

Theme: In times of distress we need to expectantly wait upon God, knowing we can have hope because He is the Sovereign God Who has fulfilled all of His promises in Christ.

## I. A Time of Great Turmoil, Sorrow, and Loss

- A. Chapter 40 begins Isaiah's words to the exiles
- B. They lost everything - houses, freedom, many died
- C. Isaiah's words to the exile community cover 40-66
- D. It begins with powerful words of comfort
- E. We are going through a time of turmoil, sorrow, loss
- F. Where do we find comfort and hope?

## II. The Basis for Hope In Troubled Times

- A. The Gospel is a firm basis for hope  
Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. Isaiah 40:1-2
  - 1. Comfort, comfort - double command for emphasis
  - 2. My people, your God - covenant motto (v1)
  - 3. Tender words to God's people Jerusalem (v2)
  - 4. All is paid for - triple assurance of full pardon (v2)
  - 5. The first basis for hope is the promise of comfort, tenderness, and forgiveness found in the Gospel!
  - 6. Despite our sins, God has not forsaken us, but has chosen to forgive and restore us to Himself!

- B. The unfailing Word of God is a firm basis for hope  
A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:6-8
  - 1. People are like grass and flowers - frail and failing
  - 2. But God's Word is firm and never failing!
  - 3. One of the great causes of despair in troubled times is how often people fall and fail. People disappoint time and again, and even those who are better eventually die.
  - 4. But God's Word never fails, and it endures across the millennia.
  - 5. Hard times have come and gone, forces attempting to undermine God's Word have arisen and faded, but the Word of God still endures!
  - 6. We can have comfort and hope in the midst of these uncertain times because our hope is rooted in God's certain Word!
- C. God's Personal Presence & care is a firm basis for hope  
You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"... <sup>11</sup> He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. Isaiah 40:9, 11
  - 1. The prophet speaks: "Here is Your God"

2. God is not a harsh despot; He is our Shepherd
3. Our Shepherd does not abandon us; He picks us up in His arms!
4. Our Shepherd holds us close to His heart!
5. Even through the rough terrain of uncertain times, our Shepherd leads us gently, caring for each one of His flock.
6. You are never unseen or unloved! Your Shepherd sees you; He walks with You; He carries You when you are afraid; He keeps you close to His heart!

D. God's greatness is a firm basis for hope

1. God is awesome in His Immensity

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Isaiah 40:12

- a. God is Infinite - the entire world and universe are as nothing to Him!
- b. The earth and the universe are unfathomably vast, powerful, and overwhelming to us but they are nothing next to God!
- c. You may be restricted from seeing many people right now but God is with You, for He is everywhere at all times!
- d. We can have hope because we are never alone!

2. God is awesome in His knowledge

Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? <sup>14</sup> Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? Isaiah 40:13–14

- a. God is Infinite in His knowledge - no one is able to teach Him anything!
- b. God never grows in knowledge because He knows all things and He knows them immediately (directly).
- c. 2020 has been full of surprises and has shaken many things - but none of it has surprised God! And He already knows what 2021 will hold as well!
- d. We can have hope because God knows everything that has happened to us, is happening to us, or ever will happen to us! We may be taken by surprise but He is not!

3. God is awesome in His power

"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. <sup>26</sup> Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Isaiah 40:25–26

- a. A forceful question - who is like Me? Who is My equal?
- b. Look to the heavens! God created and sustains them!
- c. God's strength is beyond compare - no one could stop Him!
- d. We can have hope because God is mighty to save!

### III. Applying the Word - Living In Hope!

#### A. Am I drawing strength from hope in God?

Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”? <sup>28</sup> Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. <sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. <sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; <sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:27–31

1. In times of turmoil, sorrow, and loss we are tempted to think God does not know or care (v27)
2. This leads to the temptation to try and get through the situation in our own strength or to turn to other sources for help.
3. But these sources all fail - v30
4. These times come to cause us to turn to God and draw strength from Him for He does see, He does care, and He never grows tired or weary! (v28-29)
5. To survive times of turmoil, sorrow, and loss we need to stir up our hope in God, for this is an inexhaustible source of strength no matter our circumstances!

#### B. Do I see that Christ has come to give me hope?

1. Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God’s Gospel promises. He has paid for our sin, bearing the punishment we were due! (v2)
2. John the Baptist is the voice crying in the wilderness  
It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way” — <sup>3</sup> “a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” <sup>4</sup> And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Mark 1:2–4
  - a. God’s people were still in exile even though they had returned to the promised land!
  - b. John is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy as he prepares the way for God’s coming to His people in Jesus Christ!
3. God’s Word through Isaiah comes to us today in the preaching of the Gospel  
For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:23–25
  - a. God’s Word is eternal and unchanging. It stands forever!
  - b. Yet God’s ancient Word is forever current and relevant! It is living and enduring, and used by God to save and deliver us!
  - c. The promises of Isaiah 40 are ours in Christ. We are God’s exile people, and in our times of turmoil, sorrow, and loss He comes to us in Christ to give us hope and strength.

### C. Renewing our hope in God

1. To renew our hope we must meditate on God's character, work, and promises given to us in Christ.
2. Make it a priority to engage with the devotionals each day. Listen and engage!
3. Spend less time on the news, social media, and surfing the internet - they are a sinkhole of turmoil, despair, and anger.
4. Invest time waiting on God and His Word and in prayer.

### D. A prayer to renew our hope in God

#### The Advent of Hope in Christ

Isaiah 40

November 29, 2020

Prayer

Romans 15:13

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas, hope; Jesus

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."  
<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." <sup>9</sup> You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"  
<sup>10</sup> See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. <sup>11</sup> He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. <sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the

earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? <sup>14</sup> Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? <sup>15</sup> Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. <sup>16</sup> Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup> Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. <sup>18</sup> To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? <sup>19</sup> As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. <sup>20</sup> A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple.  
<sup>21</sup> Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? <sup>22</sup> He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. <sup>23</sup> He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. <sup>24</sup> No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

<sup>25</sup> “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. <sup>26</sup> Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. <sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”?

<sup>28</sup> Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. <sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. <sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; <sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:1–31