

Series: Isaiah
Title: Comfort
Text: Isaiah 40: 1-2
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Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

This world has been full sorrow and pain and suffering—since the moment sin entered in the garden. We tend to think of sorrow, uneasiness, sadness, confusion as our personal trials and tragedies. Those things do cause discomfort, but those are really secondary effects of what real discomfort is.

True discomfort is:

- A consciousness of sin and of knowing God knows.
- Trying to cover up our sin and knowing we have failed.
- Trying to hide from God and knowing we can't.
- That is the stuff of true discomfort, of sin and sorrow.

Chapter 39 ends with the LORD declaring the captivity of Judah by Babylon and all their sons and daughters and riches and all their substance being carried away. Then chapter 40 opens with these words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people!” And the comfort he gives has nothing to do with any of those temporal things, but with the pardon of sin and the free abundance of acceptance with God in Christ.

When the LORD says, “Comfort ye, comfort ye” it is speak to the HEART of my people. One of the mysteries of the gospel is that the word of God works in spirit—a quickening word, regenerating, cleansing, renewing word and in the inner man, the new man, the new creation, the hidden man of the heart.

Proposition: If our conscious is purged of sin, if God has reconciled us to himself and born witness in our souls that he remembers our sin no more—this light affliction works an eternal weight of glory—comfort never to be taken from us. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul.”

Divisions: 1. Who is speaking and to whom; 2. The comforting news; 3. The best for last.

I. WHO IS SPEAKING? AND TO WHOM DOES HE SAY SPEAK THIS COMFORT? (Isaiah 40: 1)—

MY people, saith YOUR God.

God made everything and needs nothing from you or me. He is the solitary God full of glory in himself. (Isaiah 40: 15, 17.) If you pour out a 5 gallon bucket, 55 gallon drum of water—are you worried about the little drops or the dust of the scales—if the nations are a drop, counted as dust—what are you and I. Isaiah 40: 22 says, “grasshoppers.”

Yet the great I AM--hath chosen a people whom he calls “My people.” Don't you love this word “My”—it means “his possession.”

Deuteronomy 32: 9: The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Before we go further, let us each ask this question—Am I in this number? When God says “My people!” is he speaking of me? We are not talking about “Peace, peace! Where there is no peace.” Nothing more damning than that! Can you say, “I am his and he is mine?”

Do you delight in God doing the choosing?

Believers delight in God choosing whom he will because He first chose his Son, Christ Jesus—

1 Pe 1:20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, :21 Who by him do believe in God,...2: 4—chosen of God and precious

Isaiah 42: 1: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Believers rejoice in God’s choosing because the Father chose US in his Son

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved

His electing grace is comfort to our hearts left in our sin we would not nor could not choose him—

Romans 3: 11: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

- Adam hid from God
- Abraham was in a land of idolatry
- Of David, I took you from the shepcote

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:

And these words “my people” are comfort to our souls, because he will keep us though we are so prone to wander.

Malachi 3: 6: I am the LORD, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

II. WHAT DOES HE SAY TO HIS PEOPLE—WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS THAT COMFORTS OUR HEARTS—(Isaiah 40: 2)

John Trapp—“the very hive of heavenly honey”

Warfare—iniquity—sins

1. Satan is a foe we could not defeat
2. Sin is a foe we could not defeat
3. The curse of the law is a holy foe we could not satisfy
4. A complete, active righteous obedience to God is too much for a sinner
5. Death is a foe we cannot defeat

Jeremiah 31: 11: For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was stronger than he*.

God says tell my people—my heavenly Jerusalem-- that her warfare is accomplished—by whom? V2: OF THE LORD’S HAND

1. By God the Father’s purpose and grace
2. By God the Son’s finished work
3. By the Holy Spirit’s invincible power her iniquity is pardoned

How can man be just with God? How can holy God pardon our iniquity?

The LORD God does not justify his people by sweeping it under the rug as if it were not there, not by looking the other way and treating you as if it were not there. One has to be flesh and blood like his people yet spotless in himself. He had to willingly have the sin of his people laid upon him. He willingly was made a curse in place of those given him that the just Judge might justly pour out wrath upon him instead of them. He was willingly cut off out of the land of the living and endured the hell of separation from God on their behalf. Only then is Holy God just to show his elect mercy, to send forth this comfort of good news and quicken their dead soul to life with his everlasting word. That one is Christ Jesus and he cried from the cross, “it is finished!” He says tell my chosen, redeemed, born again child--your warfare is accomplished, your iniquity is pardoned!

Isaiah 53: 5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Here is more comfort—this covenant is “Ordered in all things and sure”

I love how the last word of chapter 39 was the LORD declaring to Hezekiah how that Judah and all his possessions and all his sons would be taken captive in Babylon. But chapter 40 immediately says, “her warfare IS accomplished.”

Down the page the LORD declares what Christ would come and do and we know he has finished it now (Isaiah 40: 10-11.) But in our text, even in Isaiah’s day, he declares it is already done in present (eternal tense)--warfare IS accomplished, her iniquity IS pardoned, she HATH received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.

How can that be? How can Abel be washed and accepted of God before as yet Christ went to the cross? Because the warfare was accomplished before the foundation of the world. There was a Surety before there was iniquity to pardon.

Illustration: If men merely react to save a people we consider it something.

But the LORD’s glory is greater than that. The LORD does not react. The LORD’s work is finished from the beginning and the triune God brings to pass in time what he promised himself he would do from the beginning.

Isaiah 14: 24: The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand

All the rebellion of wicked hands in this earth fulfills his purpose of glorying his power and grace to his people.

- When Adam sinned—fulfilled his purpose

- When Hezekiah entertained an alliance with Babylon and the Lord allowed Babylon to carry the whole nation captive—fulfilled his purpose
- Even when man rejected Christ and nailed him to a tree. The wicked hands are without excuse. The rebellion is man's rebellion. But every bit serves God's purpose.

Psalm 76: 10: Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

THIS IS GOD, NOT MAN (Isaiah 40: 21-24; 41: 4.)

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

Why did he leave us in the midst of so many enemies? There may yet be a long journey across hot desert sands as it was between Babylon and Palestine during their captivity--giant mountains, deep valleys, crooked treacherous paths—but the Highway of Holiness is Christ and no enemy shall harm us in the way for he has, and does, make the path plain.

He does it in the midst of so many enemies and thereby the Lord brings us to know the wretchedness, the helpless, weak and worthless grass that we are--so that we not only say "Christ is precious," but we *know* Him to be precious--not in our head but in our hearts, not in pretense but in the power.

Have we been stripped of things we held dear in this life? Nothing that is taken away from us in this life is needful, but one thing IS needful—Christ Jesus—and of his fullness has every believer received and does continue to receive abundant grace

III. THE BEST FOR LAST—

Christ our Captain accomplished our warfare. Christ our Substitute put away our iniquity and every believer is pardoned. But that is not enough.

If we would be accepted of God, we must have something more than the forgiveness of our sins. We must be made perfectly righteous before the holy Lord God (Matt. 5:20). That is the double part of the blessing of grace--V2:... she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

1 Corinthians 1:30 "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Adam was created upright, but not eternal-of the earth, earthy—his righteousness was corrupted and his seed corrupt. But the last Adam, Jesus Christ, was made a quickening Spirit. He offered himself through the

eternal Spirit, he obtained *eternal* redemption. You who have born again of the incorruptible seed, are robed in seamless, perfect robe of righteousness and you right now—*have..eternal...life!*

Does it seem as if your whole house is shaken so as to fall? Only those things that can be shaken, will be shaken—but those things which God has planted--you living stones built up in the Christ our Living foundation--shall never be shaken. For you who are “his people”—there is 1 Peter 1: 4:...“an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”. And he shall keep you and you shall have it.

Just as you are his portion—HE IS YOURS.

Isaiah 61:7: For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Oh, meditate on this thought—BRETHREN, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD.

Now to you who have never confessed Christ. To you who find this word comforting your hearts for the first time—the Lord says,

Zechariah 9:12: Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

May our Lord comfort his people this day.

Amen!