Powernaps, Prayer, & Eagles Wings

Isaiah 40:28-31

3/13/22

Are you tired? Here are a few one-liners that moms have written in answer to, “You know you’re tired when…”

* You know you’re tired when...you sob uncontrollably at ‘Toy Story’ and have to be comforted by your 7-year-old.
* You know you're tired when...you pour orange juice into your tea instead of milk.
* You know you’re tired when you try putting the cereal box in the fridge & it takes a good few seconds to realize it’s not the milk!

Market analysts reveal that one in three of us admit we’re permanently worn out because of the pace of modern life. There are many reasons for weariness and certainly, many of them are due to ill health – or there is a legitimate physical reason for tiredness. If it’s a weariness due to the pace of life today, one suggested solution that health experts propose is to find a quiet place for at least 12 minutes a day. This suggestion includes, cutting back on multi-tasking, focusing on doing one thing at a time, and giving that all your attention. When you combine prayer with meditation on Scripture, or praying, or listening to music, then the weariness tends to lift or at least lesson.

Some of you might be advocates of the power nap. Recent research has shown that a 20-minute power nap boosts concentration, alertness, creativity, and mood.

* Proponents of the power nap were people like, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, and Napoleon.
* Companies such as, Nike, British Airways and Continental have started to promote power naps in the workplace.
* Google has gone a step further and provided relaxation pods for its employees. These contain soothing music and light shows, with a gentle rumble function to wake them up after the 20 minutes have passed.

I’m not telling you all to have a nap now, but I want you to know that I understand tiredness. I relate to the weariness that happens because of everyday life. Some of you are wading through discouragement and hopelessness – seeing no way out and this brings a general weariness in itself. You might be lacking in energy and desperately seeking some solution.

*28 Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.*

*29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.*

*30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.*

*31 But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

These verses from Isaiah 40 and particularly beginning with verse 21, celebrates the divine work of creation in beautiful poetic language. The One who sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, stretches out the heavens, spreads them out like a tent, brings princes to naught & reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. The One who does all these things is incomparable – He brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. This was the creation of our Everlasting God.

What does Isaiah say about our Everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth? Isaiah says, “He will not grow tired or weary.” Let me say it again, “He will not grow tired or weary.” Well thank God for that!

* If you were training in a gym – would you go to someone who always looked tired for help? Normally you would choose the person who looked the healthiest and the most energetic.

Our God does not grow tired or weary! In fact, Isaiah says, “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.”

* Are you weak today? Do you need some strength?

Tiredness and weariness is not just something that is attributed to us older folks. Isaiah rightly says, “Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall.” Then Isaiah uses the ‘but’ word. Whenever you see that little but word in Scripture, it is good to pay attention. That little word can contradict all the rest. You and I might grow tired and weary “but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.” It’s not maybe or they might – it’s they will renew their strength. The strength that is received from the Lord will be such that they feel able to soar on wings like eagles – to run and not grow weary – to walk and not be faint. WOW! Don’t you want that kind of strength today?

Let’s consider Jesus when he walked the face of this earth.

* He began his ministry at about thirty years of age – a relatively young man. Did you know that even Jesus got weary? In John’s Gospel, we read these words, “Jesus came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob’s well was there. So, Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting by the well. It was about the sixth hour” (John 4:1-6).
* Consider with me, Jesus on the cross. Tired and crushed from what has happened. He is in tremendous pain, and He cries out, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” Jesus is expressing those words found in Psalm 22 from a heart of someone who feels abandoned by their God. He is more than tired – he is weary and crushed. It’s hard to realize that there is a ‘weary’ Jesus in the Bible. We understand the Jesus who teaches about love, who performs miracles, raises people from the dead, and casts out demons. We understand powerful Jesus, but a weary and downtrodden Jesus?

This weary Jesus comes and sits down next to us today and says, “I know. Believe me, I know what it’s like to be hot and tired and worn out.” Hebrews 4.15 says this, “We have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.” Although Jesus was all God – Jesus was still all man. Aren’t you thankful that we serve a Savior who truly understands the difficulties of life even when it’s just being tired?

In reading the Gospels you’ll see, Jesus has been busy. He has healed Peter’s mother in law. At evening, he has healed the sick and cast out demons well into the night. We don’t know whether he had time to have a power nap or not but verse 35 of Mark’s Gospel says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, Jesus went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” I’m guessing Jesus might well have gotten up well before daybreak. John Wesley was known to rise at 4.00 am every morning to seek God for the first four hours of the day.

I’m not advocating we all get up at 4.00 am, although some may, but if Jesus as God’s Son felt the need to depart to a solitary place to pray – then perhaps we need it too. We don’t know how long he spent, but let’s assume that it was the first four hours until 8.00 am. Most homes were tightly packed together and villages along the Sea of Galilee were often close together. Finding privacy with so many people desiring attention required rising before others did.

I enjoy the language of Mark’s Gospel. Simon and the others went looking for Jesus. Perhaps, they were frantic. Where had he gone? Maybe people had been pestering the disciples looking for the Master thinking that they would know where Jesus was. When Simon and the others found Jesus, they said, “Everyone is looking for you!” It’s almost as if Jesus didn’t know. He didn’t say, “Yes, I know I needed to get away.” Jesus simply said, “Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages - so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (1:38).

Is it possible that Jesus regained strength from his encounter with God in prayer?

* In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow and felt His deep need of prayer to the point where Jesus asked for the cup to be taken from him. Yet, during his prayer, Jesus surrendered His will to the Father. He even followed up his words with “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Closing

Do you feel weak and weary today? Are you in a weary place? Does life and its problems have grounded you down? We’ve seen today that when we wait upon the Lord, we will renew our strength – so much so – that we will rise up on spiritual wings like those of an eagle. We as children of God should want to soar, as on eagle’s wings rise above our circumstances and weariness Is it your desire to leave this service today lighter and able to look up at the sky. But how do we overcome this weariness? Jesus says Matt. 11 *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*

The question is do you want to soar, as on eagle’s wings – do you want to rise above our circumstances and weariness. It is your desire to leave this service today lighter and able to look up at the sky! Do you want to rise and fly as the eagle, run fast, and not tire? Do you want to spiritually walk great distances and not grow weary? Then come to Jesus this morning and wait for your strength!