

Isaiah 40 – God Comforts His People

To set this passage in context, have a quick recap on the previous weeks. What have we learned about God? What have we learned about his people?

Abandoned!

At this point God's people are in exile in Babylon. The warnings of God's judgment have come to pass, and his people have been carried off to a land far away. (Isaiah 39.5-7) They are the slaves of a cruel nation, and all hope seems gone. Put yourself in their shoes; all the promises of God and his faithfulness up until now seem far away. Isaiah 40 is god's response to those claims and questions in v27.

Most people at some point will feel abandoned by God – why do we feel like this, and what are some of the circumstances that lead to feeling this way?

'Comfort my People'

God's people felt just like this, and he speaks comfort and truth into their lives. Read the passages below, and for each discuss what we learn about God. How does that speak into the lives of God's people then?

v1-2

v3-8

v9-11

v12-20

v21-26

v28-31

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God's comfort now...

If this is God's character and we are supposed to mimic his character to the world around how do we show this kind of tenderness? How can we carry those in our small group close to our heart? What do you need to do in your group to make this a reality?

The Good News!

God is faithful! It's hard to read through this chapter and not be reminded again of who he is! Compared to the Israelites in exile we have even more reason to trust God. The promises in verses 3 (Luke 3.3-6), 5 (John 1.14) and 9-11 (John 10) have been fulfilled!!! How have they been fulfilled?

How do they still remain to be fulfilled? How can we be practically involved in their fulfillment?

Preparing the way...

This passage points to Jesus, and the comfort he will bring, and about how the glory of the Lord will be seen! And we are still longing for the completion of this work! For the Lord God to finally come with power to rule the all the people. And in the meantime our job is to 'prepare in the desert', to 'shout out loud the good news'!

These versus encouraging us to shout out the good news come in the context of the rest of Isaiah chapter 40! What are the overall themes of the chapter and why are they important to know when we go to shout out the good news?

Shout it out!

How can you as a small group share the good news with those in your classes before Christmas?

Reflect

How can you make sure that when God 'feels' far away you can still cling to the truth of who he is? What are the issues in your own life that prevent you from remembering who God is?

We are now the people entrusted with preparing the way, and with crying out. In what ways do you find this difficult? What can we do as a small group to help overcome those difficulties, or to proclaim this good news as a group.