

INTRODUCTION 引言

The 2024 Summer Olympic has begun two days ago. Athletes from all over the world will compete in 329 events. Only the best contestants will win. The motto for the Olympic says it all. The original version was written in 1894. It consists of three Latin words: Citius, Altius, Fortius. Meaning: faster, higher and stronger. Like sports, like life. The world is full of competitions. In school, at work and in traffic. The most capable survivors will prevail. The good news for Christians is that God is on our side. Today is our annual Youth Sunday. A few young people will go to college. The next few years will be a different ball game to them. The messages in the book of Isaiah are encouragements to them as much as to us. Most of us have completed formal education. There will be no more exam. But life is full of tests. In Isaiah's time, God's people faced challenges like social problems, moral decline, threats from foreign nations. Besides, people saw their relationship with God like a weekend routine. The Bible says: there is nothing new under the sun. We are dealing with the same troubles today. But God's Word is a timeless truth. His reminders to the Jews in 700 BC are still valid to us. Only by relying on God can we run faster, jump higher and lift stronger.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Power Source 能力的泉源

God told the Israelites that He was their ultimate power source. God quotes their complaints in verse 27: **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"?** The Israelites felt that God was unaware of their problems and He did not come to their rescue. They looked for God only when they were in troubles. We have a similar attitude. We say to God: "Please don't bother me when I'm doing fine. But where were you when I was hurting?" God assured His people that He had never changed. He replies in verse 28: **Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth...** Here, we see the two most common titles for God in the Bible. The Hebrew word for God is "Elohim." It describes Him as a powerful being. The verse talks about God's work as a Creator. In Genesis, God spoke and things came into existence. Besides, God is also the Lord. The Hebrew word is "Jehovah." It underscores God's role as a covenant maker. He initiated an eternal relationship with people. This mighty God uses His power to create the whole universe, maintain the world and care for His children. God continues in the second half of verse 28: **...He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.** Unlike us, God will never feel tired. He is unlimited in power and wisdom. Moreover, He uses His power wisely. You can light a fire and burn up

a gallon of gasoline in minutes. You can also add the fuel to your car and drive for twenty miles. The difference depends on how you release the potential power in that liquid. God exercises His power according to His plans. The Israelites blamed God for not using His power to help them. Very often we feel the same way. But even when God seems to be silent and idle does not mean that He turns off His power. The whole Bible is a testimony of His power. Stories like the exodus, the rise and fall of Israel, the ministries of Jesus and the expansion of the early church are evidence of God's mighty hand in history. The same God has been leading you too. Why do you exist in the 21st century? Why were you born in this country or why did you come to this city? Why is your life experience different from the person sitting next to you? Why do you work in a certain company or study at a particular school? We can keep asking similar questions. We have to remember God's works in the past and recognize His works in us and in our world. God who has been behind us and beside us will walk before us. Your challenge may be the next few years in school, your next work project or an unresolved conflict. Put your trust in the powerful God and He will lead your way.

2. Power Surge 能力的充滿

God is our ultimate power source. He is willing to share His power with us. There will be a power surge as we rely on Him. Verses 29-30 describe our limitations: **29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted.** People young and old will faint and feel weary. But God is the help in our deficiency. He gives us power. That will lead to some exciting outcomes. Read verse 31: **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.** Those who wait on the Lord will soar like eagles, and they will walk and run with energy. The word "wait" carries the meanings of looking for and hoping for. It is waiting with expectation. It is like waiting for a traffic light to change to green. You anticipate a positive result. We must wait on God when He is working behind the scene for our next step. We take a break when we feel tired. Very often, our weakness is not on the outside but on the inside. That reminds me of the story behind Gatorade. In 1965, the football coach of the University of Florida asked a team of scientists to develop a drink for his players. The beverage does not only replenish the water lost in sweat. It also supplies energy and electrolytes. It proved to be critical when the school team beat Georgia Tech in 1967. The head coach of Georgia Tech was asked afterward the deciding factor for his loss. He said plainly: "We didn't have Gatorade. That made the difference." The miracle drink was able to quench a deeper thirst. Our weakness may not be just physical in nature. Sometimes, we lack the mental strength to get out of bed. We are unmotivated to face new challenges. Have you been there before? Deep down inside, the fatigue can be a spiritual problem. It happens when we are disconnected from God the power source. Sooner or later, we will run out of juice. We need to plug back into God. We need to wait before God and rethink a few words that begin with the letter P. First, what is your life **purpose**? Why do you do what you are doing? Are you

living for yourself only, for your family or for God? Then it is **passion**. What will energize you? Is it to earn more money, prove to others that you are capable, serve people or pursue God's calling? Once you are clear about your purpose and passion then you need to make some **plans**. How can you reach your goals? You cannot finish if you do not start. May be you need to take some courses, change some habits, start reading a chapter of Bible each day. You can start today rather than wait till January 1! You can also ask God for a few brothers or sisters to be your spiritual companions. You can encourage and pray for each other. There will be a power surge when we wait on God and reconnect to the power source.

CONCLUSION 結論

Only by relying on God can we run faster, jump higher and lift stronger. God has a bright future for you whether you are 18 or 80. Follow Him one step at a time, live one day at a time and tackle one task at a time. Focus on Jesus; He will lead your way. Aim high, or you will be knocked down. It is common to see dead bodies of animals on the roads. Once in a while, I notice there are dead birds too. They are not small birds or vultures judging from their sizes and colors of the feathers. They could be eagles. I wonder why such kings of the sky ended up on the streets. Did they get sick and just crash to the ground? Or did they fly too low and were hit by cars? Regardless of the reasons, eagles do not walk on the roads. God creates them to conquer the air. Eagles rest on a tree and catch some breath. Before long, they will continue to fly. We need to take a rest too when we feel tired. When we wait on the Lord, we can reset our focus. We feel refreshed to resume our life journey. We can soar like eagles and we can jog like marathon runners. May this message be an encouragement to the few college freshmen and us all.

INTRODUCTION 引言

2024 年夏季奧運會於兩天前開幕。來自世界各地的運動員將參加 329 個項目的競賽。只有最優秀的選手才能獲勝。奧林匹克的口號說明了一切。最初的版本寫於 1894 年。原文是由三個拉丁語的字組成：Citius, Altius, Fortius。意思是：更快、更高、更強。體育就像人生。世界充滿了競爭，無論是在學校、工作和馬路上。只有最利害的人才能贏。對基督徒來說，好消息是神站在我們這邊。今天我們一年一度的青年主日。一些年輕人將上大學。接下來的幾年對他們來說將是不一樣的比賽。以賽亞書中的信息對他們和我們來說都是鼓勵。我們大多數人都完成了正規教育。雖然不會再有考試了，但人生充滿考驗。在以賽亞的時代，神的子民面臨社會問題、道德沉淪、外強威脅等挑戰。此外，人們將他們與神的關係視為週末的例行公事。聖經說：日光之下並無新事。今天我們也面臨同樣的困難。但是神的話語是永恆的真理。祂在公元前 700 年對猶太人的提醒對我們仍然有效。唯有依靠神，我們才能跑得更快、跳得更高、舉得更重。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Power Source 能力的泉源

神告訴以色列人，祂是他們最終的能力源頭。神在第 27 節中引用了他們的埋怨：**雅各啊，你為何說，我的道路向耶和華隱藏？以色列啊，你為何言，我的冤屈神並不查問？**以色列人覺得神沒有意識到他們的問題，也沒有來拯救他們。他們只有在遇到麻煩時才尋求神。我們也有類似的態度。我們對神說：「當我一帆風順時，請不要來煩我。但當我受傷的時候祢在哪裡？」神向祂的子民保證祂從未改變。祂在第 28 節回答說：**你豈不曾知道嗎？你豈不曾聽見嗎？永在的神耶和華，創造地極的主...** 我們在這裡看到聖經中對神的兩個最常見的稱呼。「神」的希伯來文是「Elohim」。它將神描述為一個強大的主宰。這節經文談到神作為創造者的工作。在創世記中，神一說話，萬物就產生了。此外，神也是「主」。希伯來文是「耶和華」。它強調了神作為立約者的角色。神與人建立了永恆的關係。這位全能的神運用祂的能力創造了整個宇宙，維持世界的運作並照顧祂的兒女。神在第 28 節的後半部份繼續說：**...並不疲乏，也不困倦；他的智慧無法測度。** 與我們不一樣，神不會感到疲倦。祂的能力和智慧是無限的。此外，祂有智慧地使用祂的能力。你可以在幾分鐘內燒乾一加侖汽油。你也可以把汽油加在車子裡並行走二十英里。分別是在於你如何釋放液體中的潛在能量。神按照祂的計劃運用祂的能力。以色列人責怪神沒有使用祂的能力來幫助他們。很多時候我們也有同樣的感覺。但縱然神看起來

靜默不動，並不代表祂關閉了祂的能力。整本聖經都是祂大能的見證。出埃及、以色列的興衰、耶穌的事工以及早期教會的擴張等故事都是神在歷史上大能之手的證據。同一位神也一直在引導你。你為什麼生活在 21 世紀？你為什麼出生在這個國家或是來到這個城市？為什麼你的人生經歷與坐在你旁邊的人不同？為什麼你在某家公司工作或在某所學校學習？我們可以繼續問類似的問題。我們必須記住神過去的作為，並察覺祂在我們和我們的世界中的作為。那位一直在我們後面和在我們旁邊的神將會走在我們前面。你的挑戰可能是未來幾年的學校生活、你的下一個工作項目或仍未解決的衝突。相信神，祂會引導你的前路。

2. Power Surge 能力的充滿

神是我們最終的能力泉源。祂願意與我們分享祂的能力。當我們依靠祂時，我們就會充滿能力。第 29-30 節描述了我們的限制：**29 疲乏的，他賜能力；軟弱的，他加力量。30 就是少年人也要疲乏困倦；強壯的也必全然跌倒。**年輕人和年長的人都會感到疲乏和困倦。但是神會彌補我們的不足。祂賜給我們能力。如此便產生一些驚人的結果。請讀第 31 節：**但那等候耶和華的必重新得力。他們必如鷹展翅上騰；他們奔跑卻不困倦，行走卻不疲乏。**等候神的人必如鷹展翅翱翔，他們行走奔跑都充滿力量。「等候」這個字有尋找、盼望的意思，表示滿懷希望地等待。這就像等待交通燈變綠一樣。你預計會有正面的結果。當神在幕後為我們下一步做準備時，我們必須等候祂。當我們感到疲倦時，我們會休息一下。很多時候，我們的軟弱並不是在外面的，而是在裡面的。這讓我想起了佳得樂 (Gatorade) 背後的故事。1965 年，佛羅裡達大學的橄欖球教練要求一群科學家為他的球員開發一種飲料。該飲料不僅可以補充因出汗而流失的水分，它還提供能量和電解質。1967 年，當球隊擊敗佐治亞理工學院時，這種飲料被證明是關鍵的因素。事後佐治亞理工學院的教練接受訪問。記者問他被打敗的主要原因。教練坦誠地說：「我們沒有佳得樂。分別就在那裡。」這種奇妙的飲料能夠解決深層的乾渴。我們的軟弱可能不僅僅是身體上的。有時候，我們缺乏起床的意願。我們沒有動力去面對新的挑戰。你碰過那些情形嗎？在內心深處，疲勞可能是靈裡面問題。當我們與神這個能力的泉源切斷時，就會發生這種情況。遲早，我們會耗盡心力。我們需要重新與神連接。我們需要在神面前等候，重新思考幾個用 P 開頭的字。首先是目的 (purpose)。為什麼你正在做某些事情？你只為自己而活，為家人而活，還是為神而活？然後就是熱誠 (passion)。什麼會讓你充滿活力？賺更多的錢，向別人證明自己能幹，服務群眾，還是為了追求神的呼召？一旦確認了自己的目的和熱誠，你就必須製定一些計劃 (plans)。你如何才能達到你的目標？如果你不開始，你就無法完成。也許你需要進修一些課程，改變一些習慣，開始每天閱讀一章聖經。你可以從今天開始，而不是等到 1 月 1 日！你也可以求神賜給你幾位弟兄或姐妹作你的屬靈伴侶。你們可以互相鼓勵並為對方禱告。當我們等候神並重新接通能力的泉源時，就會充滿能力。

CONCLUSION 結論

唯有依靠神，我們才能跑得更快、跳得更高、舉得更重。無論你是 18 歲還是 80 歲，神都會給你一個光明的未來。注目於耶穌；祂會為帶領你的前路。要放眼在上面，否則就會被打倒。在路上經常能看到動物的屍體。偶爾，我注意到也有死的鳥。從身體的大小和羽毛的顏色來判斷，牠們不是小鳥或禿鷹。他們可能是老鷹。我懷疑為什麼天空的霸王會流落街頭。牠們是生病了然後跌倒在地上嗎？還是他們飛得太低而被汽車撞到？無論出於何種原因，老鷹都不會走在馬路上。神創造牠們是為了征服天空。老鷹在樹上歇腳透透氣。不久之後，牠們就會繼續飛行。當我們感到疲倦時，我們也需要喘口氣。當我們等候主時，我們可以重新調整我們的焦點。我們充滿體力地重新開始人生的旅程。我們可以像老鷹一樣翱翔，我們可以像馬拉松選手一樣奔跑。願這篇信息成為幾位大學新生和我們所有人的鼓勵。