

Introduction

1. JR Tolkien wrote the trilogy “The Lord of the Rings”
 - a. It’s the story of a boy named Frodo, whose mission is to destroy this special ring, that has the potential of doing great evil in the world
 - b. His journey is difficult – He is tempted with the evil power this ring could give him, he fights these monster things called orcs, he is attacked by a giant spider, his strength is zapped, he is tired, he cannot go on
 - c. And then, when the ring is finally destroyed, he is deserted on a rock with hot lava all around him – it would appear that he has certainly met his defeat
 - d. And then the eagles come – they gently pick up Frodo’s limp and almost lifeless body – and carry him off to his salvation, to his healing

- I. **While JR Tolkien does a masterful job with this story, our lives are not a story – they are real!**
 - A. We may not fight orcs or get bitten by a giant spider, but our life can be very difficult, and we do get very weary

 - B. Think about the Gospel Reading today – and the “lack of strength” described
 - i. There was Peter’s mother-in-law – dealing with a fever and sickness, which could even lead to her death
 - ii. There were those attacked by the demons and Satan
 - iii. These people were tired, they were weary, they were dealing with very difficult situations in life – like us

 - C. Isaiah was written about 600 years before Christ – and look how he describes life in our Old Testament Reading
 - i. He talks about youths faint and weary
 1. One may think, “Ah, the carefree life of being a teenager”
 2. But those who are teenagers know life is not always so carefree
 3. There’s the energy of getting good grades, the ups and downs of relationships, there’s trying to figure out what life is all about and what they want to do for the rest of their lives
 - ii. Isaiah says the young men shall fall exhausted
 1. Think of the man or woman in her 20’s –
 2. Trying to build a career
 3. Trying to prove yourself at work
 4. Working on a new marriage, establishing a home

5. Trying to raise young children, trying to make ends meet
- iii. Let's face it, no matter how young or old we are – we grow weary, we feel faint with life, we feel so very weak at times
 1. Why? Why do we feel so tired, and weary, and worn-out?
 2. Why do we often feel hopeless and helpless, depressed and zapped of energy or motivation, struggling with our lives and purpose?
 3. Because this world is fallen and destroyed by sin and death
 4. It's not global warming, it's not "bad karma", it's not fate, it's not the lining up of the stars – it's the FALL, the rebellion of mankind, it's sin against God

II. Do you think God has deserted you? Do you feel God has left us? Do you think God cannot do anything about our awful condition?

- A. These are the questions being asked in Isaiah's day
 - i. A great enemy, Assyria, was on the prowl, coming to war
 - ii. Israel was about to be destroyed: homes, children, worship places, businesses, lives!
 - iii. They were feeling God-forsaken; they were feeling deserted; in spite of their outright rebellion against God, now they were feeling left by God
- B. And Isaiah says...
 - i. Do you not know? Do you not hear?
 - ii. This God whom you doubt – laid down the foundations of the world
 - iii. This God whom you feel has deserted you – sits above the circle of the earth
 - iv. This God whom you even doubt His existence – destroys evil rulers on the earth
 - v. This God can blow on His enemies – and they wither and fly away like stubble in an open ND grain field
 - vi. This God whom you sometimes think is weak and helpless – He created all that exists: the mountains, the lakes, the human body, gravity, physics, light, animals, and more...
- C. OK – it's nice to know God has not deserted us, but how is He going to help us?
 - i. I'm glad you asked!
 - ii. While an eagle can soar higher than any bird, he also comes close to the earth, skimming the waters and landing on the field

- iii. Jesus is God – soaring higher than anything that exists, for He is God and lives in heaven
- iv. AND YET – He came to earth, not skimming this earth, but BECOMING US!
- v. God comes to earth and grows faint on the cross
- vi. God comes to earth and His strength is whipped out of Him
- vii. God comes to earth and He is weary on His journey to Calvary
- viii. God comes to earth and is exhausted on the cross and asks for a drink
- ix. God comes to earth and takes on man's greatest exhaustion, and takes on man's most awful faint = He takes our sins... He takes our death
- x. And three days later – He soars once again, rising from the dead, and giving defeat to everlasting weakness and eternal weariness

D. Jesus did not come to earth to suffer and die to give some grand display of how great He is – like some marvelous show of fireworks...

- i. He came to save us – He came to save you
- ii. He came to renew your strength
- iii. He came to raise you from your weariness
- iv. He came to lift you from the exhaustion of this sinful and fallen and dying world
- v. When you're tired at the end of the day, when you're weary in raising your children, when you're anxious about your future, when you're tired in a struggling marriage, when you're faint with a body wearing out
- vi. This is why Jesus has come! To renew you! To strengthen you! To renew your strength!

E. When you were baptized – God, like an eagle out of heaven, God came and descended upon you – for life – never to leave you

- i. When you come to receive the Lord's Body and Blood – God comes from heaven and places Himself in this Bread and this wine – in order to renew your strength
- ii. When you hear His Word, when you meditate upon Scripture – God, like an eagle soaring out of heaven – comes personally to you and renews your strength
- iii. He doesn't come to renew us through acupuncture or hot stone massages; He doesn't come to renew us through helping us to "think ourselves healthy", He doesn't come to renew us with some grand stimulus package...
- iv. He comes dying for us, and rising for us
- v. He comes forgiving all our sins, He comes raising our bodies from death, He comes with comfort and peace of

salvation, He comes with the certain hope of heaven for all eternity for all who believe in Him

Conclusion

1. I know – we want to experience the fullness of this renewed strength right now
2. But like Frodo – in the “Lord of the Rings” – we are still on the journey, we are still in this fallen world
3. And yet, with a purpose, with a hope, with a peace – of knowing WE are not in control, GOD IS
4. Using the analogy of an eagle – I wonder how many times we think we can fly on our own, without God → I know when I begin feeling like that, I feel more anxious, I get distressed, and while I try to be in control, things are out of control
5. We are weak and helpless, and God soars out of heaven to save us
 - a. With Him – we don’t need to fly = He flies for us
 - b. Jesus is like an eagle, we are mounted on His wings, in absolute safety, and He carries us through life
6. But that’s not all – there IS an eternity, and there IS a heaven
 - a. And on the last day – God will come soaring out of heaven once again, like an eagle
 - b. He will descend to our grave, call us forth, and we will mount on His wings, and He will take us to heaven – and we will live there with Him forever and ever
 - c. And there – we will always be strong, there we will always be alive, there we will always be healthy, there we will always be glad, there we will always be at peace
7. This Jesus – and through Him alone – He shall renew your strength!
8. Go – and soar in Christ! Amen.