

Title: The Consolation of the Gospel

Text: Is 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 is the LORD God speaking. This is God's command to his prophet and to every messenger God sends to preach the gospel, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.*"

The Lord calls and saves through the preaching of the gospel of Christ from the first hour to the last. Through the preaching of God's word, the Spirit of God reproveth and rebukes (convince and convicts of sin), exhorts (entreats, beseeches, call to Christ's side). The Spirit of God does this in the heart of his child through the preaching of the word of God. That is why Paul told Timothy,

2 Timothy 4:2: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4: And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Isaiah declared the Lord's word and the Lord convinced and convicted Hezekiah of his sin. He told Hezekiah after his days, the Lord would turn Judah over to Babylonian captivity. Then immediately, God gave Isaiah this command.

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, [speak to the heart] 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.

Even when God rebukes, God charges his preacher to comfort his people. The purpose of preaching is for the edification of God's people, not for their destruction. Paul said God's preacher has "*authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction*" (2 Cor 10: 8).

The purpose of preaching is to turn God's child from sinful self to Christ our Righteousness. Through Isaiah's word, the Lord did that. The Lord broke Hezekiah's heart. Scripture says he was humbled in heart. Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." Hezekiah knew that due to Christ his Surety, God was just to be merciful to him. In Christ, Hezekiah had peace with God! So as soon as Isaiah had delivered the Lord's word, God commanded Isaiah to "*comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God.*"

Division: 1) Who is this comfort for—God says, "For my people, saith your God." 2) Why is this charge given? 3) What is the comfort of God's people?

THIS WORD IS FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Who are God's people? There is a particular people in this world who God calls "*my people.*" God declares to them I am "*your God.*" What do God's people have in common? How do we know who God's people are?

One, God's people are chosen by God our Father in Christ by God's sovereign grace before the world was created. And we love that it is so. They are God's covenant people who the triune God entered covenant to save for himself!

Two, God's children are redeemed. We were purchased by Christ by his precious blood. We are Christ's "*purchased possession.*" (Eph 1: 14) We were sold under sin—held for ransom—justice demanded our death. But Christ bought his elect from the claims of justice. Christ redeemed us by his precious blood. God our Father calls us, "*MY people!*" Christ calls us "*MY sheep!*"

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

Three, God's children are called by irresistible grace. Each of God's children shall be born-again of God. Within those regenerated of God there is a new man created through Christ's righteousness in Christ's holiness so that Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren! The Spirit of God gave us faith to submit to Christ as our only Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Holiness and Redemption (1 Cor 1: 30-31). Therefore, his people glory only in the Lord! We have nothing in which to glory in of ourselves. God's children glory only in the Lord.

God gave us a heart to follow Christ with a true heart's desire to please him. He turned us from our self-righteousness. God granted us repentance from our self-will. He turned us from our own wretched SELF! God gave us faith to believe on Christ and follow him. The Spirit of God continues to work this work in the hearts of his people through the gospel of Christ. We know our need of God's presence, of God's power keeping us. Beholding our sin, we cry out with David,

Psalm 51: 10: Create in me a clean heart, o God; renew a right spirit in me. 11: Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12: Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. 13: *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Four, God's people are a peculiar people. Each elect child of God is God's own. God chose us to be his own.

1 Peter 2:9: But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

The world does not know us, because the world does not know our Lord and Savior. The world does not understand God's child, because they know not our Redeemer.

1 John 3: 1: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

We are paradox to the world. We are paradox to our own selves. In our new man, we hate our sin. The more God's grows us in grace the more see our sin and the more humbled we are by God's grace. Yet, there is an old man in us that loves sin: that is proud and will certainly bring us into bondage if God take his hand off us. But we have been made honest to confess this about ourselves. We confess our constant need of God's keeping hand upon us.

We see ourselves as the chief of sinners. Yet, we believe God that we are perfect in Christ. While the world boasts in themselves, we mourn our sin, crying, "*O wretched man that I am!* That which I hate, I do. That which I love, I do not" (Rom 7). God's children do good works but we see too much of our sin to go around boasting in our works like this world's religion does. We boast only in the Lord's works for us.

This is who the Lord commands us to comfort—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, *MY people, saith YOUR God.*" The gospel is for God's own people: chosen, redeemed, regenerated and called and made to believe on Christ alone, a peculiar precious people to God while strange to this world. But God calls us "MY PEOPLE!"

Are you one of his people? Do you delight that the glory is all due to God? Is Christ your only hope? Can you say, "I am his and he is mine?" If so then be sure to get this. If Christ is your All then God Almighty, declares I am "*your God!*" He is yours as much you are his! He is *your God!* Being joint-heirs with Christ, all things are his and all things are yours!

1 Corinthians 3: 21: Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23: And ye are Christ's; and Christ *is* God's.

WHY IS THIS CHARGE GIVEN?

It is because God our Father will have his people comforted. God our Father knows his people need comfort and God our Father delights to comfort his people.

Psalm 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11: For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12: As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13: Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14: For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

God gives this charge to comfort my people because he delights to comfort us. But only in his Son. The word "comfort" means console. The consolation of God's people is Christ. God is commanding his messenger to preach Christ to my people.

2 Corinthians 1:5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Hebrews 6: 18...we have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: [Christ our Forerunner who is for us entered into God's presence as our everlasting high priest]

This is why God tries his people. It is so that his child can find no comfort anywhere but in Christ. God gave Hezekiah everything he had. Then God left him to try him so he would know he was yet a proud sinner in his sin-nature. As God enables his child to put off some outward sins, God will leave us, to try us, to makes us see the sin of our nature more and more. If he did not do this then we would be speaking of our works in pride like Hezekiah did of his treasures.

Hezekiah's sorrow was not merely that God would take away all the treasures but that his sin was against God. But God keeps us knowing our sin so that Christ alone might be our only Comfort and Consolation, our only Treasure. That is why the more God grows his child, the more he uses his child, the more he will try you.

God used the apostle Paul greatly. He raised Paul to the third heaven and gave him an abundance of revelation. Therefore, God gave Paul a thorn in his flesh that Paul might not be exalted above measure. Whatever Paul's thorn was it kept Paul knowing he was a sinner! But Christ gave him more grace so that Paul found no strength and no comfort anywhere but Christ alone. Then as God comforts us with Christ alone, we comfort God's people with the same comfort.

2 Corinthians 1: 3: Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 6: And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. 7: And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation. 8: For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;...

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE BY WHICH GOD COMFORTS HIS PEOPLE?

Isaiah 40: 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 is the consolation God's people have in Christ, "*Her warfare IS accomplished!*" Like Judah, before God's elect went into captivity, our warfare was accomplished in Christ our Surety! Now Christ has satisfied justice and given us faith to believe in him *that our iniquity is pardoned.*

What is this double reward? It does not mean God punished us double for our sins. It means God has given us more in Christ than we lost in Adam. Our Comfort, our Consolation is acceptance with God in Christ our Righteousness who made us perfectly, eternally righteous before the holy Lord God, never again able to fall into ruin (Matt. 5:20).

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.

Isaiah 53: 5: [Christ] *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.

Our consolation, our comfort, is Christ our Life! If we have Christ then we have life right now!

1 John 5: 11: this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12: He that hath the Son hath life;

If you are finding this gospel of Christ comforting your heart 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;

For each of God's people, I pray with Paul

2 Thessalonians 2: 16: Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17: Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Amen!