Sermon Title: "WAITING ON THE LORDD IN TIMES OF CRISIS!

Sermon Text: Isaiah 40: 27-31

Introduction:

GOOD MORNING TO ALL! THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICE TODAY! AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL YOU WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY IN OUR SUNDAY SERVICE CELEBRATION.

THIS WEEK, WE HEARD ONE OF THE SADDEST NEWS IN OUR FIGHT WITH THIS COVID-19 - THE DEATH BY SUICIDE OF A CERTAIN DR. LORNA BREEN. AN EMERGENCY ROOM DOCTOR IN NEW YORK'S PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL & ONE OF THE MANY DOCTORS & NURSES & FRONTLINERS WHO WERE THE FIRST WHO FOUGHT THIS DISEASE. APPARENTLY, SHE HAD CONTRACTED THE VIRUS & RECOVERED. BUT TRUE TO HER CALLING, SHE RETURNED TO THE ER WHERE SHE WORKED, APPARENTLY THE OVERWHELMING STRESS, THE PHYSICAL & MENTAL EXHAUSTION, & THE BURDEN OF SEEING SO MANY PATIENTS DYING & NEEDING HELP SOMEWHAT CAUSED HER TO TAKE HER OWN LIFE. INDEED, SHE IS ONE THOSE MANY HEROES WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES & ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST THIS DEADLY & WICKED DISEASE. CHURCH. LET US CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THESE HEROES & MODERN WARRIORS THAT ARE FIGHTING FOR OUR SAFETY & HEALTH, LET US CONTINUE TO REMEMBER THEM IN OUR PRAYERS.

AS I REFLECTED ON THIS, IT ONLY FEINFORCED MY BELIEF & CONVICTION THAT IF THERE IS ANOTHER QUALITY OF LIFE THAT WE MUST EQUIP OURSELVES WITH IF WE ARE TO BECOME STRONG BELIEVERS OF THE LORD ESPECIALLY DURING TIMES OF ADVERSITIES OR CRISIS LIKE THIS COVID CRISIS WE ARE FACING TODAY, WE MUST HAVE A STRONG HEART! WE NEED MORAL & SPIRITUAL STRENGTH TO OVERCOME LIFE'S CRISIS! THIS IS WHAT THE PROPHET ISAIAH WILL TEACH US THIS MORNING!

LET US PRAY!!!

CONTEXT OF PASSAGE. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH CAN BE EASILY DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS/SECTION- CHS. 1-39 IS ALL ABOUT THE

LORD'S JUDGMENT OF HIS PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THEIR UNFAITHFULNESS TO HIM. THIS CAUSED THE LORD TO DESTROY JERUSALEM THRU KING NEBUCHANEZZAR & SENT THEM AS CAPTIVES TO BABYLON FOR 70 YEARS AS PREDICTED BY JEREMIAH. WHILE CHS. 40-66 IS ALL ABOUT THE LORD'S PROMISE OF REDEMPTION & HOPE FOR HIS PEOPLE, WHICH INCLUDES ISAIAH'S PROPHECY ABOUT THEIR RETURN TO THE JERUSALEM. CHAPTER 40, FROM WHICH WE ARE GOING TO TAKE OUR PASSAGE IS ABOUT THE LORD'S GREATNESS & MAN'S WEAKNESS. PARTICULARLY, THE PROPHET ISAIAH WILL HIGHLIGHT THE LORD'S PROMISE OF THE LORD TO RESTORE THEM TO THEIR LAND.

A. ISAIAH <u>REMINDS</u> GOD'S PEOPLE OF <u>WHO THEIR GOD IS</u>!

NOW, THE FIRST THING THAT WE SEE IN OUR TEXT IS ISAIAH PRESSING & REMINDING GOD'S PEOPLE OF WHO THEIR GOD IS! USUALLY, THE PROBLEM WITH GOD'S PEOPLE IS THE FOCUS OF OUR EYES IN TIMES OF TROUBLE OR PROBLEM. IT IS USUALLY FOCUS ON THE BIGNESS OF OUR PROBLEM RATHER THAN THE BIGNESS OF OUR GOD! AND SO, ISAIAH REMINDS THEM THAT...

1) HE IS THEIR <u>ALMIGHTY</u> GOD, THE <u>SOVEREIGN</u> LORD!

"Jacob, why do you say, and Israel, why do you assert, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my claim is ignored by my God'? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth. He never becomes faint or weary; there is no limit to his understanding." (vv. 27-28)

VERSES 27-28 ACTUALLY CONTAINS THE VARIOUS ATTRIBUTES OF THE LORD THEIR GOD. FIRST OF THEM IS HIS OMNIPRENCE.

a. He is **Omnipresent!** He is the All-present or Eternal God!

"The Lord is the everlasting God ..." (v. 28)

b. He is **Omnipotent!** He is the All-powerful God!

"The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth.

He never becomes faint or weary..." (v. 28)

c. He is **Omniscient!** He is the All-knowing God!

"Jacob, why do you say, and Israel, why do you assert, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my claim is ignored by my God'? (v. 27)

"No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account."

(Heb. 4: 13)

2) HE IS THEIR **COMPASSIONATE** & **GRACIOUS** GOD!

BUT HE WAS NOT THEIR ALMIGHTY GOD, HE WAS ALSO THEIR GRACIOUS GOD & FATHER! WE KNOW THAT HE CHOSE ISRAEL NOT BECAUSE OF ANY SPECIAL REASON BY GRACE & HE TOOK THEM UPON HIMSELF & REVEALED HIMSELF TO THEM & MADE THEM HIS PEOPLE & CHILDREN EVEN HIS MOST TREASURED POSSESSIONS.

"For you are a holy people belonging to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. "The Lord had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors," (Deut. 7:6, 7)

IN FACT, THIS WORDS OF ISAIAH WAS FULFILLED WHEN THE LORD SOVEREIGNLY TOUCHED & USED KING CYRUS OF PERSIAN KINGDOM, THE ONE WHO TOOK OVER THE BABYLONIAN KINGDOM TO BE KIND TO HIS PEOPLE & ORDER THEIR RETURN TO JERUSALEM & EVEN HELP THEM BUILD THE SECOND TEMPLE & THUS, FULFILLED THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of King Cyrus to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and to put it in writing: This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: "The Lord, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah..."

(Ezra 1: 1- 2)

THEREFORE, THE LORD WANTS THEM TO KNOW THAT THEIRE GOD HAD NOT CHANGED! HE IS STILL THEIR SOVERIGN GOD & HE IS STILL RULING AND THAT HE HAS NIOT FORGOTTEN THEM. HE IS ACTUALLY WORKING SOVEREIGNLY & GRACIOUSLY IN BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE. SO, HE IS USING HERE HIS SERVANT ISAIAH TO COMFORT & ENCOURAGE HIS PEOPLE NOT TO LOSE HOPE BUT TO BELIEVE & TRUST THAT THEIR RESTORATION WILL DEFINITELY HAPPEN & WILL COME.

B. ISAIAH PROMISES GOD'S PEOPLE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME!

BUT THE LORD DID NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE THEM BY PRESSING THEM OR REMINDING THEM OF WHO HE IS TO THEM & WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR THEM. HERE IN VERSES 29-31, THE LORD PROMISES HIS PEOPLE STRENGTH!

1) THE LORD'S PEOPLE WILL BECOME WEARY & WEAK!

THE LORD KNEW THAT HIS PEOPLE WILL QUESTION WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEM & WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS – "WHERE IS GOD IN ALL THIS?" HE KNOWS THAT THEY WILL BECOME WEARY & WEAK, DEPRESSED, HOMESICK, JOYLESS, RESTLESS, & HOPELESS DURING THEIR STAY IN BABYLON. HE KNOWS THAT THEY WILL BECOME WEARY & WEAK AND THE NEED TO BE STRONG IF THEY ARE TO SURVIVE & OVERCOME THIS ORDEAL. SO, HERE AGAIN THE LORD SHOWED HIS GOODNESS TO THEM BY GIVING THEM THIS PROMISE OF STRENGTH!

THE LORD KNEW THAT THEY WILL BECOME WEARY & WEAK.
THIS I THINK IS NOT PHYSICAL BUT MORAL & SPIRITUAL. AND SO

THE LORD BEING AN ALL-KNOWING GOD, HE GIVES THIS PROMISE OF STRENGTH.

"He gives strength to the faint and strengthens the powerless. Youths may become faint and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint." (vv. 29-31)

IN THESE VERSES, ISAIAH DESCRIBES TO US THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OR ATTRIBUTES OF THE LORD'S STRENGTH.

- O HE WILL GIVE STRENGTH TO THOSE WHO HAS NONE!
- HE WILL <u>INCREASE</u> THE STRENGTH OF THOSE WHO HAS <u>LITTLE</u>!
- O HE WILL RENEW THE STRENGTH OF THOSE WHO LOST IT ALL!
- 2) THE LORD IS THE **STRENGTH** OF HIS PEOPLE!

NOW, WE KNOW THAT THE LORD DOES NOT JUST PROVIDE STRENGTH TO HIS PEOPLE BUT HE HIMSELF IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR HEART. WHY? LISTEN TO WHAT THE PSALMIST ASAPH -

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever." (Psalm 73: 26)

KING DAVID DECLARES,

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart celebrates, and I give thanks to him with my song." (Psalm 28: 7)

C. THE LORD POINTS OUT THE REQUIREMENT FOR HIS PROMISE!

FINALLY, ISAIAH POINTS OUT THE KEY TO RECEIVE THIS PROMISE OF THE LORD OF STRENGTH! EVEN THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES & TRIALS & CRISIS OF OUR LIVES! AND CLEARLY, THE KEY WORD TO THIS REQUIREMENT/CONDITION IS THE VERB "WAIT/HOPE" IN VERSE 31. THE PROPHET ISAIAH

EXHORTS THE PEOPLE OF GOD & NOW TO "HOPE" (NIV)/"TRUST" (CSB) & "WAIT" (KJV/NASB) IN THE LORD!

NOW, SINCE THIS IS THE KEY WORD THAT WILL EXPLAIN WHAT THE LORD WANTS US TO DO TO RECEIVE HIS PROMISE OF STRENGTH & ALL THESE ATTRIBUTES, WE NEED TO LOOK DEEPER INTO THIS WORD PARTICULARLY IN THE HEBREW RENDERING. JUST LIKE THE GREEK LANGUAGE SOME MEANING OF A TERM COULD BE LOST IN THE TRANSLATION & COULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD MORE IF WE KNOW THE MEANING OF THE TERM IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE.

THE HEBREW WORD USED HERE IS "QAVAH" WHICH IS TRANLATED "WAIT." SO THE KJV & NASB ARE CLOSER IN THEIR TRANSLATION TO ORIGINAL WORD. IF WE ARE TO RECEIVE THE LORD'S STRENGTH, INCREASE IT OR RENEW IT, WE MUST LEARN TO "WAIT" IN THE LORD! NOW, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "WAIT" OR "QAVAH" IN HEBREW? THE TERM HAS A LITERAL & FIGURATIVE MEANING. (EX. "WHITE HOUSE" – A BUILDING IN WASHINGTON D.C./THE CENTER OF US GOVERNMENT).

- 1) "WAIT" (LITERAL) "TO BIND" (THE IDEA IS WEAVING OR INTERTWINING OF STRANDS OF A ROPE OR THE PROCESS OF MAKING A ROPE/CORD. THIS IMPLIES STRENGTH IN NUMBERS)
- 2) "WAIT" (FIGURATIVELY) "TO HOPE, OR TO LOOK FOR W/EAGER EXPECTATION"

THEREFORE, FROM THESE MEANINGS WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT TO "WAIT" IN THE LORD IS TO "PUT ONE'S HOPE" IN THE LORD WHO IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR LIFE. THE FOCUS IS ON "GOD ACTING" & NOT ON "MAN WAITING"! AND ONE CAN DO THIS BY "BINDING" HIMSELF TO OUR LORD; THAT IS, "WEAVING OR INTERTWINING" OUR LIFE WITH HIM. FOR AS THE WISEMAN COUNSELS US, "A CORD OF THREE STRANDS IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN." (Eccl. 4:12). THIS MEANS THAT "WAITING" IS NOT BEING PASSIVE OR LAZY BUT WORKING OUT OUR SALVATION!

D. HOW TO "BIND/WEAVE" OUR LIFE TO THE LORD'S!

THEREFORE, IT IS VERY CRUCIAL & IMPORTANT FOR US BELIEVERS TO LEARN HOW TO "WAIT" UPON THE LORD! FOR THIS WILL SPELL OUR VICTORY OR DEFEAT IN TIMES OF CRISIS LIKE THE THIS ONE THAT WE ARE FACING TODAY. WE DESPERATELY NEED SUFFICIENT STRENGHT IN ORDER FOR US TO LIVE OVERCOMING LIVES! SO, HOW DO WE LEARN TO "WAIT" UPON THE LORD? HOW DO WE "BIND" OUR LIFE TO GOD'S?

BUT BEFORE WE DIG INTO THAT, LET ME MAKE A COMMENT ON THE METHAPOR ISAIAH USED TO DESCRIBE WHAT THIS STREGNTH OF THE LORD CAN DO TO US. THIS METHAPOR IS ACTUALLY PART OF PROMISE.

"They will soar on ("mount up") wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint." (v. 31)

ISAIAH WAS ACTUALLY USING A PHRASE THAT WAS FAMILIAR TO THE PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY HAVE HEARD MANY TIMES BEFORE FROM THE LORD'S SERVANT, MOSES. THE SAME PHRASE WAS USED BY MOSES TO DESCRIBE WHAT THE LORD DID FOR THEM DURING THEIR DARK & TRYING TIMES.

Moses went up the mountain to God, and the Lord called to him from mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob and explain to the Israelites: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."

(Exo. 19: 3-4)

WHEN WE MAKE THE LORD THE STRENGTH OF OUR HEART, HE PROMISE TO CARRY US ABOVE THE SKY & ABOVE THE STORMS OF LIFE! THE LORD PROMISES TO GIVE THEM STRENGTH TO RUN THRU LIFE & ENDURE LIFE'S STORMS! TO WALK THRUGH PROBLEMS & NOT BE FAINT!

SO, HOW DO WE "BIND/WEAVE" OUR LIFE TO GOD'S? I THINK THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DO THIS AS WE LOOK AT THE

SCRIPTURES BUT I THINK WHAT STOOD OUT FOR ME ARE THESE THREE THINGS. YOU CAN ADD YOURS.

1) BY FULLY "AFFIRMING" OUR LORD'S SOVEREIGNTY!

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not considered the foundations of the earth? God is enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth and spreads them out like a tent to live in..." (Isa. 40: 21-25)

IF THE LORD CAN DO WHAT HE DID TO ISRAEL AT THAT TIME THRU A PAGAN KING, HE CAN THAT AGAIN TODAY IN OUR TIME FOR HE HAS NOT CHANGED. HE IS STILL THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY & FOREVERMORE!

FOR OUR LIFE TO BE ONE WITH THE LORD, WE HAVE TO ALWAYS PRAYS "MAY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IS IN HEAVEN..."

2) BY <u>LEARNING</u> THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF THE <u>WORD & PRAYER</u>! (Matt. 4:4;Ps. 1)

IF YOU HAVE NO APPETITE FOR THE WORD OF GOD, THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG IN YOUR LIFE. EITHER YOU ARE NOT A TRUE BELIEVER LOF JESUS OR YOU ARE NOT BEEN DISCIPLED TO LEARN THE WORD! YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. YOU WILL NEVER HAVE THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME LIFE'S TRIALS W/O GOD'S STRENGTH. AND IF YOU EVER MAKE IT HERE, YOU WILL DEFINETELY NOT MAKE IT THERE IN THE NEXT LIFE FOR THAT LIFE REQUIRES THAT YOU HAVE JESUS IN YOUR LIFE AS SAVIOR & LORD!

"ONE WEEK OF NO BIBLE MEDITATION & PRAYER MAKES ONE WEAK!"

BUT BY "FEEDING" ON THE WORD, WE WILL BE ABLE TO "KNOW & OBEYI" OUR LORD & MASTER'S WILL & BE PLEASING TO

HIM! (Jn. 15). IF WE SPEND TIME with THE FATHER WE ABSORB HIS GLORY & POWER! (EX. MOSES' FACE SHINES!)

3) BY "PURSUING" OUR GOD-GIVEN CALLING & PURPOSE IN LIFE-MAKE DISCIPLES & BE HOLY! (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 8: 29)

AS DISCIPLES & FOLLOWERS OF THE LORDJESUS, WE ARE EXPECTED TO BE HIS LIFELONG STUDENT WHO FAITHFULLY FOLLOWS HIS TEACHINGS THROUGHOUT HIS LIFETIME. A DISCIPLE HAS SURRENDERED & SUBMITTED HIS LIFE TO JESUS AS HIS MASTER!

ALSO, AS HIS DISCIPLES, WE ARE ABLRE TO "BIND" OR "WEAVE" OUR LIFE WITH THE LORD WHEN WE PURSUE HIS PURPOSE & WILL FOR OUR LIFE AND TWO CLEAR PURPOSES OF GOD FOR OUR LIFE IS TO BE PART OF THE GREAT COMMISSION/MAKE DIDSCIPLES & TO BE CHRISTLIKE IN CHARACTER/TO BE HOLY! IS THIS A MAJOR GOAL OF OUR LIFE? IS THIS PART OF OUR LIFE'S PLANS?

4) BY "BEING A PART" OF CHRIST'S BODY & FELLOWSHIPING" WITH THE BRETHREN! (Acts 2: 42; Heb. 10:25)

"I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Jn. 13: 34)

IF THERE ONE MAJOR SOURCE OF STRENTH WHERE WE CAN GO DURING TIMES OF CRISIS, IT IS THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH! THE LORD DID NOT JUST CALL INDIVIDUALS HE CALLED A CHURCH – A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO TRUSTED HIM AS SAVIOR & ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE ONE ABNOTHER, TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER, ETC, ETC.). IT IS GOOD TO KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR FAITH & OUR SUFFERINGS AS BELIEVERS OF JESUS CHRIST!

CLOSING CHALLENGE:

THE QUESTION I WOULD LIKE TO ASK AT THIS POINT IS THIS--ARE YOU WEAK & WEARY TODAY? DO YOU FEEL WEARY OR WEAK BECAUSE OF THIS PRESENT CRISIS OR ANY CRISIS OR PROBLEM YOU ARE FACING TODAY? DO YOU DESPERSATELY NEED STRENGTH TO MOUNT UP OR SOAR ABOVE YOUR PROBLEM OR DIFFICULTY YOU ARE EXPERIENCING TODAY?

PERHAPS, THE ANSWER TO YOUR DILEMMA IS "WAITING"! AND SO THE RIGHT QUESTION IS THIS – ARE WE DILIGENTLY & FAITHFULLY "WAITING" IN THE LORD TODAY? ARE YOU "TRUSTING" THE LORD'S SOVEREIGNTY? ARE YOU "FEEDING" YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE WITH THE WORD & PRAYER? ARE WE "FULFILLING" OUR CALLING & PURPOSE AS PEOPLE OF THE LORD?

CHURCH/FRIENDS, IF THERE ONE LESSON WE HAVE LEARNED TODAY, THIS IS IT – WE CAN BE STRONG & OVERCOME LIFE'S CRISIS & STORMS! THE LORD ASSURES US OF HIS STRENGTH! AS WE "WAIT" ON HIM, AS WE "BIND/WEAVE" OUR LIFE WITH HIS LIFE, HE ASSURES US THAT HE WILL GIVE US STRENGTH WHEN WE HAVE NONE, HE WILL INCREASE OUR STRENGHT WHEN WE HAVE LITTLR, HE WILL RENEW OUR SGTRENGTH WHEN WE ARE FULLY EXHAUSTED OR RUN OUT OF IT.

HE EVEN PROMISE THAT WE WILL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES & FLY ABOVE OUR PROBLEM OR CRISIS. INDEED, ALL THIS WE CAN DO THROUGH WHO THE LORD JESUS WHO IS THE STRENGTH OF OUR HEART! GOD BLESS!

CLOSING PRAYER:

"OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, INDEED, THANK YOU FOR YOU ARE THE STRENGTH OF OUR HEART & OUR LIFE! THANK YOU FOR YOU MADE THIS POSSIBLE THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. IN HIM, WE CAN DO ALL THINGS THAT SEEMS DIFFICULT. WITH HIS LIFE & STREGNTH IN OUR HEARTS, WE KNOW NOW THAT CAN RESIST SIN. WE CAN ENDURE TRIALS & SUFFERINGS. WE CAN OVERCOME TRIALS & ADVERSITIES OF LIFE. WE CAN RISE ABOVE LIFE'S

STORMS & BE SAFE & SECURE IN YOUR SOVEREIGN HNDS, KNOWING YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF ALL THINGS.

FATHER GOD, WE THANK YOU THAT WE ARE SEEING LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL OF THIS CRISIS. MY PRAYERYOU'RE YOUR PEOPLE HERE AT FBC & THOSE JOINING US THIS MORNING IS THAT WE WILL NOT BECOME COMPLACENT OR LAX AS BEGIN TO ENJOY THIS SUMMER BEFORE US. INSTEAD, YOU WILL MAKE CONSCIOUS & CONSIDERSARTE OF OTHERS. AND ALWAYS THINK OF OURS & OTHERS SAFETY & HEALTH. TEACH US SELF-CONTROL & DEISCIPLINE AS WE ENJIY & EXPLORE THIS SUMMER REMENERING THAT A SECONS WAVE OF OUTBREAK COULD POTENTIALLY HAPPEN.