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Text: Isaiah 40:28-31

Epiphany 5

### WHEN YOU ARE EXHAUSTED

The prophet Isaiah talks about being weary and exhausted. It can happen. And it can be a problem. This morning I want to talk with you about what to do when that happens.

First, I want to share a story with you. It is not a story describing something that actually happened, but it does help us to see something that is very true.

The story goes like this. Satan called a world-wide convention. In his opening address to his evil angels, he said, "We can't keep the Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles. But we can keep them from forming a strong relationship with Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, let them have their Bibles, but let us steal their time, so that they won't be able to have a close relationship with Christ."

"How shall we do this?" asked the evil angels.

"Keep them busy!" Satan answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, then, borrow, borrow, borrow. Convince them to work 10, 12, 14 hours a day, 6 or 7 days a week, so they can afford to buy all they want to have. Pull their families apart. Keep them from spending time with their children. Then their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of life."

"Overstimulate their minds so that they cannot hear the voice of God. Entice them to play their radios and MP3 players wherever they go, and keep the TV going constantly in their homes. See to it that every store and restaurant plays music constantly. This will jam their minds and break their union with Christ."

"Fill their coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with news 24 hours a day. Flood their computers and mailboxes with junk mail, sweepstakes, catalogues, and every kind of newsletter and advertisement."

"Even in their recreation, urge them to be excessive. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies. Have them return from vacations exhausted. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in grumbling and gossip so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions.

"Crowd their lives with so many good things they have no time to spend with Christ. Soon they will be working with only their own strength, sacrificing their health and families for the good of the cause."

It was quite a convention. And the evil angels went eagerly to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busy, busy, busy.

People today are exhausted. I see it over and over again. Maybe it is reality, maybe it is just a perception. Either way, people feel they are being pulled in so many different directions, they feel they have so much to do, and they are just exhausted.

This is nothing new. In the Bible reading for today we heard the prophet Isaiah say, "Even youth will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted."

But Isaiah knew what to do. He said, "Those who wait for the Lord renew their strength, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

What we have here is a prescription for exhaustion. We also have a tremendous promise from God!

The prescription for exhaustion is to "wait for the Lord." But what does it mean to "wait for the Lord?" Perhaps the best example is Jesus himself. He was busy. He had a lot on his plate. He was constantly being pulled in many directions. But He knew how to wait on God. Over and over again we are told that Jesus spent time in prayer. He took time to rest. And that seems especially true when his stress was great and his work was exhausting. Where was Jesus just before he was arrested and put to death on the cross? He was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying!

When you wait on the Lord, you cease from your activity and remember who you are and whose you are. When you wait on the Lord, you quit your busyness and remember that God knows you, knows what you need, knows what will give you joy. When you wait on the Lord you stop and remember that God wants to give you joy, that God wants to renew your strength, that God wants to help you soar like an eagle. When you wait on the Lord, you pause and remember that you belong to God, that God loves you dearly, that God delights in you.

The prescription for exhaustion is to "wait for the Lord." Notice then what God promises to do. God promises to give power to the faint. God promises to strengthen the powerless. God promises to renew your strength. This is God's promise to you, a promise you can count on!

The result is that you shall run and not be weary, that you shall walk and not faint. Yes, the work will still be there. You will still be running and attending to many tasks. After all, you have necessary and significant work to do. God has called you, not to be idle, but to serve others. People are counting on you. You are needed. Your best is needed! That's why it is so important to wait on the Lord.

Be sure to do that this week. Wait on the Lord. Let the Lord renew your strength. And then you shall run and not be weary, you shall walk and not faint.