

Her Warfare is Accomplished

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Bible Text: Isaiah 40:1-2

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This morning we'll read our text and ask the Lord's blessing on it. Our text this morning comes from Isaiah 40:1-2.

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.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, I thank thee for this morning. I thank thee, Lord, for life that is in thy Son. O Lord, I pray that that life, that life that is the very essence of our lives if we be thy children, Lord, would be enlivened today and we would see the reigning and see thee as our life and our way and our truth. O Lord, bless this time together today and may it be filled with thy Spirit. May thy Spirit bring thy word to our souls and testify thy dear Son's presence there as it pleases you. O Lord, glorify thy name this day. Be with those who are not here for the reasons that they are not here, Lord, and known unto thee. May you be a present help in their time and make you draw them closer to thee and may you be glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Comfort. Comfort is something that the children of God are in dire need of. I was thinking this week and pondering what the Lord would give me and I was taken to resurrection life, you know, and what life in Christ is and I thought, you know, what Jesus said in John 11:25-26, he said, "I am the resurrection, and the life." You see, you can't have one without the other. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

I was challenged this week by that question: believest thou this? There are times in my life that are very hard. Sometimes I think it's too hard. I seem to be separated from my Lord and I've learned in the 44 years that the Lord has put me here on this earth, a lot later in my life I should add, that comfort is in Christ alone. Providences sometimes smile on the children of God and they bring wealth and they bring health and they bring happiness and those are temporary happinesses. But the only comfort that the child of

God has is Christ and I hope this morning in this passage that we read that you see Christ in it, that you see where the comfort that Isaiah was told and commissioned and put upon his soul to speak to the people of God. This was a very trying time. The Lord had just told Isaiah that they would be carried off into Babylon, that Israel would be carried off into Babylon because of their sins and you and I are no different. We're carried off to Babylon because of our sins.

But yet in the midst of that, the Lord says to Isaiah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." There was a need for the minister to comfort the people of God. The people of God and that's the Israel spoken of here, it's not all of Israel, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished." I want to talk about that today, that our warfare is accomplished. I want to talk about that our iniquity, the church's iniquity is pardoned. I want to talk about receiving at the hand of our Lord, double for all of our sins. That is the Gospel. It's the Gospel to the child of God because, I just finished yesterday reading a very dear, dear book but it wasn't the book, it was the Scriptures in it and it was the way the Holy Spirit used it to remind me of this union, a union you have heard me talk about many times from this pulpit, a union that is vital for the child of God: to know that the seed that is in him is Christ himself. To know that we have no union, we have no relationship, we have nothing outside of Christ.

As the days go by and as last week we were brought to be here and the place was full of people on Resurrection Day, as we went and came here and left, the churches were full and you go today and all the parking lots are less full. You see, resurrection life, when Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life," that life is not religion. That life is not what we live down here. It's that eternal, vital union that Christ has that he has implanted in his people and that we are implanted in him. That's where peace is and when I read this text in the last couple of days, to comfort the people of God, I don't have anything to comfort you with. I can't stand up here and tell you you're going to be rich. I can't tell you your health is going to be good. I can't tell you that all the things that you desire today will come about. But what the minister of God speaks to the people of God is what Christ has accomplished. What Christ has done. Who Christ is. What Christ meant when he said, "It is finished." That resurrection and the life, they are so tied together that when we leave that day that the world comes around to celebrate, the child of God can't leave it because that's the life. It's the life that's in him. It's the resurrection Lord that says, "I am alive." That, "I have risen." That, "I have defeated death." That, "I have defeated sin." That, "I have defeated the devil." That's what we're going to talk about because for the child of God, his warfare is accomplished. I want to know what that means. I want the Holy Spirit to reveal to me today what that means because I still have warfare down here. Life is hard.

The Lord tells Isaiah to comfort his people and I pray today that the people of God are comforted. But why do we need comfort? Well, in Zephaniah 3:12, the Lord preserved this word, I want you to listen, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people." You see, in the midst of Jerusalem, in the midst of this Jerusalem, in the midst of this world, there is an afflicted and poor people and they're afflicted with life because this isn't our heaven here. This isn't our place as we are strangers and pilgrims here on this

earth. We are afflicted people. We will have tribulations. We'll have afflictions of many kinds, body and soul and Zephaniah said, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people." It's a needy people, a people that are in need of the Lord's comfort and the Lord's peace and the Lord's love every moment of their life because life is hard.

"And they shall trust in the name of the LORD." That's the rest of that verse. I love the "shalls" and the "wills" in the word of God because it always takes me back to the seed. It takes me back to the vital union. It shall be because of the union that we have in Christ Jesus. Not because of my belief, not because of what I will to do but what he will will to do and has willed to do, this eternal union. It is so vitally needful for the child of God to understand and to be led to live there. to live there in that union. That's where victory is. We're going to see that today, I hope.

"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." And when I hear the Lord say that I shall trust in the name of the Lord, I know that I will because of his accomplished work, his finished work. And it was finished in eternity as a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world when it was set and it was finished beautifully and all this warfare that I have down here, that's exactly what it is, it's a warfare down here.

That's where we come to the next, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem," speak comfortably, "cry unto her," but the only way Isaiah could cry is if he believed it. If it was written upon his heart. I had this text almost 2 weeks ago and I told my wife, I said, "You know, the only thing that concerns me is I don't know if I've been tried enough in it," because I want to experience the Lord in the text. I want the Lord to take control of it. I want him to speak to me in it and that's the only way I can speak to you in it.

Then he sent the flood. He sent the flood of providential trials. He sent the flood of afflictions and praise be to God he did because, you see, when he says to my soul that my warfare is accomplished and it all began last week. It all began last week when I sat in that chair back there and I listened to the sermon on the bodily resurrection and that's when I saw and I started to see how true this was, that my warfare is accomplished, that that final victory that this body of mine that is decaying now because of sin will be raised a glorious body. That is victory and as much as I get weighed down in this life and as much as sin eats at me and as much as it tears down this body, I know the victory. My warfare is accomplished. This old man will be crucified and this body that this old man has taken over seems to be, will be raised new and the deeds of the old man will be crucified and put away and this glorious body will be joined with my soul. I've always just seemed to miss a little connection. I couldn't really explain it. I kept trying to think of this body the way it is and Paul talking about the sin riddling this body and then it's like the Holy Spirit just revealed it to me and that was the beginning to show me that my warfare is accomplished and the thing that I had struggled with the most, the old nature in me, the Lord has put it away. I'm so blinded down here because it's so close to me and as I carry it around in me every day, it seems to get the upper hand.

But my warfare with this old man is accomplished and it's accomplished in eternity of what Christ did and that's the Gospel. That's what the Lord speaks to the child of God's soul, that his warfare is accomplished. Accomplished means completed, finished entirely. Entirely. That's what I wanted to touch on this morning as I just touched on the old nature and I touched on the old man, but we've got sin too and we've got the world and we've got the devil and all of these things seem to work in time here to separate us but they can't separate us from this vital, eternal union of what Christ has done and will do and has accomplished for his people and that's a glorious truth. That's what I need applied to my conscience, I need applied to my mind, I need applied to my soul to live. That's resurrection life. It's not a day. It's not a religion. It's Christ. It's the seed of Christ in me. It's me being in Christ who is my life.

So what about the devil? Well, I picked one verse for each one of these and it's really unfair because the entire Scriptures talk about the victory. They talk about what Christ has done. They talk about it in detail about the finished work of Christ. You know, Paul said at the end of 1 Corinthians 15, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ," and that victory in Jesus Christ is what the child of God has and the way, the truth and the life which is Christ, in the resurrection life that is Christ and to experience that is what we're in dire need of. That's why we are poor people. We can't get there on our own. We can't get there through obedience. We can't get there through the must-do's and the have-to's. We can't get there at all without him.

So I want to read to you what John wrote in 1 John 3:8 about the accomplishment in relation to the devil. In 1 John 3:8 he says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning," and how true that is. I'll tell you, that's not a debatable term for us because we see how this world is and we look and we see the things that take place every day and we see that that's not a hard thing, that those that committeth sin is of the devil, and that means lives in sin, will die in sin, will perish in sin.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested," this is the second part of that verse, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." The works of the devil are destroyed in Christ. The works of the devil will be destroyed in Christ. Your warfare is accomplished. That's what this means. "Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her, your warfare is accomplished." Do you have these battles? Do you fight these battles? Do you have that old nature battle every day? Do you have the battle with the devil every day? And that passage in Zechariah where Joshua is standing there and the devil is right next to him just speaking, just saying things in his ear, just trying to encompass him, just trying to put whatever he can in his ear to try him. That's what life is down here and I don't know about you but when this is seen, when the child of God is brought to see his warfare is accomplished and yet the days live on and you fall back in those things that sin and so it comes right back on you, you desire to be out of this tabernacle, to be out of this life down here, I should say. To be out of this life that just seems to play itself over and over again. And it shows how in dire need we are of the Holy Spirit to reveal this to us on a daily basis, on an hourly basis, because that's what life in the soul is. That's what life is.

What about the world? Well, also in 1 John 5:4-5, he says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." And do you know what is born of God? The elect of God. The elect of God and the elect of God only. They are born of God and there is no other way to see what the Lord has laid on my heart to speak today but being born of God and having the Holy Spirit reveal it to you.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," and Christ overcame the world because he was the only begotten Son.

"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And the child of God knows that that's the faith of the Son of God. And the child of God knows that that's the seed of Christ. He knows it. He knows that he can't overcome sin. He can't overcome the world. I see my children, I see the children in here, I see the adults struggle so much with the world. I see myself struggle with it and there is no overcoming but in Christ. To be hidden in Christ, to have Christ revealed as the one thing needful, the one thing necessary, the one essential truth, the one essential life, the one essential way. That's him and those "shalls" and "wills" are fixed and he shall reveal that to his children in his perfect time. And he shall reveal this victory.

"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" And I'll promise you one thing: you won't believe it if you're not in Christ. It doesn't matter what you talk with your mouth, it doesn't matter who you tell that you believe, it doesn't matter what your religion is. If you are not in Christ, you won't believe in Christ. Our warfare is accomplished. It's completed. It's finished entirely by Christ.

What about sin? I told you, there are many places I could go but let's hold our finger in Isaiah, we're coming back, let's go to Romans 5 a minute. Let's just look how Romans 5 ends, starting in verse 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," yes, we fail in Adam. We are sinners but we don't stop there. "So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Notice that doesn't say the obedience of all of those, it says the obedience of one shall many be made righteous because that obedience, that perfect obedience was the robe of righteousness that Christ puts on the child of God and it's perfect and it is lacking nothing because it is sinless. It's a perfect obedient robe.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Your warfare is accomplished. I don't know about you, but sin abounds. Sin abounds in this body of mine every day but as a testimony of Christ and me being in Christ, I can say that grace does much more abound. But, you see, I can't say that in myself. I can't say because I have overcome it, because I have put it away, because I can do this. I can't say that. But I can say by the grace of God is that grace did much more abound.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death," and don't miss that. That's the finality of sin for the child of God, death. That's what was so beautiful about that message last week about the resurrection and about the body that, do you know what, when the sin is put away, when it is dealt with and it's done with, we're not going to have it anymore. Sin and its rightful

place down here reigns that as sin reigned unto death, "even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." That's eternal. Grace abounds eternally. Sin will be destroyed. Do you know why? Because our warfare is accomplished.

We've seen the world overcome. We've seen sin have an end. We've seen the devil put in his place. We've seen the Lord work so mightily in this bodily resurrection to put down the deeds of the old man and how important that is that he mortifies those deeds while we still live here. That warfare, and I can't stress to you, if I could show you the scars, I would but they are all internal, the scars of the warfare, the warfare is very strong.

But this warfare being accomplished takes us now to Hebrews 4 to say this about the warfare being accomplished. Where to start? And, of course, this is rest. Let's just start in verse 3, "For we which have believed do enter into rest," there is the faith of the Son of God. It's the only way to have rest. "As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath," as he was speaking of those that he just spoke of here not being mixed with faith and them that heard it, "if they shall enter into my rest: although," which the Greek says "though," "though the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Isn't it a glorious truth that the Lord gives us rest here while we live in this life but the rest truly is eternal. But in time, he meets our souls. He meets our souls with himself to bring us to rest in this warfare. And I know, you're like me and say, "Well, it just seems to be short-lived sometimes." You're right but it's enough. It's the sustaining grace that sustains the child of God in this life and readies him for the life to come. That's the goodness of our Lord. That's the peace and comfort that, Lord willing, is preached to your soul today.

Then look at verse 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." It remains. It's here. It's every time the Lord meets your soul to reveal this victory.

"For he that is entered into his rest," verse 10, "he also hath ceased from his own works." Do you see that? Do you see how that is tied? Because in a minute we're going to go to a verse that talks about works and them being glorious but they're not ours. Oh, if we could ever cease from our own works and desiring more righteousness or more obedience or whatever it is that we desire to perform in ourselves that the Lord would block off that creature, put down that creature righteousness under his feet and show us what we are in Christ and what Christ has accomplished, finished entirely for his people.

Now, let's go back to our text. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." "Pardon" means "forgiven or excused." I want you to listen to the definition of "pardon," okay? "Release of an offense or the obligation of the offender to suffer a penalty or bear the displeasure of the offended party." Do you know what that says to me? He stood in my place. He was the perfect substitute. And because he did, because he stood in my place, he has accomplished all things for me. What a victory. What an understanding to be shown that the Lord who is perfect and sinless stood in my place to take these sins that I have committed past, present and future and put them away. To pardon them. To stand and say, "They are not guilty." Not guilty, why?

Because of him. Because of his justifying blood. Because of his justifying righteousness. And because he is the justifier of all of the people and elect of God only. The elect only.

And all of this is for his glory, for his name. David said it this way in Psalm 103:12, he said, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." You try to make those 2 meet, as far as from the east is to the west, they never do. That's the complete forgiveness of our sins. Not one sin unpardoned. Not one sin not forgiven. Let that sink down. Do you know how hard it is for us to forgive? It's impossible. Forgiveness and repentance is of the Lord.

Paul said it this way in Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." We're a prisoner of sin but he bought us back with the price of his blood from all iniquity, "and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." That's that works I was telling you about. They are not ours. What is a child of God zealous of? His Lord. His Lord who has set up his kingdom in his soul, his mind, in all of him. He is zealous of the name of the Lord to be glorified. He's humbled that the Lord has chosen him because he sees that there is nothing worthy in him. What a blessing that her iniquity is pardoned.

Paul says it in this way in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us." That's what I said, he stood in our place, "who knew no sin." Knew meaning he did not have a relationship. Knew nothing of what it was like to sin. Knew no sin, just hated it. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." In Christ. He is that seed that's in us. Do you remember that relationship in John 17 that he keeps going over and over, "Lord, I be in thee, Father," as he's praying to the Father, "and they are with us and I in them and they in me." That's that eternal, vital union and to walk around and not to know it or to not experience it and not have any revelation of it, is death.

Then this last phrase, "for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." Well, what does that mean? Well, we've already talked about it. He giveth more grace. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Do you know how the Lord's words were, "Verily, verily, of a truth, it is established"? He has overruled our sin.

I want to read you something. This was what Hawker said on this verse and it was the end of it and I didn't think I could say it any better so I printed it out. He said, "One thought more on this most blessed passage. What does the Lord mean by Jerusalem having received double for all her sins? Surely it means what is literally true, that in the person of her Lord, the atonement he made for sin was of such infinite value that it not only compensated for all the evil done by sin but over and above, left such a redundancy of merit as might be well called double and such as will never be accounted for in the blessings of pardon, peace and glory and happiness to all eternity. Reader, I beseech you often, yea very often, turn to this sweet Scripture and think of Jesus." How blessed that would be that we could turn to these Scriptures and think on Jesus.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her." I can't overestimate or stress how important that cry is. When I hear

those words, I know that is soul work. David said a lot, "Out of the depths I cry unto thee." Jonah cried out of the belly of the whale. That is soul work. "Cry unto them." And the only way you'll ever understand is that same soul work, that same Holy Spirit that is so faithful to lead the elect to Christ and his finished work.

"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." When I read that last part, I just think of how great grace is. I sat last night, Bible study with the children trying to explain to them how great grace is. It blows my mind of the depth of grace because I'm always comparing it with me. I'm always comparing it about how do I love, grace is so much greater. The grace of faith, the grace of love, all that is stored in Christ is so much greater and more powerful than anything we have. But here's the beauty: if we be in him, we possess all of it because of the vital union that we have in Christ Jesus.

I want to leave you today with just the rest of the chapter, not the rest of the chapter, I just want you to read with me from 28 on, how this chapter ends, I should say. I love this question in 28, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Have you not heard? Have you not understood that the Lord is faithful and he never wearies? You know, you and I, we weary. I'm weary now. Have you not known that? Have you not experienced the faithfulness of the Lord?

"There is no searching of his understanding." His ways are so much higher than our ways.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." He is our strength. He is our power.

"Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." And when I hear words like that, how am I borne up on those wings but by the Holy Spirit alone, to show me what Christ has done, show me that he swallowed up my weariness, that he swallowed up my faintness, that he swallowed up the fact that I have no strength and he has become all of those things for me because I am in him and that's where life is and all of these things that we make to be life down here are not life at all.

But this Lord, this Lord that has accomplished our warfare, that has pardoned our iniquities and has overruled sin by his grace is worthy to be praised.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, bless these words, Lord, take them to the souls of thy children, enliven us, cry out to us today, Lord, these words, what you have done in the finished salvation for thy people. Lord, draw us to thee and thee alone. Bless this message for thy glory, for thy name's sake. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.