

Shepherding Sermons



When Waiting Feels Like Being Forgotten

A Reflection on Isaiah 40:27–31

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Introduction

There is a weariness that comes not from working too hard, but from waiting too long.

It is the weariness of unanswered prayers. Of circumstances that do not change no matter how faithfully you trust. Of hopes that have been deferred so many times that they no longer feel like hope at all—they feel like evidence that something has gone wrong.

You have prayed. You have waited. You have trusted as best you know how. And still, the thing you have been asking for has not come. The situation you have been enduring has not shifted. The breakthrough you have been anticipating has not arrived.

And somewhere in the long stretch of waiting, a question begins to form. Not loudly. Not dramatically. But persistently. Quietly eroding the foundation you thought was secure.

Does God see? Does He care? Has He forgotten?

You know the right answers. You know what Scripture says about God's faithfulness. You know the theology of providence, of sovereignty, of His perfect timing. You have heard the testimonies of those who waited and eventually received. You have read the passages that promise He does not forget His people.

But knowing the right answers does not eliminate the question. Because the question is not primarily theological. It is experiential. It is born not from doubt about God's character in the abstract, but from the grinding reality of days and months and sometimes years in which nothing changes.

And in that grinding reality, faith becomes difficult to sustain. Not because you have stopped believing in God, but because you are tired. Tired of waiting. Tired of trusting without seeing. Tired of holding on to hope that feels increasingly disconnected from your actual life.

This weariness is rarely spoken about directly in Christian settings. Because admitting that waiting has worn you down can sound like weak faith. Admitting that you are struggling to believe God sees can sound like doubt. Admitting that you sometimes wonder if He has forgotten can sound like something you should repent of rather than something you are simply carrying.

But Isaiah 40 speaks directly into this weariness. Not to shame it, and not to resolve it with quick reassurance. But to name it. To acknowledge it. And to offer something that does not eliminate the waiting but changes what it means to endure it.

This reflection sits with the difficulty of waiting when waiting feels like being forgotten. Not to provide easy answers, but to notice what happens when exhaustion makes faith feel impossible—and what Scripture offers when reassurance is not enough.

Main Reflection

The weariness of waiting is not a failure of faith. It is the natural response to prolonged difficulty without resolution.

You can sustain hope for a season. You can trust through uncertainty for a time. You can hold on to conviction even when circumstances do not align with what you believe God has promised.

But there is a limit to how long that can be sustained without visible confirmation. And when that limit is reached, when the waiting has gone on longer than you thought possible, weariness sets in. Not the weariness that comes from a hard day's work, but the weariness that comes from carrying something you no longer know how to carry.

This weariness is not about losing intellectual belief in God. You still believe He exists. You still affirm His goodness, His power, His sovereignty. But belief and trust are not the same thing. And the weariness of waiting is what happens when belief remains intact but trust has become too costly to maintain.

Because trust requires something belief does not. It requires you to stake your present reality on a future you cannot see. It requires you to continue living as though God will act, even when there is no evidence that He will. It requires you to keep hoping, keep praying, keep waiting—without knowing whether any of it will make a difference.

And that is exhausting. Not because it is difficult in theory, but because it is difficult in practice. Because every day of waiting is another day in which you must choose to trust again. Another day in which you must resist the conclusion that your prayers are not being heard. Another day in which you must hold on to hope that increasingly feels like self-deception.

Many believers who find themselves in this place assume the weariness is their fault. That if they had stronger faith, they would not be struggling. That if they trusted God more fully, the waiting would not feel so heavy. That spiritual maturity is measured by the ability to wait indefinitely without growing weary.

But that assumption misunderstands what faith is. Faith is not the absence of weariness. It is not the ability to wait without struggle. It is not the capacity to remain unaffected by prolonged difficulty.

Faith is what continues even when weariness is present. It is what holds on even when holding on feels impossible. It is what keeps trusting even when trust has become costly rather than comforting.

But here is where the difficulty deepens. Because weariness does not only affect your ability to trust. It affects your perception of God Himself.

When waiting goes on too long without resolution, it becomes difficult to believe that God sees. Not because you have intellectually concluded that He is absent, but because His presence does not feel evident in the circumstances that matter most to you. You pray, and nothing changes. You trust, and nothing shifts. You wait, and nothing arrives.

And over time, the silence begins to feel like indifference. The delay begins to feel like forgetfulness. The waiting begins to feel like abandonment.

This is not a conclusion you want to reach. It is not a belief you are proud of holding. But it is where prolonged waiting often leads. And the fact that you know it is theologically incorrect does not make it emotionally untrue.

You know God has not forgotten. You know He sees. You know He cares. But knowing these things does not change the fact that your experience suggests otherwise. And when experience and theology are in conflict, experience often shapes your functional trust more than theology does.

This creates a kind of internal division. You believe one thing in your mind and feel another thing in your heart. You affirm God's faithfulness in theory while struggling to trust it in practice. You continue to pray even when prayer feels futile, because stopping would feel like giving up—but continuing does not bring the relief you are looking for.

And in that division, shame often enters. Because if you are this weary, if you are struggling this much, if you are questioning whether God sees—then something must be wrong with you. Your faith must be insufficient. Your trust must be inadequate. Your endurance must be failing.

But what if the weariness itself is not the problem? What if prolonged waiting is meant to be difficult, and the difficulty is not evidence of spiritual failure but of human limitation? What if God does not expect you to wait indefinitely without growing weary, and the weariness you are carrying is not something you need to repent of but something you need to bring to Him honestly?

Because Isaiah 40 does not rebuke those who are weary. It does not accuse them of weak faith. It does not suggest that if they trusted more, they would not be struggling.

It simply acknowledges that they are weary. And it offers something—not as a quick fix, but as an invitation to continue even when continuing feels impossible.

But that invitation is not easy to receive. Because by the time weariness has set in, you are not looking for an invitation to keep going. You are looking for resolution. For the thing you have been waiting for to finally arrive. For the waiting itself to end.

And when resolution does not come, when the waiting continues, the invitation to keep trusting can feel like one more demand you do not have the strength to meet.

Scripture Deep Dive

Isaiah 40:27–31 says:

"Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

The passage begins by naming the complaint. Not dismissing it, but naming it. "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God."

This is the voice of those who feel forgotten. Those who believe their circumstances have gone unnoticed. Those who are convinced that God is not paying attention to what they are enduring.

The passage does not rebuke this complaint. It does not accuse those who feel this way of being unfaithful. It simply names what they are saying—and then responds not with shame, but with reminder.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth."

This is not new information. The people already know this. They have heard it before. But the reminder matters because weariness distorts perception. It makes you forget what you once knew. It makes truth feel distant even when it is still true.

The passage continues: "He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable."

This is meant to be comfort, but it can feel like distance. Because the fact that God does not grow weary highlights the reality that you do. The fact that His understanding is unsearchable means that you do not—and cannot—fully grasp why the waiting continues.

And yet, the passage insists that this is part of what makes Him trustworthy. Not that He explains Himself, but that He does not need to. Not that He eliminates the waiting, but that He sustains you through it.

"He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength."

This is the shift. The passage does not promise that God will remove the difficulty. It promises that He will give strength to those who are already exhausted. Power to those who have none left. And the giving is not conditional on them being strong enough to receive it—it is offered precisely because they are not.

"Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted."

This acknowledgment matters. Because it removes the assumption that weariness is a sign of spiritual failure. Even the young—those who should have the most strength, the most endurance—will grow weary. Weariness is not evidence of weak faith. It is evidence of being human.

And then comes the promise: "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

This is often read as a promise of immediate renewal. As though waiting for the Lord guarantees that exhaustion will be replaced by energy, that weariness will give way to soaring.

But the passage does not promise that the waiting will end. It promises that those who wait will be renewed. And renewal is not the same as resolution.

Renewal means strength to continue, not strength to arrive. It means the capacity to keep going, not the elimination of difficulty. It means endurance that is sustained not by your own resources, but by God's provision.

The imagery matters. "Mount up with wings like eagles; run and not be weary; walk and not faint."

These are not all the same activity. Mounting up with wings is dramatic, visible, soaring. Running is active, forward motion. But walking is slower. Steadier. Less impressive.

And the passage includes all three. Because sometimes renewal looks like soaring. Sometimes it looks like running. And sometimes it looks like simply being able to walk—to continue moving forward, even when forward motion is slow and the path ahead is still long.

This is not the kind of promise that eliminates weariness. It is the kind of promise that sustains you through it. And for those who are already exhausted, that may not feel like enough.

Because what you want is not strength to keep waiting. What you want is for the waiting to end. What you want is resolution, not endurance. What you want is arrival, not the capacity to continue.

But the passage does not promise arrival on your timeline. It promises presence. It promises strength. It promises renewal that comes not from within you, but from the One who does not grow weary.

And the invitation is not to muster more strength on your own. It is to wait for the Lord. To remain in relationship with Him even when the relationship does not produce the outcomes you are hoping for. To trust that He sees even when your circumstances suggest He does not.

That kind of waiting is costly. It is not passive. It is not easy. And it does not eliminate the weariness you are carrying.

But it offers something that weariness alone cannot provide: the possibility that you can continue even when you feel you cannot. That strength can be renewed even when you have none left. That waiting, though difficult, is not the same as being forgotten.

Discussion Questions

1. Where in your life has prolonged waiting made you wonder whether God sees or cares? What does that wondering feel like?
2. How have you responded to weariness in your faith? Have you treated it as something to repent of, or as something to bring honestly to God?
3. What is the difference between resolution and renewal? Where have you been asking God for resolution when He may be offering renewal instead?
4. In what ways have you been trying to sustain your own strength rather than waiting for the Lord to renew it?
5. What would it look like to continue trusting even when trust feels costly, without demanding that the waiting end immediately?

Prayer & Application

Everlasting God,

You do not grow weary, and we do. You do not faint, and we are exhausted. You see what is hidden from us, and we feel forgotten.

We confess that waiting has worn us down. That prolonged difficulty has made it hard to believe You are paying attention. That the silence has sometimes felt like indifference, and the delay has sometimes felt like abandonment.

Forgive us for the ways we have treated weariness as failure. For the ways we have assumed that if we trusted more, we would not be struggling. For the ways we have tried to sustain ourselves rather than waiting for You to renew our strength.

We do not know how to keep trusting when trust has become this costly. We do not know how to keep hoping when hope feels disconnected from reality. We do not know how to keep waiting when waiting feels like being forgotten.

But You do. And so we ask: give power to the faint. Increase strength to those who have no might. Renew us—not so that we can soar, but so that we can walk. So that we can continue. So that we can endure one more day without giving up entirely.

We do not need You to explain why the waiting continues. We need You to sustain us through it. We do not need resolution on our timeline. We need the assurance that we have not been forgotten. That You see. That You care. That the waiting, though long, is not the end of the story.

In the name of Jesus, who knows what it is to wait, to endure, and to trust the Father even when the path is unclear. Amen.

A Quiet Invitation

If you are weary from waiting, this passage is for you. If you have wondered whether God sees, this reminder is offered to you. If you are exhausted from trying to sustain faith on your own strength, this invitation to wait for the Lord is meant for you.

Waiting for the Lord is not the same as passive resignation. It is not giving up. It is not accepting that nothing will ever change. It is the active choice to remain in relationship with

God even when the relationship does not immediately produce what you are hoping for.

And the promise is not that the waiting will end right away. The promise is that those who wait will be renewed. That strength will be given to the faint. That you can continue even when you feel you cannot.

This week, when the weariness presses in and the question arises—Does He see? Has He forgotten?—return to this passage. Read it slowly. Not as a test of your faith, but as a reminder of His character.

Because God does not grow weary. He does not faint. He does not forget. And He gives strength to those who have none left—not because they have earned it, but because He is faithful.

Next Steps

If this reflection has named something you are carrying, we invite you to:

- Acknowledge the weariness honestly rather than treating it as something to repent of—bring it to God as it is, without shame
- Read Isaiah 40:27–31 slowly this week, noticing where the passage speaks to the specific place of waiting you are in
- Visit shepherdingministry.org for additional resources on trusting God through prolonged difficulty and learning to wait without growing bitter

These reflections are offered as companions, not corrections. You do not need to have your weariness resolved before you bring it to God. You do not need to pretend the waiting is easier than it is. You do not need to muster strength you do not have.

The invitation is simply to wait for the Lord. Not to wait alone, but to wait in relationship with the One who does not grow weary and who promises to renew those who do.

About This Series

Shepherding Sermons is a weekly series of short pastoral reflections written for those who want to take Scripture seriously without living anxiously before God.

This series is rooted in the conviction that fear was never meant to govern faith. Scripture invites trust, responsibility, and honest relationship with God—without pressure, panic, or coercion. Each sermon is shaped to be read slowly, with care for those who have been worn down by fear-based teaching or who are learning to trust God again.

Shepherding Sermons does not aim to argue, persuade, or rush spiritual conclusions. It returns again and again to Scripture read in context, allowing God's character—revealed most clearly in Jesus Christ—to remain central. Where faithful Christians have disagreed, this series seeks clarity without hostility and conviction without fear.

These reflections are offered as companions rather than instructions. They are meant to create space for steady faith, thoughtful obedience, and repentance without shame. No urgency is demanded. No emotional response is required.

If you are tired, uncertain, or quietly rebuilding trust, you are welcome here. This series is written to walk alongside—not to drive forward.

Additional resources and related teachings can be found at shepherdingministry.org