

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Our Only Comfort

Speaker:

Steve Heitland

Date:

March 14, 2021

Scriptures:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Theme: Find your comfort in the Lord who always saves his people.

Introduction: In the overall structure of Isaiah, ch. 40 marks a significant transition. The time frame has shifted from Isaiah's contemporaries (740-680 BC) to the exiles in the Babylonian Captivity (from 586 BC onward). The Lord is addressing his people *after* judgment, and working to save and restore them to himself. So, this is a message of comfort directed to a people who have suffered for their sin.

Isaiah highlights three aspects of the Lord's comfort:

1. Comfort in his presence (1-5)

The essence of true love is in seeking the good of another. Here, the Lord shows his love for his people by seeking their good—despite their rebellion against him. The Lord comforts his people and identifies as their God. Ultimately, his comfort is linked to his pardon. For Judah to be restored they must first be forgiven. Our experience of God's comfort is very much tied to our experience of his pardon. As we turn from our sins and turn to him, we are forgiven and comforted. If we have received God's pardon, then we can be comforted by his presence. But for those who persist in rebellion, his presence is terrifying, not comforting.

2. Comfort in his promise (6-8)

The strength of the promise of God is exemplified in his word: "the word of our God will stand forever" (v. 8). In contrast, humans and their achievements are like grass and flowers. We may look impressive, but we are weak and frail. We do not endure. The temptation is for mankind to look to ourselves for strength and comfort. We can set up our own ideas and values for what life should be, and in doing so we reject the One who alone can lead us into the truth. That is why we must study God's word in order that we may know his truth, and so be sanctified and strengthened by his promises.

3. Comfort in his power (9-11)

The Lord sends his herald to announce his salvation far and wide. He has come to save his people, and he wants all men to know it. Three images illustrate his salvation. He is the mighty warrior, the wealthy benefactor, and the good shepherd. He is powerful to save, and tender in his care for his people.

Questions:

1. How do you turn to trivialities to distract you from the problems in your life?
2. Do you study Scripture deeply out of a conviction that it is God's words of life?
3. How does the tender and powerful love of Christ affect you and motivate you to know him?