

## The Sermon Of The Stars.

Text: Isa 40:26-31

Suggested Hymns:

461, 444, 143, 284, 458

- 1) Of The Wisdom And The Power Of The Creator
- 2) Of The Folly Of Doubt
- 3) The Blessedness Of Those Who Trust In God's Promises

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Isaiah 40:26-31 <sup>26</sup> *Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.*

<sup>27</sup> *Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God"?* <sup>28</sup> *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

<sup>29</sup> *He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength.* <sup>30</sup> *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall,* <sup>31</sup> *But those who wait on 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.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

*Jubilate* is the Latin name for this Sunday. It means rejoice and is taken from the opening words of the Introit for the day, <sup>1</sup> *Shout loudly to God, all the earth!* <sup>2</sup> *Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious!*

And why shouldn't we rejoice when we know and have again heard the joyous news that God raised Jesus from the dead, that sin is atoned for, our iniquity is pardoned, and eternal life is secured?

We see the working of His almighty power when He raised Christ from the dead; we see His marvellous wisdom and His unlimited power in the glorious

works of creation, all of which is a guarantee for us of the deliverance and preservation of God's people.

The Prophet, in our text, tells us look up and see the stars, the power and wisdom of the Creator which they reveal, and the comforting assurance which is to be drawn from them. Let us, therefore, on the basis of our text, consider the *Sermon of the Stars*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. The Stars Preach Of The Wisdom And The Power Of The Creator**

Our text begins, <sup>26</sup> *Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.*

First, we are directed to look to the heavens and the stars. We know the answer to the question "Who created all these?" God did, of course, but God did not simply create the world and then let it continue on its own power. He continues to care for the created world. God controls the motion of the stars of heaven.

Astronomy studies the movements of the stars in the vast expanse of the universe, but God determines the movement. We talk of galaxies and planets; God controls them all. He controls the movement of the stars as a general would control his army. But God does not control them with impersonal detachment. He knows each heavenly body by name.

What a contrast to those who think that the stars control their destinies and who consult their horoscopes to discover what life will bring them. God controls the stars and us; the orbits of the planets. The stars do not control us.

Look up at the sky on some clear night. A look into the starry sky humbles us. Then remember that the stars of heaven have God's personal attention. He calls them all by name, as a father would call his children by name. So powerful, vast, and loving is our God.

Again, go out in the stillness of the night; lift up your eyes and see the ever-reoccurring miracle on the firmament of heaven studded with stars great and small, with brilliant constellations, with myriads of shining luminaries twinkling

in the skies, changing their position as the hours and the seasons pass, but never failing to appear at their designated post.

Is it mere chance? Is it only the unchanging law of nature? Is it the final outcome of an evolutionary process extending over millions and billions of years? Indeed not. Lift up your eyes and see who has created these things. See in the glories of nature the revelation of the almighty Creator.

*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*<sup>1</sup> And in Psalm 97:6 we read, <sup>6</sup> *The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples see His glory.* Take notice of what kind of Being it is that created the hosts of heaven. He cannot be seen; He is invisible. But His works declare His infinite power and wisdom.

As we read these words, we are impressed with the majesty of our God. Like a shepherd of an unnumbered flock, He nightly leads the vast number of stars from their fold like sheep to the pasture, and this in the most perfect order.

He calls them all. Our text says that “*He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.*” Would you miss an individual star? You hardly know of its existence, much less of its exact position except for the largest and most prominent stars.

God knows the exact number of a host that to us is absolutely numberless; what is more, He gives each one its name, a name that fits that star and expresses God’s intent concerning it.

And now when you go out at night, do not fail to see with the eyes of faith this ever-continuing, ever-reoccurring, overwhelming demonstration of the infinite wisdom and the limitless power of God who created heaven and earth.

The hymnist Johann Wilhelm Hey wrote,

*Can you count the stars that glimmer,  
Softly on the distant sky,  
And the clouds that hide their shimmer,  
When the raging storms are nigh?  
God on high, who never slumbers,  
Counts them all and knows their numbers,  
And He guides and rules them all.*

Thus the stars preach a sermon. Likewise as recorded in Psalm 147:4-5, <sup>4</sup> *He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.* <sup>5</sup> *Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.* What a comforting and reassuring sermon so necessary to the children of God in the misery of their sin, and in their countless afflictions and trials.

God who numbers the stars is wise enough to have a solution for your problems, no matter how difficult they may be. God who created the stars and daily leads them forth is powerful enough to deliver and sustain you in any emergency.

But can we be comforted? Or do we have justification for doubting the willingness and the ability of the Lord? The stars furthermore preach a sermon on the folly of doubt in the Lord's gracious promises.

## **2. The Stars Preach Of The Folly Of Doubt**

Our text says, <sup>27</sup> *Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God"?*

All too often we fail to depend on God's power and tender interest in the affairs of His created world. God's people are not beyond complaining that such a powerful and boundless God has forgotten them. Jacob and Israel are terms of endearment, showing the love and affection God has for His people. God cared for Jacob, blessed him, and protected him. God wrestled with him and changed his name to Israel.

Then God repeated the promise that the Saviour would come through his descendants. All this God did out of grace and mercy. Jacob did not deserve any of it. When Jacob's descendants became the nation of Israel and left Egypt, God continued to care for them. God marked every phase of their history with His gracious care.

How can people bearing His name keep on speaking as they do, saying, *"My way, my lot, is hidden from the Lord, my situation escapes Him; He seemingly has overlooked me and my pitiful condition?"*

And my judgment is passed over from God, my legal claim to His help on the basis of His promises are seemingly ignored by God. That was Israel's

unwarranted complaint. So then why make it? How could God be guilty of such neglect “*who keeps, an eye on everyone of the starry host and sees to it that night after night not a single one is missing?*”

But you and I are often inclined to complain with Israel of old, “***The LORD has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me.***”<sup>2</sup> ***For I said in my haste, “I am cut off from before Your eyes.”***<sup>3</sup> How often are not cross-bearers prompted to think and perhaps to say, *The Lord seems to be too busy for me. He either does not know of my sorrow, or He is not willing to do anything about it. He is simply turning a deaf ear to my cry.*

Listen to the Lord in our text,<sup>28</sup> ***Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*** Don’t you realise this, was it never preached to you? Why, it was preached to Israel again and again, and we have it in God’s sure and certain Word.

What is it that we should realise and that we have heard so often that we cannot count the number of times it was proclaimed? That the everlasting God never changes, but is always the same, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who called the universe into being and rules it with almighty power, and neither faints nor is weary.

How can such a powerful, eternal Being, the Ruler and Creator and Preserver of all, ever grow faint or show a decline of strength for want of nourishment or from exhaustion. That is impossible with Him who is always the same and changes not.

Nor can we search out His understating and know the mind of God. We judge by appearances; we know in part; but God’s wisdom is infinite and absolute. He makes no mistakes. He overlooks nothing. He forgets no appointment. He fails in no responsibility.

God may delay His help, but in the end His wisdom and power are always revealed, and we appear foolish with our doubts and fears. Therefore it is absolute folly to doubt God’s promises. That is the sermon of the stars. And it is all the more unnecessary and foolish because the stars proclaim to us the blessedness of those who trust in God’s promises.

### 3. The Stars Proclaim

#### The Blessedness Of Those Who Trust In God's Promises

Far from fainting and growing weary and weak Himself, God is rather the source of never-failing strength for His children. To the faint He gives power every time the need arises; and to those who are weak, who are powerless, He gives an abundance of strength.

How can we receive such a gift from the Lord? *Those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength.* Faith in the Lord brings this strength. When we rely on human strength, we will stumble. When we trust in the Lord for strength, He gives it. Not only will believers receive strength; they will renew their strength.

That happens in the physical sense. People who are sick and dying, beyond hope perhaps of recovery, receive new courage and strength. But we think especially of spiritual strength, of faith, of hope, of perseverance in trials of the soul, of victory in the battle against the forces of darkness.

And how gloriously is the renewing of strength described in our text, *They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.* Eagles are birds of prey and are known for their seemingly endless power of sustained and lofty flight among mountain tops.

Believers are pictured as eagles soaring in the blue sky. Eagles ride the air currents as they stretch out their wings and soar. God promises to be the wind beneath the wings of His people. What wonderful comfort for all *“who wait on the LORD!*

*They shall run,* like runners in a race, never wearying, never tiring. *They shall walk,* walk fast perhaps for a long and tiresome distance, and yet *“not faint”* and become exhausted.

Yes, that is the powerful and comforting sermon of the stars. They preach eloquently in their silent lustre, of the wisdom and the power of a God who is the very source and fountain of sustaining strength.

*“Are you weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge, Take it to the Lord in prayer.”<sup>4</sup>* Go to His Word and hear in 2 Corinthians 12:9, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is*

*made perfect in weakness.*” Have you a task to perform which is difficult, a task that seems impossible for you? Wait on the Lord, the all-wise and all-powerful and you can rejoice in the words of Philippians 4:13, <sup>13</sup> *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Far from fainting Himself, Jehovah is rather the Strengtheners of those who have become faint. Yes, you say, my but my case is unique. I have problems that people simply cannot solve. Is God not the all-wise? Is Christ not called Wonderful, Counsellor? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Do you need forgiveness? Strengthening of your faith? Courage to resist temptation? Inspiration to carry on?

Then look to the stars and see in them the proof of the existence of an all-wise, all-powerful God who is your Lord and Creator, who raised your Saviour from the dead, and who is always ready and always willing to help you.

In summary, through the stars God reveals **four** important truths about Himself.

First, God is the Creator. He has unlimited power and uses that power for the benefit of His creatures. He gives us life and provides a beautiful world to live in.

Second, God does not become tired or weary. His power was not exhausted by creation nor does He grow tired with the continuous care of the world He called into existence.

Third, God is beyond human ability to grasp and understand. He is holy. The full truth about God lies beyond our empirical investigation. God must reveal Himself if we are to know anything about Him beyond the fact that He exists and He is great.

Fourth, God gives strength to the weary and weak. God turns Himself toward His creatures. He gives blessings to them out of love for them.

So trust Him. Trust His word. The Psalmist says in Psalm 37:5, <sup>5</sup> *Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.*

You will, by the use of Word and Sacrament, by diligent prayer, renew your strength, increase your faith, and receive day by day blessing in body and soul.

You will fight the good fight of faith, run your prescribed course, and in the end will overcome and obtain the victory.

And we read in Revelation 2:7, *To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*

May the Lord, make us ever more ready to hear and heed the sermon of the stars until we reach our glorious home beyond the stars, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 19:1

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 49:14

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 31:22

<sup>4</sup> Hymn 426