

Call to worship God for his great love to us:

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Prayer meeting with our Lord God:

Our Father you invite us into your presence and to address you as our Father, even as Abba, Daddy, as the Holy Spirit helps us in our human frailty. You have told us we are a new creation, citizens, and family members of all who are part of this glorious new world, you are making. Help us to understand more of this gift and live worthy of it. In Jesus Name.

Hymn: *by Walter Smith*

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.
3. To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish but naught changeth thee.
4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Message to believers: 'Wear out the saints' Daniel 7.25

Word study:

Daniel 7.25 is a prophetic statement loaded with warning as well as promise. Link it to Revelation 13.7. The Hebrew word, 'weary' is in some translations 'wear out' or 'wear down'. Others use 'oppress'. When Daniel was translated from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek between 285-247 BC the word chosen was the same as the one Jesus chose in Matthew 24.4,5,11, and 24 for His warning to the disciples and to all

saints both of how the enemy would operate and how to overcome. This Greek word has the idea of 'drifting' or 'wandering away' from Jesus and thus being deceived by Satan. The pressures and influences upon the saints are thus aimed at 'wearing them down' from their sacred truth and standing.

This statement is one of several in Daniel which is taken up in Revelation to encourage believers. Yes, it is a statement helping believers to understand what is going on around them and even why they feel as they do. Don't take them lightly. Don't let yourself become worn down.

Message of encouragement and strength:

Aircraft engineers design wings to maximise lift, speed and manoeuvrability and to overcome drag in aircraft. The designer of the famous Spitfire, R.J. Mitchell, as he worked on what became an iconic fighter plane significant in winning the Battle of Britain found a special elliptical-shaped wing was ideal for his Spitfire.

Wing drag versus wing effectiveness is an image of two forces operating with Christians today. One holds us down the other lifts us to life effectiveness. One is darkness and lies. The other is forgiveness and a life of sanctification, doing life with Jesus the Lord of Life.

There are two powerful but unequal forces operating in a Christian's life. One is to dull us. The other is to excite us. One to lukewarm us, the other to stir us heavenward. The former from the earth, the latter from heaven. There is much in the Bible on this subject.

Right from the beginning the dulling or drag force has been around. Daniel states it very simply; *He shall speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most Highⁱ*, Daniel actually shows that this is not just a now-and-then thing, it is the ongoing ploy of Satan against the precious people of Jesus through the whole of history.

Do you sometimes feel wearied and down, and even hear that dark thought drifting across your mind; 'is it really worth it?' there it is, right there, exactly what the Bible is talking about.

But on the other hand, Heaven is working too, in you and around you, to promote the kingdom of God in and with you. There are many Bible insight encouragements for us, but here is just one;

Do not let your zeal subside; keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.ⁱⁱ This is the life goal working in you to accomplish the Lord's purposes in your life.

Many years ago I was working on a farm during my University vacation to earn some money. I was helping a young farmer harvest his crop using the old bagging methods. It was hot, dusty, and frankly boring and my mind was floating off into other worlds. I was a relatively new Christian keen to find God's will for my life.

This particular day was a drag. But looking up as I saw the young farmer on his header, I realised he was desperate for his small farm to get somewhere for his young family. Suddenly a new thought seized me. 'Get into it, throw yourself into the work, make of it something!' There and then my attitude changed – vigour emerged, I bumped those wheat bags up and down with purpose and energy, my whole day changed from dull to bright and so did the rest of the daily farm work on that vac.

I know now what happened. It was the zeal of God as promised. Propelling me through and out of the enemy's lies to keep me down and dull and ineffective. And that has occurred countless times in so many different ways through my life.

Today more than ever the saints are pushed into weariness. The drift of the enemy. When the book of Daniel was translated from Hebrew to Greek the word chosen for 'weary' was 'drift'. It means to be deceived. Deceived that the ways of God's law, promises and daily life were not to be trusted. Deceitful because without them there is just dragging down, lukewarmness, and ultimately death.

Replacing love over bitterness or even indifference brings hope and life. The Holy Spirit tugs on us to keep on with what we have been told to do. Get to church and serve to stir up your brothers and sisters with gentle words of encouragement and helpfulness. You are called to this.

I believe we are entering a period of history before our Lord's return when Satan is pouring all his resources of lies and deceit and even intimidation to 'wear down' the true saints, trying to prevent you from proceeding on with the liberating kingdom lifestyle our Lord has redeemed you for. Jesus is glorifying himself in your life and mine to show what he can accomplish on the Day of glorification in you.

Or your business or employer demands or social, sporting group, or your unfulfilled aspirations, and inner desires, may have led you away from trusting Jesus. These are all part of the pressure to wear you down. Disappointment through relationship problems and failures of trust especially with other Christians – all these are common 'wearing down' phenomena.

All over at present Christians are wearing out. Even in families where once Christian conversation was the norm, in the next generation, it is taboo.

Of course in some parts of the world this wearing down is systemic and often violent. In countries like ours, it is simply a way of life. No time for that which was once important, significant and cherished. It becomes awkward to even talk about Jesus. This is the wearing down of God's people and it is going on with vigour in our culture.

Don't be wearied, be aglow with the Spirit. Day by day.

Meditation and renewal:

Have you felt pressures working against you forcing you to give up what was once important, even treasured by you? You may be married to someone less interested, maybe intolerant of the Bible, of fellowship with believers and attending church: Your Bible is no longer kept on the bedside table. You have given up on church, for the sake of peace, even on saying Thank you – grace at meal time. You feel a sense of loss deep in your soul.

Prayer:

Dear Father please forgive my lukewarmness before you. It's time in my life to have changes for the good, changes which please you and changes which I will trust your Holy Spirit to guide and establish me. Help me to bear any opposition, calm my fears and grant me Godly perseverance in Jesus' Name. Amen

Conclusion:

Whatever your situation, now is the time to quit compromise and remembering what you once believed and knew, return to the Lord, refuse to be wearied, lied to and worn down by attitudes and forces that have leached out genuine love of God from your soul. Turn today and be assured of cleansing and direction for this new path that the Lord will care for and lead you in.

Prayer:

I thank you Lord Jesus for changing my life to your glory and my joy. Amen

Hymn: *by JohnMonsell*

1. Fight the good fight with all your might,
Christ is your strength and Christ your right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
your joy and crown eternally.
2. Run the straight race through God's good grace;
lift up your eyes, and seek his face.
Life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the path and Christ the prize.
3. Cast care aside, lean on your guide;
his boundless mercy will provide.
Lean, and the trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life and Christ its love.
4. Faint not, nor fear, his arms are near;
he changes not, and you are dear.
Only believe, and you will see
that Christ is Lord eternally.

Benediction:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amenⁱⁱⁱ

This service was prepared for HopeNet SA by Rev Ian Clarkson

ⁱ Daniel 7.25

ⁱⁱ Romans 12.11

ⁱⁱⁱ Ephesians 3:20