
Sermon Notes

April 12, 2015

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Our God Reigns: Comfort and Joy

Isaiah 40:1-11

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."

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.

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.

Our Great God

- ❖ Isaiah 40 is one of Scripture's great monuments
 - pondering its grandeur as well as its immense practicality provides refreshment for our souls
 - we need to have an ever expanding, growing vision of God
- ❖ Isaiah 40 offers us a remarkably encouraging interweaving of
 - God's personal, intimate, active care in our lives
 - God's vast, immense, infinite, incomprehensible nature

Comfort, Comfort

- ❖ The God of all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
 - we all need the comfort that God alone can give
 - this was true in Israel's history, it is true of us today
- ❖ God sometimes uses the consequences and fallout of sin to cause us to take our eyes off of ourselves and put them on Him
 - the effects of our brokenness are not forever (Hosea 6:1)
 - God provides the way of reconciliation and restoration

■ *My chains are gone, I've been set free...*

- ❖ God's comfort and joy are freely available to all, but only comes to those who embrace His invitation to be part of "His people"
- His people admit and acknowledge that God's way is not only the **best** way, it is the **ONLY** way
- we are to make known (cry out) the proclamation of God's pardon for our iniquity

The Coming of Comfort

- ❖ God inspires Isaiah to speak of Jesus, the coming deliverer (vv. 3-4)
 - Get ready! Christ, the bringer of comfort is coming!!!
 - Christ inaugurates a kingdom that turns the world upside down and inside out
- ❖ Through the presence and expansion of this kingdom, God manifests and reveals His glory (v. 5)
 - *Our God Reigns*
 - this is the rock solid hope we hold onto when our lives make no sense
- ❖ To receive this comfort, we must submit our lives to the authority of God's unchanging Word

God's "Two Arms"

- ❖ God describes Himself by giving us a picture of Himself as having two distinctly different arms
 - one arm represents His power and authority
 - His other arm is engaged in caring for and tending to the needs of those who are described as *His reward*
 - ◆ **WE** are Christ's reward
 - ◆ **WE** are the fruit of His labor
- ❖ A word of admonition to the "careless"
- ❖ A word of encouragement to the "careworn"

Personal Application

1. In what area of your life do you sense your greatest need for God's comfort? If you are struggling with pain and brokenness because of known sin, confess that sin, repent of it, leave it behind and ask God to begin the process of reviving and restoring you.
2. Are there any inappropriate, self-destructive ways that you have resorted to in search of comfort and/or relief from pain and suffering? Identify and repent of these as you ask God for His perfect comfort and joy.
3. How does the picture of God's "two arms" in this passage encourage you? Are you more aware of His "ruling arm" or His "caring arm"? What will help you keep a more balanced appreciation of these two aspects of God's personality?