

# A word of comfort. (Quality: very good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ] For the Lord's help, we'll direct you to Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 1.
- Isaiah chapter 40, verse 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.
- We'll follow into verse 2, of course, with the meditation. The word this morning then is a word of comfort.
- It was a comfort for God's people. It was a word of comfort for a condition that they would come into.
- And being directed to it, we trust by the Spirit of the Lord, it is a word for us in the gospel day. Its implications for Zion then was that their Redeemer would come.
- [ 1 : 16 ] That he would come with a strong hand. That the glory of the Lord would be seen. And it looks for the coming of our Lord in the way he came.
- And to the glory and the triumph in his coming again. So there is comfort from the Lord to this people in Isaiah's day.
- And it's an assurance that their warfare is accomplished. That their iniquity is pardoned. She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.
- I want to speak first in the exercise of comfort.
- If you understand what I mean. If we've been quickened into life and grace and have precious faith, there will be the exercise of faith.
- [ 2 : 24 ] There will be the trial of faith. And in the exercise of faith, there will be the exercise of divine comfort. There are times when we need divine comfort.
- That comfort that God alone can give. For time and for eternity. And I've been pondering this in a personal way.
- And I will with you. Because there come times in our spiritual experience. As well as in our natural life.
- When we can be discouraged. And we can become depressed. Now from the word of God and the experience of believers, we should say to you this morning, we should never be depressed.
- Never. Never be depressed. As the world that has no God, no hope in this world, do become depressed.
- [ 3 : 37 ] You might say, But I do get depressed. I say again, from the word of the Lord, and that him we sometimes think, we should never be discouraged.
- Take it to the Lord in prayer. That's the antidote for natural depression. And for soul depression. That is the remedy, is to take it to the Lord in prayer.
- I know the natural mind. I say, Well I can't. And I don't. And I do get depressed. And that's all there is to it. It isn't my friends, is it? The Lord's purpose is to comfort his people concerning things past, present experience, and concerning things to come.
- And he knows their condition. He knows how to suit his word and his blessing to our condition. He knows the end from the beginning.

He is a blessed God. So we should never become depressed. But let me go on a little further. David knew something of it, didn't he?

[ 5 : 04 ] David said, Why? He's speaking to his own soul in the exercise of comfort. Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou disquieted within me? And then he says again, But my soul is disquieted within me. My soul is cast down within me.

It's a fact. I can't help it. My soul is cast down within me. But he didn't leave it there, did he? What did David say to himself?

Hope, thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God in better days.

My hope was in God. My trust was in God. My rejoicing was in God. Now when you're in this low place, hope, thou in God.

[ 6 : 05 ] He won't change. He won't fail thee. Hope, thou in God, for I shall yet praise him. He is the health of my countenance. When his light shone upon me, he was the health of my countenance and my God.

My face did shine with sacred joy and peace. Well then hope there in God. And so we might add further things, but he is the God that is appointed to comfort those that mourn in Zion.

To appoint unto them that mourning Zion. The Lord doesn't despise the mourners. The Lord has a great regard for mourners.

I hope I'm not speaking to any who say, well I'm self-sufficient. I can manage. I can manage my own affairs. I can get by alright.

In many things I feel I can. In the ministry of God's word, I can't manage. I can't manage without the Lord's help.

[ 7 : 25 ] I can't manage without those things that God has promised to his servants. Can you manage your affairs?

Are you stout-hearted that neither of these things can affect you? To cast you down or make you depressed, you can manage. Keep cheerful.

Now the Lord appoints to them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the spirit of praise, or the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

He knows what we come into. The Lord knows when we want comfort. And I know you want comfort.

And I need comfort. We come into spots and places. When this text came into my mind, I had to say, Lord, I'm cast out.

[ 8 : 31 ] I'm sad. By reason, yes. I've had reason. I've lost friends. We've been by a bedside several days and the lady has since died.

I've had to bury a friend. I said, Lord, these things are getting on top of me. Lord, I want comfort.

I want comforting. I've had to say sometimes, Lord, I don't deserve comfort. I've been backsliding in heart. I've grown cold.

I deserve reproof rather than comfort. But I had to say when this text came, Lord, if I'm to preach comfort, I need comfort.

And in the exercise of comfort, which is the point I'm making, you believers are brought there to say, Lord, I need comfort.

[ 9 : 41 ] I'm in that time when sorrows and other people's concerns bear upon my spirit the weight of things, the exercise of life. I need comfort.

Lord, Lord, I need comfort. Well, did the Lord forsake me, not hear my prayer? No, the Lord broke my heart, softened my spirit.

The Lord communed with me. He communicated blessings and mercies. He stirred me up to faith and to prayer and to rejoicing in the Lord.

He was my God and my helper. I could look to him for all I needed. Remember his disciples. On one occasion they were preaching much.

They'd left all to follow him. It wasn't easy to follow Christ. They followed him, they preached with him, and he said, come ye apart and rest a while.

[ 10 : 51 ] Wasn't that compassion? Come ye apart and rest a while. You've been preaching too much and working too hard and laboring under the sun too much.

You come apart into a desert place and be free from all the crowds and all the responsibilities and duties and your prayers and cares come apart.

That's how the Lord does to us, doesn't he? Do you know what I'm talking about? Being drawn aside, the Lord appearing for you, softening any rebellion, any murmuring, any unthankfulness, softening all that and bringing you like a suppliant to his feet.

Lord, I want comfort. comfort. Well, that's where he brought me, communed with me and so he comforted me, renewed my spirit, strengthened me and so we're unable to go on, aren't we?

Well, ponder that experience of comfort, try not to get too downhearted. Do not be discouraged.

[ 12 : 11 ] Tell the Lord. Tell the Lord what you feel. Tell him you're in need. Tell him you're sad. Tell him you want help. And the Lord will appear.

The Lord will strengthen. It's what we've read, isn't it? Waiting upon the Lord to renew our strength. to come a little closer to our text.

We're coming, aren't we? To the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

What a beautiful title to our blessed God, the Father of mercies. And as I pondered that this morning, it's so complete, isn't it?

The Father of all mercies. All the mercies you need and I need and can need are in God. He is the Father of them all.

[ 13 : 14 ] Can you do without one? I can't do without one of God's mercies. There's one mercy I can't do without. And that's a token of his sovereign mercy.

That he has been merciful to me, a sinner. That he's heard my prayer time and time again. God be merciful to me, a sinner. I can't do without that mercy.

Blessed be God, we don't have to. Because he is the Father of all mercies, sinner. If you come short of that mercy, if you don't know that mercy of God to a sinner, then your case is a sad case for all eternity.

No, he's the Father of mercies, isn't he? And he's the God of all comfort. Oh, how many comforts he's given us.

Providentially, that we often take for granted. Oh, the comforts we have in our bodies, in our minds, that are denied to so many.

[ 14 : 29 ] Oh, the comforts we have in our daily life, where we live, what we can eat or drink, or where we can clothe ourselves, what comforts we have.

Can you be without one comfort? Without the comfort of knowing that God is your God and will be in time and for eternity.

That the comfort he has to you is divine comfort. He is a divine comforter. The comfort is divine when he speaks, oh, when he speaks to your heart.

You know that he is your God and your Savior. and your friend, I could be without any other comfort, except that one. We need all the comforts that God has given us.

But in that one comfort, that he has chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, and chosen us and blessed us in him, I hope none of you take these things for granted.

[ 15 : 43 ] There is divine comfort. you say, when are you coming to the text? Well, God says here, comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to her. Well, we are appointed to speak comfortably to Zion, not to speak peace when there is no peace.

That won't profit you, but to speak comfortably to you. I want to take an overview with you of the prophets. When I say an overview, it's going over prophecies to the conclusion of them, the center of them.

All the precious things we shall overpass, won't we? all the precious prophecies. Now, you say, well, prophecies may be dull, can't understand them, people get taken up in them, it puts me off, they're too complicated for me, sometimes I see a precious jewel there.

No, but take another view of the prophecies. Those two disciples on the way to Emmaus did, didn't they? They wanted comfort, their Lord had died, he was crucified, it was the end of their hopes, but this stranger, blessed stranger, they didn't know him, but what a wonderful stranger he appeared to them.

[ 17 : 22 ] Here was a man speaking to them, he didn't know about Christ being crucified. Aren't thou a stranger? No, it's not these things, he knew, but they didn't.

He took in all the scriptures, in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning himself. Oh, what a wonderful conversation that was.

The wonderful prophecies he brought to them, himself, the center of them. Why, they said, did not our heart burn? Oh, I should think it did burn.

It was this stranger telling us of the Christ that has been crucified, in whom were all their hopes. Here is the Christ being set forth, as though he is living, and will come again.

All their heart burned, and then you know how he was manifest to them, so it was Christ in all the scriptures. Isn't that beautiful? Christ in all the prophecies of scripture.

[ 18 : 27 ] Thou not dull, are they, when thou viewed in this light? And take another light I've been pondering. In the book of Revelation in the 19th chapter, we read this, the voice from heaven said to John, blessed are they that come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And John realized he was some great person of authority, and John said, I fell down at his feet to worship him. And he said, rise upon thy feet, do it not.

Don't worship me, he would say, worship God, for I'm of thy fellow servant and of thy brethren, which have the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God. And I pondered it. He had the testimony of Jesus, to Jesus, and concerning Jesus.

And he was that great power in heaven, that great voice from heaven that spoke to John in that vision. man. And I am thy fellow servant.

[ 19 : 44 ] Don't worship me. I have the testimony of Jesus, may have suffered for it, may have been martyred for it, we're not told. But he said, I have the testimony of Jesus.

And then we read this beautiful jewel, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. prophecy. Doesn't that put a new light upon prophecy?

The testimony of Jesus in all the prophecies, the testimony to Jesus in all the prophecies, is the spirit of prophecy.

Prophecy apart from that would be vain, and presumptuous, and empty. No. Said Jesus, to his disciples, and those that heard him, he said to the Pharisees, search the scriptures.

The Pharisees thought that having this book, they had eternal life, without a spiritual understanding of it. But Jesus said, search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of me.

[ 20 : 58 ] Ye think that by having them you've got eternal life. It's in having me that you have eternal life. They testify of me.

What comfort isn't that? What comfort. And I want to take another view of the Lord's way in prophecy.

He is speaking of the children of Israel being in captivity. captivity. In the previous chapter, Hezekiah was told that the jewels that he showed would be taken from them, their children would be taken into captivity and made as eunuchs and there would be none to deliver them.

But the Lord speaks of a king. In chapter 45 we read of Cyrus. Now Cyrus was declared by Isaiah to be the Lord's shepherd.

He wasn't the good shepherd. Cyrus was an idolater. When Cyrus was given a name he wasn't yet born.

[ 22 : 10 ] He would be a powerful king. He was a sinful idolater that God would use to deliver his people out of captivity. Do you know your Bible history?

Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus he was anointed not as Jesus was anointed. Oh no. He was anointed to be a great king amongst kings of the earth.

He wasn't the Lord's anointed. There's a significance, a symbol. It all leads to Christ being the anointed and a great king and a deliverer. It all leads to that.

But of Cyrus it is spoken. I've called thee by thy name. He's a shepherd. He's a deliverer. And they should deliver my people not for price nor reward but by my spirit.

Now in a hundred or so years later Cyrus was born and named. And he became a king and that came true of him that the Lord would loose the loins of kings.

[ 23 : 19 ] In other words make them weak. Take all their courage. And they lost the battle and Cyrus overcome nearly all of Asia. Cyrus when he was dying called his sons and his daughters to worship the gods of the sun and Jupiter.

He was an idolater. But that was God's way of delivering his people out of captivity. And this is God speaking the comfort to them.

Tell her that her warfare is accomplished. I want to come to these expressions. Her warfare is accomplished.

The church from captivity would be in a warfare. Fleeing, being pursued, being delivered.

They would be through the desert and the wilderness way. We read in verse 7 in chapter 41 a beautiful expression.

[ 24 : 28 ] No, it's not chapter, it's not verse 7.

Heaven, in verse 17. When the poor and needy seek water, this is the people of God in the wilderness, and their tongue faileth for thirst, this would be their lot.

They would be poor and needy. They would have nothing, but they were being delivered. They would seek water, and their tongue would fail for thirst.

A swollen tongue would not be able to express what they wanted. Then, says the Lord, will I hear them? I'll hear them. I'll hear their requests for water, and for help, and for comfort.

I will hear them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. These are the comforts of God to his people. And in that journey, we read, comfort you for your warfare is accomplished.

[ 25 : 48 ] That is, all that God has purposed for them is already accomplished. accomplished. They shall be delivered, not by might, not by power, but by God's spirit and deliverance.

They would lay down their arms. They wouldn't need to fight in this battle. The sword will be turned into a plowshare.

The lion will lay down with the lamb. the warfare is accomplished. And so we look, don't we, to the conquest that Jesus, our Savior, has accomplished for us in his life, at Calvary, at the cross.

The warfare is accomplished. Zion is pardoned. Her peace is assured. Oh, yes, comfort in my people that her warfare is accomplished.

Do you believe it? The victory's sure. The gospel will triumph. the word of the Lord, the glory of the Lord, will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

[ 27 : 24 ] The Lord will come again. The Lord, we trust, our Savior and Redeemer, will redeem. He's paid the price. He will redeem with power.

He will come in his glory. The warfare is accomplished. And why, says the Lord, for her iniquity is pardoned.

Oh, what a blessed comfort we have in our God, that our sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.

Didn't John write to those in his day, the apostle John, little children, I write unto you because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

When we are called into faith in Christ, we are called to believe that our sins, which are many, are for his sake forgiven.

[ 28 : 31 ] I tremble sometimes when I think, some, perhaps we are preaching to, will say, well, then it's all right, it's all been accomplished, the gospel is complete, we can just go on, that's how the world goes on, and we'll perish.

We need to be led by faith, don't we, to Jesus Christ, we need to be led to believe on him who cried at Calvary, it is finished, no more to be accomplished, a finished work, in his body, and in his dying, to rest in a finished work, not to say, well, I can rest, he's done it all for me, I can just sail through to heaven, without a concern, that's not the way of the Lord, the way of the Lord is to bring sinners, convict and convince and lead to Jesus, to faith in him, to trust in him, and then they are assured of that your sins are all forgiven you, for his name's sake, sins past, sins present, solemn, sins to come, more solemn, child of

God, that is why we hate sin, in our right mind, we don't love it anymore, but once we loved, and sin takes so many subtle forms, doesn't it, and Satan takes so many subtle forms, to deceive us into thinking all is well, that we can live carelessly and lightly, child of God, it is not like that, we hate the sins, we pray against them, we long to be holy, our comfort is in that he has accomplished our warfare, that our iniquity is pardoned, now take this thought, has he dealt with us after our sins?

You say no, no he hasn't dealt with us after our sins, has he rewarded us according to our iniquities?

Has he given us double punishment for our sins? We must look at some of these things, God hasn't rewarded us double for our sins, he hasn't dealt with us as our sins deserve or our iniquities, he has dealt justly, justly, men would call God unjust for punishing sin, no, our God in this sense of this prophecy here is that he's not dealt with us as we deserve, he's been gracious to us, oh but he has been gracious to us, he hasn't dealt with us, this is our comfort under our sins guilt, God.

[ 31 : 53 ] And look at part of this beautiful prophecy, come now says the Lord, let us reason together, you say can that mean me, a sinner like me?

Yes, it's spoken to all who in the gospel day will hear the words of the Lord under the sweet influence of the spirit, come, let us reason together, says the Lord.

What's the reason? What is the reasoning? Though your sins be as scarlet, they should be as white as wool, though they be red like crimson, they should be as white as snow.

What is the figure? Wool that is dyed needs cleansing, but wool that is double dyed needs double cleansing, and says the Lord, your sins may be deep dyed, they might be double deep dyed, but though they are, they should be as white as wool that is purified, be as white as snow.

What can be whiter than snow? What can be whiter than snow than a soul washed in the blood of the Lamb?

[ 33 : 18 ] love? And I want to take, you might look at it, some of you are, in the 44th chapter of Isaiah, and in chapter, in verse 21.

we are speaking of idolaters and those that feed on ashes, but says the prophet, remember these, O Jacob, and Israel, for thou art my servant.

I have formed thee, thou art my servant, O Israel, thou should not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

No, God's way, he hasn't dealt with us after our sins, has he? Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, he has bid us return, his bid us return, and take with us words.

This is God's heart from all generations. Say unto the Lord, I've sinned, receive us graciously, we've sinned, this is the Lord's way.

[ 34 : 44 ] Then we have this beautiful expression, for I have redeemed thee, such a full expression there is our comfort, the Lord has redeemed us.

And then the effect of it, sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it, shout ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein, why?

Why should we break forth into singing? Why says the Lord here, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

you have that sweet hope that the Lord's redeemed you, and then that blessed rejoicing that he's glorified himself in Israel, glorified himself in saving his people.

What a blessed God of comfort we have. What divine comfort we have here in these prophecies. and when we look further into these beautiful prophecies, we come to words like this, don't we, in verse 10 in chapter 1, fear thou not, the fear nots of God.

[ 36 : 10 ] what comfort there is in a fear not. If I should say to you now, you no need to worry, don't fear that.

What effect could it have but little? fear not. But when God says fear not to his people, why should we fear?

There is that reason why we should not fear. And the fear not there are many of them in this precious part of God's word. There are many of them in the Psalms.

There's many of them spoken by the angels to Elizabeth and to Mary and to Zachariah. there's many spoken by our dear Lord. Fear not, little flock, it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

You say, am I to expect the kingdom at last, said Jesus? Fear not, little flock. You're a little flock, you're fearful, but fear not.

[ 37 : 23 ] It's your father's good pleasure. That's the reason why we shouldn't fear to give you the kingdom. And these fear not here. In the context of our text we're led to this morning, fear thou not, it's a command, isn't it?

For I am with thee. What else matters if the Lord is with us? What else? Of whom shall I be afraid?

What can man do unto me? Be not dismayed. Yes, dismayed or dispersed, be not dismayed.

And why shouldn't we be dismayed? Why? It's in here, for I am thy God. That's why. And why? Because he is their God.

I will help thee. I will strengthen thee. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. God's faithfulness.

[ 38 : 32 ] That's the reason why we should fear not. So don't you think we've got good reason this morning to take the comfort God gave to his church and people then for all the prophecies of God believer for you are in Christ.

Yea, and amen to the glory of God the Father. There isn't one promise that isn't certain that hasn't the amen for you in Christ to the glory of God.

God, I close with one simple little thought. I sat outside. After a little while along came birds, a dozen or more coming and going, sparrows, robins.

And I saw a sparrow that would sometimes perch on something solid and sometimes hovering on something that moved. the Lord said, are you not worth more than many sparrows, O ye of little faith?

What comfort is in the beautiful things of nature around us, the sun that shines, the power of it, the glory of this powerful earth, and all God sustaining it in his power, and there's a little sparrow.

[ 40 : 06 ] Shall a sparrow fall to the ground? Let your father's care, he loves, and he cares, my friends. May the God of all comfort comfort your hearts now and eternally.

Amen.