

Where Comfort Is Found

Sunday, January 10th, 1993

Isaiah 40:1-4

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: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

My subject today is: "Where Comfort Is Found." Where do you find real, genuine, lasting comfort and rest? Where is it found? We're going to be turning to the Book of Isaiah as our text. Turn to Isaiah Chapter 40. I'll be reading the first three verses on the subject: "Where Comfort Is Really Found."

If you have your Bible, open it to Isaiah 40 and listen to this scripture. The scripture reads, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.*" What is being said? Speak to the heart, not just to the head, but also to the hearts, (speak to their hearts in a comfortable fashion). "*Cry unto her, cry unto my people that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, and that she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins.*"

Now, this scripture is not for everybody, it is for those who believe God. It is for those who have found their rest in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. This promise in this scripture is written to those who look to the scriptures for their food, strength, and for their comfort. If you are a person who believes God, who finds your rest, confidence and hope in Christ Jesus, then you will find in this message today, great assurance and great comfort (if you will listen).

That is the biggest problem. It's difficult to get people to listen. Our Lord often said, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith to the churches. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*" Do you have spiritual ears so you can hear? God anointed eyes so that you could see. He gave you a born again, renewed, and regenerated heart so that you could understand. Do you have ears to hear? Then hear what God says!

Now, here are some questions: Who is speaking here? It is the Lord your God who is speaking (that is clear). It says, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the hearts of my people.*"

To whom does the Lord speak? He is talking to His prophets. This is Isaiah writing here, the Lord said, *“Isaiah, comfort my people. Comfort ye my people.”* The scripture says, *“The Lord spoke to our Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.”* He calls them His prophets, His preachers and His shepherds. God speaks to the people by His servant, by His true servants.

In Ephesians four, it says (speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ), *“He that ascended is the same who descended.”* In other words, the Messiah who went back to heaven is the Messiah who came. He said, *“I came from the Father and I go back to the Father, but he that ascended, is the same as he that descended. He gave to the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists or missionaries, pastors and teachers that the child of God might be taught and edified.”* So, the Lord says to His preachers, to His prophets, to His under shepherds, *“You comfort My people.”* I have some things to say to My people and I am going to say them through you, My true prophets.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. All the way through the scriptures we have men through whom God speaks. He speaks to His people through His servants, through His true preachers. What is His command? What is the Lord saying to His prophets, preachers and teachers? He says, *“Comfort My people, speak ye comfortably to My people.”*

There is a time for rebuke. No body likes it, but there is time for rebuke and time for reproof. There is also time for correction, and self-examination, I know that. The command here is to *“Comfort My people.”* Their hearts need spoken to so that they might have rest and peace. It is so that they may know the truth and have assurance. They need a good hope of eternal life. *“Speak comfortably to My people.”*

The next question is, who are these people to whom the Lord would have us speak comfortably and to the heart? He says, *“They are My people.”* You can't comfort where God has not comforted. You can't comfort where God has not converted. We cannot cry, *“Peace, Peace when there is no peace.”* The Lord says, *“You comfort My people.”*

Who are His people? I will give you several marks of His people. Number one; they are His people by choice, by Divine choice. Christ said to His disciples, *“You didn't choose me, I chose you.”* The Lord chose His people. He chose His bride. Moses wrote of Israel and said, *“It pleased the Lord to make you His people.”* Christ calls them, *“My sheep.”* He says, *“The Father gave Me these sheep; My sheep hear My voice and I give them eternal life.”* He calls His sheep and says, *“I know My Sheep and are known of Mine. My Father gave Me these sheep and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hands.”* So, they are His by choice.

Secondly, they are His by purchase. He bought them. In First Peter 1:19 it says, *“For as much as you know, you were not redeemed (bought back), by corruptible things such as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by traditions from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.”* *“You are not your own; you are bought with a price.”* Oh, what a price He paid! He gave Himself, He gave His life, He gave His blood and He died for His people. *“You are not your own; you are bought with a price.”* You are His people. He chose you, purchased you, and redeemed you.

They are His also, by a Divine call. Paul said, *“Whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He predestinated, He called. He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* He called you out of false religion into His rest. He called you out of your works into His accomplished work; He called you! The scripture says, *“Whom He predestinated He called and whom He called He justified.”*

Psalm 110:3 says, *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”* Who are these people? They are His people. They are His people by choice, they are His people by purchase, and they are His people by call. He called them and came and found them. It is just like when He called Zacchaeus to come down. He said to Matthew, *“Follow Me.”* James and John, while they were mending nets with their father, the Lord said, *“Follow Me.”*

They are His by faith. They are His people because they want to be His people. They are willing to be His people. In Ephesians 1:13 it says, *“In whom you trusted after you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.”* So, they are His people.

Now, why do these people need comfort? The scripture says, *“Comfort ye My people, saith your God; speak to their heart.”* God is speaking; He’s speaking to His preachers, His prophets, His servants and His under shepherds. He is telling them to comfort His people. Why do they need comfort? Why do the Lord’s people need comfort? There are three reasons:

Number one; they are Sons of God, but they are still Sons of men. They are still human and they still bare the infirmities of the flesh, the pains of the flesh, and the sorrows of the flesh and the temptations of the flesh. Paul says, *“We have this treasure;”* it is a treasure. There is the knowledge of God, the relationship with God, and eternal life, which He has given to us. *“We have this treasure in earthen vessels.”* We know and realize and are made aware of it constantly. That is the reason that Paul tells us, *“To mortify our flesh”* (to keep it under, push it down, crucify it and do everything in our power to keep these passions of the flesh from rising up and over coming us). They still need comfort. They

are the sons of God, that is true, but they are still sons of men. They are still human and they still bare about in their body the infirmities of the flesh.

Secondly: *"They are a tried people."* God's people are definitely a tried people. The Lord Jesus said, *"In this world you will have tribulation;"* you are going to have trouble. You'll have trouble in the flesh. You folks know what trouble is. You people listening to me who are straight forward, honest, truthful and children of God; you know what trouble is. Believers have sicknesses, they have family problems, they have heartaches, they have problems with their children, they have personal conflicts and inward distress, depression, pain and tears. This life is full of pain and tears. They are a *"tried people."*

Thirdly; why do they need comfort? Well, they are still human and they are a tried and troubled people. They are also a persecuted people. They are hated by this world. They are sometimes even hated by the members of their own households. People for whom they work hate them. They are suffering for what they believe. If they stand solidly and truthfully for the gospel of God's redeeming grace, if they stand for honesty, integrity, and righteousness, they are going to be persecuted. So, the Lord commands His preachers to comfort His people. They need help and comfort and need it day by day. They need it all the time; they need to be comforted.

I'm one of God's preachers; He's called me to preach. I've been preaching the gospel for almost 42 years now and I'm one of those preachers to whom God is speaking. I have a far-reaching ministry. There are people who listen to me by television, radio, tapes and the pulpit. What must I do to comfort God's people? He says, *"You comfort My people; you comfort My people. You speak comfortably to the hearts of My people."* What am I going to do? How am I going to comfort them?

Should I go to the hospital and rub their heads or go to their homes and tell them that things are going to be better? They may not get better right now. Here is the key word: *"You comfort My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably."* The key word is speak! I want you to speak, preach, teach and give them the Word of God. It is His Word that comforts. It is not my words, it's not my feelings, ideas, theories or even philosophies; it is His Word that comforts His people. It is His promises that give rest and comfort to His people.

He ask Peter, *"Do you love Me?"* The Lord said, *"Feed my sheep."* What do I feed them? You feed them the Word of God! Paul told Timothy to *"Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season; preach the Word."* You see, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* The Bible states, *"Comfort ye one another with these Words."* That is what Paul says in the Book of Thessalonians, *"Take these*

Words and comfort people. Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby."

David said, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."* What do suppose those green pastures are? They are the green pastures of His Word. Sheep feed on grass. God's sheep feed on His Word. This is the children's bread. *"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still water."* What is the food and drink of the believer? It is God's Word.

So, He says, *"Comfort My people, comfort My people, speak to their heart and say this to them, the war is over!"* Isn't that what it says? Look at it in Isaiah 40, it says, *"Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her, her warfare is accomplished."* The war is over!

Do any of you remember the end of World War II? Do you remember when World War II was over? I remember it very, very distinctly. It seems like it was just yesterday. I was in the service, in Okinawa on a ship. I had been there since the invasion of Okinawa. They announced that the war was over on August 14th, 1945. It was a few days before my 20th birthday. I had been over there about two years. The enemies were defeated and it came over the radio. They said, "The enemy is pursuing for peace; the enemy is defeated; the war is over, the enemy poses no more threats or air raids. There were to be no more bombs, there would be no more shooting, there would be no more bloodshed, there would be no more dying; your danger is past. The war is over!"

Oh, I tell you, we nearly went crazy! We were so happy. There was so much comfort, peace, quietness and rest. The next day we turned on all the lights on the ship. We didn't have to keep the lights off at night. We made all the noise that we wanted. We sent radio messages. We didn't have to have radio silence anymore. The war is over; the enemy was defeated! There was peace and we weren't afraid anymore. We didn't have to worry about dying over there.

Well, this is what He tells me to tell you, that our spiritual war is over and the enemy is defeated. Who is your enemy? Well, Satan is your enemy, but Satan is defeated. I told you before that this message isn't for every body but it is for God's people (believers). It is for those who know God. Satan poses no threat to the children of God, none whatsoever! He's defeated. *"The seed of woman has crushed his head. The prince of this world is judged; he's cast out and defeated."* He has no power whatsoever in the life of a believer, not any whatsoever.

What is your enemy? Is it death? Death is defeated. There is no death. *"He that believeth on Me, Christ said, shall never die."* He will sleep. He will depart from this

world someday and will be going to be with Christ, but he's not going to die. Death is defeated. The scripture says, "*There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus.*" Why? There is no judgment because Christ took our judgment. He took our punishment, and He took our condemnation. "*There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ.*"

There is no judgment, it is over; the war is over! You don't have to be afraid. You don't have to tremble; you are not in any danger. There is no threat to your safety. The curse is removed; "*Christ has been made a curse for us.*" You say to My people, "*Comfort My people, and you say to her, the war is over, the enemy is defeated.*" There is no threat.

Do you remember the woman who was caught up in adultery? It is in John Chapter 8. They brought her to the Lord Jesus and they cast her down at His feet. These men all stood around her. There were lawyers, Pharisees, Sadducees, Sanhedrin members, legalists, and moralists. They had their religion and their good works. They told our Lord, "Moses in the law condemns her." They said, "*Stone her.*" The law condemns her, what do you say?

You remember the story, Christ stooped down and wrote in the sand and stood up and said, "*You that are without sin, cast the first stone.*" He stooped back down and kept writing in the sand. They began to leave, the oldest, down to the youngest. In a moment, He stood up and looked around and they were all gone. All of the accusers and all the enemies were gone. He looked down at the woman and there was no one left but Him and the woman. He looked down at her and said, "*Woman, where are your accusers? Doth no man condemn thee?*" She said, "*no man.*" He said, "*neither do I; go and sin no more.*"

That is the way it is with you and with me. "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it is God that justifieth.*" Who can lay anything, who can condemn; it is Christ that died? This is our comfort. "*You say to My people, the war is over.*" Christ the Conqueror has defeated all our enemies. We don't have any more.

Secondly, "*You say to her that her iniquity is pardoned,*" her sins are all pardoned. Is this not the heart and core of all of our spiritual problems? What is the heart and core of all spiritual problems and of all our sorrows? The heart of it is sin. "*Your sins have separated you and your God.*" That is the whole problem. "*The sting of death is sin. The soul that sinneth shall surely die. There is none that doeth good and sinneth not. There is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" Is that not our problem? The reason is sin.

“Say to My people, you tell them that their sins are all pardoned.” You say to those who believe, to those who are called, to those that have heard the gospel and have received and believed it, to those who rest in Christ’s righteousness and in Christ’s cleansing blood, their sins are all forgiven.

You can’t say this to anyone else but His people, but you can say it to them. All of their sins are gone. Why? The reason our sins are gone is because Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree. He said, *“I lay down My life for My sheep. By His righteous knowledge shall my just servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”*

You tell them that their iniquities are pardoned. How were they pardoned? Christ bore them. *“He shall bear their iniquity.”* He bore the sin of many. *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; by his stripes we are healed.”*

Spurgeon said this, “If Christ bore my sins, I don’t bear them. No, I do not bear them. If He bore them, I do not bear them. If He died for them, I shall not die for them. My sins cannot be on Him and on me too! It cannot be that He took my sin in His body and died for them and left them on me. That can’t be because a thing cannot be in two places at one time.” Our sins are pardoned.

What does the Bible say? *“The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”* He said, *“Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow.”* He cleanseth us from all sin. The Bible says that our sins are blotted out. The Bible says, *“Our sins have been separated from us as far as the east is from the west.”* The scripture says, *“Our sins are remembered no more.”*

You comfort My people, amid their trials, amid their temptations, amid their troubles, amid their conflicts and with this treasure of the gospel. They are striving for holiness and to be like Christ. They want to glorify Him on this earth. Here is their comfort; the war is over, the enemy has been defeated. Their sins are pardoned and I will never bring them up again. Their sins are put away, they are cleansed and pardoned and I will remember them no more.

Now, listen, *“Say to My people, they have received of the Lord’s hand, double for all their sins.”* What is our Lord saying here? He is saying that there is a full atonement. It is not scarce; it is not barely forgiven; it is abundant! The atonement is full. *“He is plenteous in redemption.”* It is no matter how great the sin, or how great the debt, you have received double for all that you owe.

You know, most of you listening to me have never had an abundance of anything, have you? We've had enough; I know that. The Lord supplies our needs. Most of us live week to week, don't you? I've lived that way for 40 some odd years, day to day. What we have is what God supplies. We have never had an abundance of anything, just plenty.

I remember reading a story about an old Irish lady who had worked, labored, skimped, saved, raised a family, and had done without. In her latter years, her son took her to the ocean. She had never stood on a beach and looked at the ocean. Her son came by and got her and drove her to the ocean. This dear old lady was standing there looking at the ocean for the first time. All her life she had nothing. She had never seen an abundance of anything. Do you know what she said when she saw that ocean? She said, 'Well, I'm finally glad to see something that there is plenty of.' Her son said, "Momma, and you're just looking at the top of it. It goes deep, deep, deep."

This is what I am saying to you; there is plenty of our Lord's grace, blood and mercy. *"He's plenteous in redemption; and his grace is sufficient. He's able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him. You have received of the Lord double for all your sins."* They are paid, not only paid in full, but they are paid abundantly. There is full atonement. It is a free salvation. He says, *"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,"* (eternal rest)! Now, that is real comfort!