

The driver of the 18 wheeler decided to not stay in his lane on 1-65 going north to Huntsville. So he just pulled over and knocked me in my chevette across two lanes of traffic. I don't know why my car did not turn over. Once I saw he was going to hit me, I did try to get out of the way. I was over on the side of the road. About 200 yards down the road, the truck stopped. I drove up and parked behind the truck. The driver got out with the words, "I had my blinker on." To which I replied, "Well, that doesn't give you the right to run over me." He was very nervous and wanted to go on, but I insisted we would wait for the police. The other driver in the truck came back and explained that the driver who hit me was on probation. If he got an accident report, he would lose his job. "That's too bad, but I don't have the money to fix my car." The driver promised to send me the money. He would get paid in two weeks. That would give me time to get an estimate and mail it to him. It was a tough situation. The pressure on me was that I was to pick up David at elementary school, and I was running out of time. No police in sight. Finally I wrote down their names and license numbers and addresses. I would get an estimate and send it. If I got no money, I would contact the trucking firm and go from there. I drove off, believing that I would just drive that bent up car until it died. I did send the estimate. I got a letter back saying that the driver did not make enough money and it would be two more weeks before he could pay the bill. Really!! At the end of two weeks, I got a check in the mail for the cost of fixing my car. The check was good. I would not recommend placing that sort of trust in strangers in an 18 wheeler. I am still amazed when I think back on that. One, that the wreck didn't just kill me. The other, that I would place trust in a total stranger and that the guy actually paid to fix my car.

Where do you place your trust? That is something we do all the time, isn't it? We trust the credit card company, the bank, and the ATM. We trust Alabama Power and the gas company. We trust our children to teachers, coaches, friends and neighbors. We know what it is to place our trust in marriage partners, business partners and friends. Trust is important in our lives.

Our text from II Isaiah today is about trust. The captives in Babylon are fearful that their scattered remnant would disappear as a nation. Cyrus has crushed his enemies. What is going to happen to them? Cyrus will actually set them free to return to their homeland. Isaiah appeals to their sense of history. Isaiah turns their attention to a power beyond themselves – a power beyond Cyrus. Isaiah reminds the released captives that the one who created the stars and their courses can be trusted to preserve God's people. They will not be lost. The Hebrew people were finding it difficult to draw comfort from the contemporary scene. They were having trouble placing trust in the midst of a difficult situation. Isaiah reminds them that the one who created, the one who keeps the creation in order – stars, moon, sun – this one can be trusted. The dependable order of the heavens reflect the reliability of the creator. It is a tough time. Isaiah is trying to get the released captives to place trust in God.

Sometimes, when the world seems to be crumbling, we find it in us to make a stand. Martin Luther standing before the accusers of the church said, "God, help me, I can do no other." Placing trust. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I may not get there with you, but I have been to the top of the mountain." Placing trust.

Sometimes, placing trust is hard. We want to just reason it out. Remember Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father, let this cup pass. However, your will, not mine be done!" Placing trust.

The shortest line is not always straight. Frustrations age us. Whether young or old, these released Jewish captives – and we 20th century men and women – get caught and imprisoned by barriers to our hopes. Our Hopes seem out of reach. Isaiah is reminding the released captives – and I think

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reminding us – that what we need is to place our trust. This God is everlasting. God does not faint or grow weary as we do. Remember the Hebrew people in bondage in Egypt. God spoke to Moses and said, “I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.” Baffled people often exclaim, “God Knows.” Do you know that expression? Have you ever been at the end of the line and your only hope was “God Knows.” It may be puzzling to us, but to say God understands is to rest upon this passage from Isaiah for today. We rest upon a wisdom kinder and more discerning than our own. “God gives power to the faint and strengthens those with no power.” To wait for the Lord is contrasted in the prophet’s mind with watching current events. The world was rocking under the campaign of Cyrus. Their neighbors and the Jews themselves were asking, “What Next?” To this question, Isaiah reminds them that the answer does not come from the events themselves. It is as they are able to place trust in God and understand that they need to see the events in the light of the Everlasting God. As they wait for the Lord, they realize that God was at hand in the shattering victory of the Persians. Isaiah’s interpretation was that God was using the events to make possible their liberation from bondage.

People of Israel, prepare to leave. Prepare to go home. It will be a long journey and the homeland will be in ruins. The temple has been destroyed. But God will give power to the faint and God will strengthen the powerless. People of faith know the symbol and praise of God as wings. We sing “God will raise us up on eagle wings.” We know that symbol. As a young person, at church we often sang, “Love lifted me.” We hear the words that those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. I like those words, I like those symbols. But it has been my experience that the main company of God’s people neither fly nor do they run. The largest part of the world’s most useful work is accomplished by plodders – Sunday School teachers, committee members, ministers, missionaries, non-profit workers, tutors, counselors. They are doctors and nurses, shop keepers. They are people who walk – and they do their job day by day.

I believe that we are the People of God as we are able to hear the words of Isaiah and place our trust in the Everlasting God.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow weary. God’s understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those 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.”

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