

Sermon Outline
The Rev. Dr. S. Edd Cathey
Comfort of Divine Proportion
December 20, 2015

Sermon Text: Isaiah 40

The Promise of Future Return

[1] Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. [2] Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. [3] A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. [4] Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. [5] And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Human Weakness

[6] A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. [7] The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. [8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Divine Power

[9] Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" [10] Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. [11] He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. [12] Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

Complete Understanding

[13] Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? [14] Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

Covenant Relationship - more binding and firm than a mere personal relationship and more loving and intimate than a mere legal relationship.

The way God Treats his People

[11] He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The Way God Views the Outsiders

[15] Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. [16] Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. [17] All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

Their Chief Offense – Idolatry

[18] To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

[19] An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains.

[20] He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.

Reminder of God's Sovereignty

[21] Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? [22] It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; [23] who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

[24] Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. [25] To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. [26] Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

Counselling to Persevere

[27] Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? [28] Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. [29] He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

[30] Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; [31] but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.