



Advent: A Season of Hope

Advent 2 – Dec. 8th - 13th Isaiah 40:1-31

Tuesday 6am @LW – Tuesday 5:15pm @AV

Wednesday 10am & 6:15pm @LW - Sunday 10:30am @AV

Comfort for God's People - Isaiah 40:1-31 [Life Application Notes](#)

WORDS OF COMFORT (40:1-66:24)

Isaiah now speaks of events that will occur after the captivity. This includes the decree by Cyrus to release the remnant captives and allow them to return to Jerusalem after he conquered Babylon. But Isaiah also foretells the coming of the suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, and describes his life and death with incredible detail. Isaiah also speaks about the coming of the new heavens and earth, when God's people will be completely restored. Because all believers will participate in this new world to come, we can have confident hope in the future.

40:1ff The book of Isaiah makes a dramatic shift at this point. The following chapters discuss the majesty of God, who is coming to rule the earth and judge all people. God will reunite Israel and Judah and restore them to glory. Instead of warning the people of impending judgment, Isaiah here comforts them. Isaiah 40 refers to the restoration after the exile. Cyrus is the instrument of their deliverance from Babylon. Secondly, it looks to the end of time when "Babylon"-the future evil world system-will be destroyed and the persecution of God's people will end.

40:1-2 Judah still had 100 years of trouble before Jerusalem would fall, then 70 years of exile. So God tells Isaiah to speak tenderly and to comfort Jerusalem.

The seeds of comfort may take root in the soil of adversity. When your life seems to be falling apart, ask God to comfort you. You may not escape adversity, but you may find God's comfort as you face it. Sometimes, however, the only comfort we have is in the knowledge that someday we will be with God. Appreciate the comfort and encouragement found in his Word, his presence, and his people.

40:3-5 Preparing a straight highway means removing obstacles and rolling out the red carpet for the coming of the Lord. The desert is a picture of life's trials and sufferings. We are not immune to these, but our faith need not be hindered by them. Isaiah told people to prepare to see God work. John the Baptist used these words as he challenged the people to prepare for the coming Messiah (Matthew 3:3).

40:6-8 People are compared here to grass and flowers that wither away. We are mortal, but God's Word is eternal and unfailing. Public opinion changes and is unreliable, but God's Word is constant. Only in God's eternal Word will we find lasting solutions to our problems and needs.

40:11 God is often pictured as a shepherd, gently caring for and guiding his flock. He is powerful (Isaiah 40:10), yet careful and gentle. He is called a shepherd (Psalm 23); the

good shepherd (John 10:11, 14); the great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20); and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). Note that the shepherd is caring for the most defenseless members of his society: children and those caring for them. This reinforces the prophetic theme that the truly powerful nation is not the one with a strong military, but rather the one that relies on God's caring strength.

40:12-31 Isaiah describes God's power to create, his provision to sustain, and his presence to help. God is almighty and all-powerful; but even so, he cares for each of us personally. No person or thing can be compared to God (Isaiah 40:25). We describe God as best we can with our limited knowledge and language, but we only limit our understanding of him and his power when we compare him to what we experience on earth. What is your concept of God, especially as revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ? Don't limit his work in your life by underestimating him.

40:29-31 Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel all of life crushing you and cannot go another step, remember that you can call upon God to renew your strength.

40:31 Hoping in the Lord is expecting that his promise of strength will help us to rise above life's distractions and difficulties. It also means trusting in God. Trusting helps us to be prepared when he speaks to us. Then we will be patient when he asks us to wait and expect him to fulfill the promises found in his Word.

Study Questions:

1. What are some of the various ways people comfort themselves about life's difficulties?
2. What good news did Isaiah have for Jerusalem concerning the sufferings that went before? (40:2)
3. How did Isaiah contrast the mortality of human life with the Word of God? (40:6-8)
4. What were God's special promises to the weak and weary? (40:29-31)
5. In what sense can it be comforting to meditate on the overwhelming greatness of God?
6. What sorts of circumstances cause contemporary people to become weak and weary?
7. What Christian within your acquaintance could you encourage with a word about God's comfort the next time you see him or her?

Bible Memory Verses: 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 40:31