

Isaiah 40:27-31

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Preacher: Steve Palframan

[0 : 0 0] We're going to read the end of Isaiah 40 from verse 27 down to verse 31, and Jen is going to come and read the passage for us. Say, Jen, I'll give it to you. From verse 27.

Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord? My cause is disregarded by my God. Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God. The creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Even youth grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Thanks, Jen.

[1 : 0 5] If you're just visiting with us this morning, or it's the first time that you've been with us for a while, you might not know we've been working our way through Isaiah 40 over these last few weeks. And it's been a joy to see how the Lord gives us comfort and courage to keep going.

And that's what we've been finding in Isaiah 40. And our prayer together as a church family is that as we look at God's word, that he speaks to us, that we engage with the Lord as we engage with what he has said and continues to say through his word, the Bible.

And so I'm going to pray and ask for the Spirit's help for me as I speak, for all of us as we listen this morning. Let me pray. Father, we do thank you that we have come together this morning not to listen to Steve's good ideas, which would be a really terrible waste of a Sunday morning, but that we've come to listen to you because we long to hear what you say to us by your Spirit through your word.

We long for that renewed strength that we'd already been praying for. And so, Lord, we ask that you might meet with us this morning, that you might speak to us, encourage us and help us, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I think probably the greatest Christmas movie of all time is Die Hard, said Alvina.

[2 : 2 6] Guy says, Home Alone, and Guy is absolutely right. Okay, so, in Home Alone, you might know the story, Kevin, the youngest of five children, is left behind by his parents who inexplicably go on holiday at Christmas to Paris with loads of kids.

I think when I first watched the movie when I was a young teenager, I didn't really understand how much that must have cost them. That was an absolute fortune to take so many people on holiday to Paris for Christmas.

But anyway, they do that. And Kevin is left behind accidentally, and he is alone, and left to fend off crooks who try to break into his house. Now, of course, the movie is famous because of the traps that Kevin famously lays for the burglars.

So, you know, the nail on the steps, yeah? And so he all kind of wince as he treads on the nail, or the glowing hot door handle and all that kind of stuff that's going on, the paint cans swinging down into this face.

But there is a scene before that, a scene of real pathos, you know, of sadness and a kind of emotional angst, as Kevin is walking down the street past loads of other houses where the lights are on, and he can see into those houses that they are full of people, and they're having a great time.

[3 : 47] They're there together as families, and they are enjoying each other's company. And he can see that they're in there, in the warmth, having a lovely time, and he's out there in the cold and the darkness and the snow all on his own.

And it's really moving, isn't it? Here is a guy. This is what it's like to be all alone for Christmas. And I start there because I think that's the sense, that sort of pathos is the sense of Isaiah 40, verse 27.

Just take a look at it. Why do you complain, Jacob? And why do you say, Israel, My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God.

The complaint from Israel here that Isaiah is echoing is that, Lord, we're on the outside. We're looking in from the snow and the cold and the dark, and others who are in your presence and enjoying your warmth, and we're not.

Our way has been disregarded by God. We are spiritual Kevins, ignored, outsiders to his plans. You know, to follow the theme of Isaiah 40 that we picked up from Isaiah 40, verse 1, this really is one of the big discomforts of the Christian life, isn't it?

[5 : 06] Chapter 40 is all about the comfort of God in an uncomfortable world. And here we've hit perhaps on the hardest part of the Christian experience. What is the hardest part of being a Christian?

The hardest part, I think, of being a Christian is not just the suffering or the pain or the injustice, or even the grief of loss and sadness.

We experience all of those, don't we? We live in a world where those things happen. They happen to us. They happen to others. There's no protection from that as a Christian. You don't kind of glide through life without losing a loved one or out ever being betrayed by a friend if you're a Christian.

Those things happen to you too, don't they? But the hardest thing as a Christian is this, is that in the midst of all of that, is this feeling at times that God has not noticed.

That perhaps our way is hidden from the Lord, or our cause is disregarded by our God. Now, if you're a Christian this morning, surely you know what that's like. Doesn't it, at times, if you're honest, have felt like in your Christian life that the Father feels distant to you, uninterested and far away.

[6 : 26] You sit down at home to read your Bible and pray because you've been told that's a really good thing for Christians to do, to sit down on their own every day, take a little bit of time to read their Bible and pray. It's a brilliant thing to do. You should do it.

But you do it and it just feels like I'm going through the motions. Perhaps the progress that you'd hoped to make in certain areas of your life just doesn't seem to have happened. Your battle with envy and pride and despair and anxiety seem just as real as they ever were.

Yet my way is hidden from my God, says Isaiah, and you go, spot on. That's exactly how I feel this morning. God has abandoned me for sure. Now, I think in all probability, Isaiah, when he speaks these words, is prophesying about how the people will feel in exile in Babylon when they've been carried off from Jerusalem, from their home city, when invaders have destroyed Jerusalem.

So the temple will be gone. It's going to be burned to the ground. The city walls are going to be pulled down. The city will be defenseless and a mess. And their home will be a foreign city in a foreign land, away from their history and their heritage, away from the place of the promises.

They will feel forgotten and abandoned by God. And in a sense here, Isaiah is anticipating that for them and saying, hey, let me give you some words to say when you will feel like this.

[7 : 44] So maybe this morning, if you don't actually feel this, it's still good for you to hear this. Because I think it's true that at some point in your Christian life, you will feel like Isaiah 40, verse 27.

Interesting, in his answer to their complaint, he tackles it head on, doesn't he? He says, why do you say this? Why do you speak like that? Because there should be some good answers to that question.

If you're feeling like that this morning, if you're feeling like a spiritual Kevin this morning, there are things to say. There are some answers, says Isaiah. You don't need to complain like that.

You don't need to feel like that. There is something to say. And then what he goes on to do, basically, is to say, listen, there are two things to know and one thing to do.

Two things to know and one thing to do. And there's no surprises in here, because I've told most of you, most of these things already with the kids. So here's the first thing. Know that God never gets tired.

[8 : 43] God never gets tired. Look down at verse 28. In lots of ways, verse 28 is a repeat of some of the things that we were seeing last week from the center of chapter 40. But here he reminds them by asking questions that the answer should be obvious to.

You know, don't you know this? Haven't you heard this? That God is the everlasting, eternal God. God has no beginning. He has no end. There is no time where God has not been.

He's the one who did not need to be made. He himself is the creator and originator of all things, all things everywhere to the ends of the earth. Meaning not only that there is not a time where God has not been.

There is not a point in history where God has not been. But there is also not a place in geography where God has not been or where he is not. And then importantly, he says, verse 28, God is untiring.

God does not get worn out. He does not grow tired or weary. You know, you shouldn't think of God as doing that thing that you perhaps do after a long day at work or a long day out.

[9 : 50] Christmas shopping in Oxford Street or whatever it is, right? You come home and you collapse into your favorite chair at home going, oh, I'm utterly exhausted. God is never like that. He's not sort of collapsing into the sofa of glory at the end of the day going, what a day that was.

No, God is untiring. He is wise beyond our learning. He has an understanding which is unsearchable. In other words, Isaiah is saying again, isn't he? Listen, in the midst of feeling like you are on the outside of God, don't assume that you know what God is thinking.

Because his ways are unsearchable to you. God does not owe you an explanation for what's going on. Even if he did explain, the chances are you wouldn't understand anyway. Because his ways are in essence unsearchable.

Before we rush through the passage to think about some other things, let's just kind of ponder on this for a moment. Isaiah says to you, he says to me this morning, the first cure for your spiritual weariness, that experience or feeling of being on the outside, the first cure to that is to remember what God is really like.

We said, didn't we, last week, that there's not a situation that you face. There's not a suffering that you're enduring. There's not a problem that you have. There's not even an idol that you are tempted to trust, which is not confronted by or comforted by having a bigger, better, clearer view of the awesomeness of God.

[11 : 21] Our suffering tends to reduce God, doesn't it? And so Isaiah's solution is not just to have a sort of better theoretical grasp of who God is, but to have an actual grasp of who God is.

Like I've told to myself regularly, Steve, don't forget, don't forget God is not weary. He's not collapsed into the sofa of glory. You're not frustrating God's energy levels.

God is untiring. You see, the feeling that I have that God is distant, that he doesn't know and that he doesn't see, there's a word to describe that. It's a lie, isn't it?

And it's a lie, firstly, about the character of God. Because, of course, God hasn't forgotten us. Has he? For God to have forgotten us or for us to be hidden from him, there must be a place in the world where God is not.

Of course, that place doesn't exist. Or to be forgotten by God, it must mean that God is kind of too tired to know or come to the end of himself. But that is impossible also. I don't know whether you've done these yourselves, but in our house, we've been doing those personality tests.

[12 : 33] See, one of our daughters had to do those for an application that she's been doing. And so, you know, you go through them and they tell you whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, whether you're led by your feelings or by facts or I can't remember all the other ones.

They're never very flattering to me, so I don't really like them very much. But anyway, you know, it's those kind of things, isn't it? Are you led by the data or are you led by your feelings?

And Isaiah here, saying to us, whatever our personality is and whatever we are like, he is saying to us, if you're a Christian this morning, to live simply by your feelings or perceptions is a dangerous place to be because your feelings will not always tell you the truth of who God is and what he's like.

At times, he says, you will feel like God is distant and far away and that you're on the outside. But it's not true. It's a lie. Because the reality is it is impossible for God to be distant when he's the creator of the ends of the earth who never grows weary.

Instead, end of verse 28, you need to remember that when it comes to understanding God, you and I are significantly limited. Don Carson, who's written a book on suffering called *How Long, O Lord*, describes the experience of suffering as the experience of entering into a tunnel.

[13 : 58] Suddenly, as you enter the pain of physical illness or emotional trauma or grief or loss, what happens is sort of that everything else kind of gets blocked out.

And the only thing that you can see is the suffering that you're experiencing. It's all you know in a given moment. That's why I think people try to distract themselves when they're suffering, don't they?

Maybe you watch more TV than you would have done or you end up scrolling your phone for hours and hours. Not because it's helping, but because it's trying to just distract you from this tunnel that you're in.

Well, here in Isaiah 40, it's like, if you like, he's just putting the light on in the tunnel. So don't forget. Don't forget what God's like. In the midst of your suffering and your difficulty, don't forget that God never grows weary.

God's not tired. So that's the first thing. We must know that God doesn't get tired, never gets tired. The second thing to know is you do get tired, right?

[14 : 57] You do get tired. We'll come back to verse 29 in a moment, but just skip it to verse 30 and listen to what he says. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall.

Here the contrast is obvious, isn't it? It's between verse 28 and verse 30. You live in a world made by a God who never grows weary, an untiring God. But you and I are not him.

We didn't make the world, nor are we untiring. In fact, the opposite, all of us, even the youngest and the fittest, run out of energy at some point or another.

Now, of course, the image is physical strength, as we were considering with the kids. But the point is not just that even the youngest of us would give up running a race. It's also the idea of spiritual strength.

The idea isn't just that all of us need a day off, right? All of us need to take a holiday from time to time. All of us need a break. But actually, the spiritual strength to keep going, we don't have either.

[15 : 59] The complaint, remember, is that God's people feel abandoned and forgotten. They feel like that God has overlooked them and is unaware of the circumstances that they're in. They feel like they're unable to carry on, that they have no strength to keep trusting the Lord.

Now, of course, there's a physical element, isn't there, to spiritual weariness. We're not neatly partitioned people, are we? Often when we're physically struggling, we're also spiritually struggling. And when we're spiritually struggling, it's sometimes difficult to get ourselves going physically as well.

But the point is here that there is nobody who is so young or so energetic that they could keep going and not have to give up. And there's nobody spiritually so vigorous, so intelligent, so wise that they can keep trusting and keep going in their own strength.

Everyone in their own strength will give way. Even if you've been a Christian for 50 years this morning, even if you're in Christian ministry, even if you grew up knowing the gospel in a loving Christian home, even if you can't remember when you learned about Jesus because it was told to you right from the very beginning, even if that is you this morning, you will still grow weary.

You will still run out of energy. None of us, by our strength, can keep going. Paul Tripp, an American guy, has written a book called Lead, written for people in pastoral ministry or for church leaders.

[17 : 28] And he observes that there's a particular dynamic, which means that Christian ministers, pastors, elders are particularly bad at acknowledging their own weakness, this particular kind of weakness specifically.

He says that they often refuse to be candid about their inability to do things in their own strength. And he tells the story, a devastating story, really, about a church that's doing great things.

This church is experiencing real blessing. The church is growing. They're enjoying good fellowship with one another. And on a particular weekend, they'd had a great Sunday.

The pastor had preached a great sermon. They'd had a fellowship meal afterwards, which had gone really well. That the members' meeting on the Sunday evening had given some exciting reports about things that were happening in the life of the church and the future plans.

The finances of the church were in great shape. But then they had a leaders' meeting on the Monday. And the pastor came in and he said this. Let me just read to you what he said.

[18 : 29] Pastor said, I can't do this anymore. I don't want to preach any more sermons. I don't want to lead any more meetings. I don't want to talk to anyone else about their problems.

I'm not even sure that I want to be married. In case you're wondering, I haven't cheated on my wife. I haven't embezzled any of the church's money. It's just that I'm done. I'm not going to continue to put myself through this.

I hate what I'm doing. I find it burdensome and exhausting. I cannot imagine continuing to do what I'm doing. I have no other plan than what I'm doing right now.

Quitting. I can't tell you how relieved I am that tomorrow I won't be a pastor anymore. I don't want to talk to you about this. I don't want you to pray over me. I don't want to go to a counselor.

I know you want to help, but I don't want help. I want to be left alone. I want to be free to move on. If you cut me off financially, that won't stop me. I'm done.

[19 : 32] And there's nothing that will undo that. And with that, he got up and walked out of the meeting. It's dramatic, isn't it? Let me tell you to reassure you, I don't feel like that right now.

But it's there to illustrate the point that everybody comes to the end of their resources. And it's not the absence of blessing, is it? It is the presence of human weakness and frailty that we cannot keep going.

Even youths grow faint. And listen this morning, if you're sat there and you think, I will never feel like that, pastor. That will never be me.

If that's what you're thinking as you listen to that being read, can I warn you that you have a really unrealistic view of yourself? I think there are some people, aren't they?

Maybe we do this just because we're too embarrassed to actually say what we need. But you know when you go around, sometimes a prayer meeting or something like that, you're meeting as a small group of friends, maybe the women's fellowship or a small group Bible study or a prayer meeting on a Wednesday night, whatever it is.

[20 : 39] And they go around and say, how can we pray for you? And you look blank and you go, well, I don't think there's anything really. You know, if you say that, again, you really haven't understood who you really are.

Will you pray for me that I keep going as a Christian? Because I know that without the Lord's help, that will not happen. I will not keep going. I need the Lord's help in every moment of every day because I grow tired and weary in my own strength.

I need you to know that as a pastor, I cannot keep going. Not just keep going in my job, but I cannot keep going spiritually in my own strength.

I know and I am so grateful that many of you pray for me. Please keep praying for me. Just to make sure that we land this point, Isaiah is saying to Israel that their perception that God is distant, that they are spiritual Kevins excluded from the warmth of fellowship with God.

It's not an indication that they've arrived at a place where God is not present. It's not that they've exhausted God of his energy. Rather, when they feel like Isaiah 40 verse 27, it's because they have run out of energy.

[21 : 55] They've been running on their own gas and it's run dry and they've crashed. And it's as inevitable as it was tragic. Perhaps this is particularly pertinent for someone this morning.

Perhaps you've been thinking to this point, you know, your spiritual life is something that you're in charge of. Something that you can run on your own. Maybe you thought, you know what, to keep going spiritually, I'll kind of dip into YouTube sermons from time to time, from various different preachers, and I'll kind of visit church occasionally.

But basically, largely speaking, I can live the Christian life based on my own strength and my own resources. That's the message of the world, isn't it? That's what we teach our children at school, isn't it?

You've got this. You can do this. Be the best you. Dig deep. Pattern up or whatever it is. But the reality is, if that is your life plan, you will crash.

Your energy will dry up. You will stumble and you will fall. And until you understand how weak you are and how limited you are, well, you'll always be about to crash.

[23 : 03] Think about it like this. It's like the tap on your sink at home in the kitchen, right? Why does water come out of the tap in the kitchen when you turn it on?

Well, because it's connected to the water supply, right? If somebody on the street puts a digger through the water main that supplies water to your home, you turn on the tap in the kitchen, water will come out for a little bit, perhaps.

The dregs of what's in the pipes. But one day it will just go completely dead, won't it? And that's so with us. We are limited creatures.

We were made by God to be dependent on him. We were made and created to live in a garden where there's the tree of life, where you would reach and eat.

We renewed. And sin, our desire to push God away and reject him, has severed our relationship with God. We live for ourselves.

[24 : 05] We give up on his law. We go our own way. And that means that we run dry. We live for ourselves. So just like God said to Adam and Eve in the garden, the day you eat of the fruit, you will surely die.

Not simply as a kind of punitive punishment, but really as a reflection of what's happened. They have severed their relationship with God. They have removed themselves from the source of their life, from God himself.

And so you and I need to know that. We do not have the resources in ourselves to sustain ourselves. God is the one who never gets tired. You and me, we do.

Thirdly then, what do we do about it? We live in a world where God never tires, where we get tired. What are we supposed to do? Thirdly then, wait and receive strength. This was hinted at in verse 29.

Let me read verse 29 to 31 to you. Waiting for the Lord or hoping in the Lord, as the NIV translates it, is how our strength is renewed.

[25 : 27] And with strength renewed, God's people will soar like eagles and run and not grow weary. And just to be super clear, in case you were wondering this, this is not literal.

This is a picture, right? It's not that waiting on the Lord will make you capable of running or flying great distances. Nor is the point, if you wait upon the Lord, you will soar through life without anything difficult happening to you.

No, rather the point is that in the midst of the chaos of what is happening, it is possible for us to experience and know a connection with God which brings supplies and vitality to our lives.

Knowing that God will bring us safely home to be with him. So for God's people in exile in Babylon, if they will wait on the Lord, he will bring them back to Jerusalem. And so for us, if we will wait on the Lord, he will bring us safely home to glory.

Like a soaring eagle gliding the updrafts of the Scottish coast. Or Mo Farah, not breaking a sweat as he glides around the track. So we will find ourselves with the Lord in glory.

[26 : 36] If we will hope in him in the midst of this world now. Of course that means, doesn't it? What's the big question for us now? Is really, what does that mean, right? It's the kind of thing that you say as a Christian, oh, I need to wait for the Lord or hope in the Lord.

But it's not necessarily something we understand. So what does it mean? What does it mean to wait for the Lord or hope in him? What probably doesn't help as we try to get to grips with this is that our Bible translators, which I understand why they've done this, because it makes it easier to read.

But this word has been used all the way through Isaiah's book. He's used it 15 times, and it's translated variously as wait or hope or look or trust or even long for.

And so that's the sense here. Waiting in the Lord or hoping in the Lord is looking to the Lord, trusting in the Lord, longing for the Lord. Interestingly, when Isaiah first used the word in his book, he actually uses it not of us longing for or looking for God.

He uses it of God looking at his people. God is waiting or looking for his people to bear good fruit. And instead, they bear wild grapes, we're told in chapter 5.

[27 : 47] So instead of the righteous deeds that he had hoped for, he gets wickedness and rebellion. So God, in his waiting on us, is gravely disappointed. What he looks for, he doesn't find.

And then in the rest of the book, Isaiah flips the picture around and says, actually, no, the image really now is not really God waiting for us to bear righteous fruit. It is us waiting for God to do what we were unable to do for him.

And so the rest of the book is about us longing for him, hoping in him and not being disappointed. And so this is the first sense of this word hope or wait in verse 31.

The sense here, if you're hoping for someone to do something or waiting for something, then what you're doing is you are relying on them to work and not you to work.

You, in this very process, you are understanding that it is their work that makes the difference, not your work. You know, you wait for or you hope for a bus, yeah?

[28 : 49] Why are you waiting for the bus? It's because you're not driving it. You are reliant on somebody else to bring the bus to you, yeah? You are hoping that the bus will arrive.

You wait for a delivery because you are not the one delivering it. So here, the image that the key to spiritual health and comfort is to realize with an increasing clarity that the dynamic of the Christian life is that God is doing the work, not us.

That our Christian lives are dependent on what God has done and not on what we do. The big reality of the Christian life is that it's not us working our way for God, but it's what God is doing for us.

Now, of course, you and I can see that even more clearly than Isaiah could. Isaiah saw this as a prophet looking forward to the coming of Christ. You and I read it as people who know of the coming of Christ.

We know that the Lord Jesus has come and done this work for us on the cross, a work that's now applied to us by faith, faith which is the empty hand, which reaches out and receives the work of Christ as we are connected to him and receive forgiveness of sins and adoption into the family of God.

[30 : 04] Now, that doesn't mean that we have nothing to do, does it? It doesn't mean that there's not works for us to do. God has given us work to do, work that pleases him and brings him glory, but our work flows out of his energy and work coming into us.

The Christian life is about not God receiving from us, but us receiving from him. And this is Isaiah's spiritual comfort for the weary saint who feels like God is absent.

That's you this morning. This is what he says. Stop. Will you? Will you just stop? You know, the fact that you feel like your way is hidden from God or that you feel like a spiritual Kevin walking the streets on Christmas Eve is because you've lost this sense of the connection to the source of spiritual life, which is Christ alone and what he has done.

Maybe the truth is this morning that you've never really stopped like that at all, ever. You might not have called yourself a Christian, but essentially what you've basically been doing is trying to do things for God, not receiving from him what he has done.

So if you've never done this before, let me encourage you, if that's you, please stop. Stop trying to do this in your own strength. Stop pretending that God is impressed with what you do when the reality is you need to trust what he has done.

[31 : 33] And for some of us, we've been Christians for a really long time. But maybe the reality is that we're weary or we're cold or we're spiritually flagging. And so too for you, the message is exactly the same.

Don't worry. Stop. Will you just stop? Will you wait? Will you look? Will you trust? Will you long for what the Lord is doing and not what you can do?

I'm told that the great Victorian preacher Charles Spurgeon used to illustrate the Christian life as a voyage on a ship across a great ocean. So I suppose in his day they were, you know, great sailing boats, weren't they?

You imagine, you know, sailing across the Atlantic to the Americas and you're sailing on this great ship. And as you leave harbour, it's beautiful.

Like the mast is new and it looks fantastic. And all the, you know, all the deck is shiny because it's been scrubbed clean by everybody. And you imagine as you set out on this journey, you imagine that you're going to pull into harbour at the other side of the ocean.

[32 : 43] And you're going to have this glorious gleaming ship. And it's going to, you know, everyone's going, oh, look at that. That's brilliant. That's amazing. He says that's what people imagine the Christian life to be, right?

That actually we will pull into the shores of glory when we die or the Lord Jesus returns. And our spiritual ships will be glorious and majestic and just full of great victories.

The Spirit says, no, it's not like that at all. What happens across the ocean is that you're battered by a storm which rips your sails. It breaks the, whatever you call the thing that holds your sails up.

It breaks it, snaps it off, clean off. You don't have time to scrub the deck and clean it because, to be honest, you're so massed. Thank you. Yes, the mast is broken. You don't have time to scrub the deck.

So it's full of mould and moss and all sorts of things. And the hull of the boat is slightly broken and you're taking on water. And when you pull into the shores of glory, that's what we look like.

[33 : 44] And you look at it and go, how on earth did that ship ever make it here? How on earth did that ship ever make it here? Because God brought it here.

That's the answer, isn't it? So listen, if in your Christian life you're feeling battered and bruised and broken, you don't have the energy that you thought you would have, you've not made the progress that you thought you would, you've been caught in a storm, you've been battered and bruised and broken, and your mast is snapped, don't worry.

God will still bring you to the shores of glory. And when you get there, you will say, how on earth did I make it? And the answer will be, because God did it.

Because God did it. And that's the truth of Isaiah 40. All of us grow weary, but God never does. And he, through Christ, by the work of his spirit in our hearts, can give us the strength to keep going, day by day, moment by moment, and bring us safely home.

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.

[35 : 00] Well, let's stop and pray. Heavenly Father, would you forgive us that we think at times we can run the Christian life in our own strength.

Thank you that our way is not hidden from you or our cause disregarded by you. But thank you that in the Lord Jesus Christ, you've given us all that we need. That we might be brought safely home.

And some of us this morning feel particularly battered and bruised. Our masts are broken. Our hull is cracked. Yet, Lord, we know you'll bring us to the shores of glory by the remarkable miracle of your grace and mercy in the Lord Jesus.

Please, Lord, we pray. Would you help us to do perhaps the most spiritually beneficial thing to do, which is not to preach another sermon, to read another book, to send another email or WhatsApp, but the most spiritually beneficial thing to do just to stop, to wait, to hope, to trust, to look to you and say, please, Lord, give me all that I need for I have nothing in myself.

I trust in you. Bring me safely home, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.