

# Comfort From God's Erring People

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[ 0 : 00 ] Before the preaching of God's word, take your Bibles again to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 40. 4-0, it's a wonderful chapter.

And we're going to read verses 1 through 11. Isaiah chapter 40, verse 1. Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling in the desert to prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low.

The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed. And all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

[ 1 : 03 ] A voice says, cry out. And I said, what shall I cry? All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers, and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them.

Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout. Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah, here is your God.

See, the sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those that have young. Amen.

[ 2 : 09 ] Let's hear the preaching of God for it. My father used to tell a story often, and though it is just a story, it nevertheless packs a lesson that we need to hear.

The story is about the day that the devil put up his tools for sale. And there, laid out on the tables, was a treacherous collection of implements.

Bitterness, hatred, anger, strife, envy, greed, lust, lies, pride, and the like.

But laid aside from the rest was a harmless-looking device. And though it was well-worn, it was priced very highly. What's the name of this tool, a customer asked.

That is discouragement, came the reply. Why do you price it so highly? Because it is more useful to me than any of the others, said Satan.

[ 3 : 11 ] With it, I can pry a man's heart open when I cannot get near him with any other tool. It is badly worn because I have used it on almost everybody, since few people seem to know that it belongs to me.

Are you downhearted this morning? Are you discouraged? Maybe with a stubborn sin that you cannot shake. Maybe with the Lord's discipline on your life because of your sin.

Maybe because of the consequences of bad choices. Maybe some loss, some dashed hopes, some regrets that you can't get over.

Maybe a long trial with no light at the end of the tunnel. You're discouraged. Discouragement is a loss of hope. It's a weariness of heart.

It's a weakness of faith in the promises of God and in the God of the promises. And it's something that every single one of us face in this world at some points in our lives.

[ 4 : 23 ] And its effects upon us and others around us are not good, nor are they glorifying to God, and therefore it's something that our God takes seriously, and so should we.

And so we've come to Isaiah chapter 40 for the divine medicine that discouraged hearts need. We're presently in the midst of a series of some of the great chapters of the Bible.

We spent many weeks studying Romans chapter 8. Last week in one sermon we dealt with chapter 73 of the Psalms.

In our evening studies we're looking at John 17. And now we come to Isaiah chapter 40.

Let me give a few introductory remarks about this chapter as you find it here in the midst of this book of Isaiah. Isaiah was God's prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah around 735 before Christ.

[ 5 : 26 ] The very first verse of his book says, The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

So Isaiah's ministry spanned these four kings of the southern kingdom a period of some 50 years. And in the very next verse, the second verse of the book, God begins to bring his charges against Judah through Isaiah.

Hear, O heavens, listen, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. So Isaiah is sent to them to confront them with their sins, to announce God's judgments that are coming upon them because of their sins.

A judgment that will come mainly through the nations around them who will bring war and exile to them. And specifically, the Assyrians, the great power of the day.

And during Hezekiah's reign, they came and they destroyed the northern kingdom, which was no more. And they threatened to do the same to the southern kingdom.

[ 6 : 51 ] And they captured all their big cities, and they came and surrounded Jerusalem. And you remember how Sennacherib blasphemed God.

Why do you think that your God's going to save you? He couldn't save any of the other countries. And Hezekiah the king called on Isaiah to pray for the nation.

And through Isaiah, the promise came that God would deliver his people from the mighty Assyrians. And so during the night, an angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 soldiers in their tents.

And when they woke in the morning and found all the dead bodies, King Sennacherib went back to Assyria, where he was cut down with a sword by his own sons in the temple of his God.

And so God protected Jerusalem and the southern kingdom. But even after such a deliverance, Judah continued to harden their hearts, continued to turn their backs on God and seek their idols instead of God.

[ 7 : 57 ] And so Isaiah prophesied to King Hezekiah that the Babylonians would come and destroy them and take the people of Judah into captivity, an exile that they would later learn would last for 70 years.

That prophecy of the Babylonian exile comes in chapter 39. And the part one of Isaiah is ended with chapter 39.

Destruction from the Babylonians is coming. Well, it came 100 years later when Isaiah was already dead and gone. Jerusalem was destroyed.

The temple was burned. The people were scattered throughout the vast Babylonian empire.

Chapter 40 begins part 2 of the book, which strangely enough is God's message through Isaiah to the Jews who would be in Babylon over 100 years later.

So this is a prophecy laid up for the future that would find Judah in captivity, would find Judah in great discouragement and much in need of this chapter.

[ 9 : 13 ] They would be downhearted. They would be losing hope as their 70 years of captivity was grinding on ever so slowly with no help in sight, feeling forsaken and forgotten by God and even blaming God for their troubles.

And so chapter 40 of Isaiah is God's word to them in their captivity, in the most discouraging circumstances of their lives. And it is not a word of judgment.

It is rather a word of comfort and sweet encouragement that he's not forsaken them nor forgotten them, nor has he forgotten his covenant promises to them.

And here he comes to renew his promise about a future deliverance, the reversal of their fortunes, about God himself coming to deliver his people in a wonderful display of his glory.

He's reviving their hope. He's reviving their expectation of good from God. He's renewing their strength to go on waiting for the Lord.

[ 10 : 27 ] And so it's from this chapter that the discouraged saints of God have been drawing the same comforts and encouragements for 2,700 years now.

And it's my prayer that as we study this chapter, that God himself, the God of hope, would fill you with all joy and peace that comes from believing that you might overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For your own good, for the good of others around you, and for the glory of your sovereign God. So chapter 40 opens with God instructing his prophets to go and speak comforting words to his people. Verse 1, Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Now this comfort is all of grace. Why is it that Judah is down in Babylonian captivity anyway?

Isaiah 42, 24, and 25 answers. Who handed Jacob over to become loot? Who handed Israel over to the plunderers?

[ 11 : 37 ] Was it not the Lord against whom we have sinned? For they would not follow his ways. They did not obey his law. So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war.

It enveloped them in flames. Yet they did not understand. It consumed them, but they did not take it to heart. And yet God sends them a word of comfort?

Comfort? That's not the way we would treat complaining rebels who forsook us. But God is not like us. And he comes with totally undeserved, gracious comfort for a people who had forsaken him and lost all faith and hope in him.

Did they sin? Yes. Yes. Did he discipline them for their sin? Yes. He was faithful to his covenant threats and therefore sent them away into captivity just as he said that he would if they forsook him. Did he leave them there? No. That's the message of chapter 40. He lets them know that they're still his people.

[ 12 : 54 ] Comfort my people, says your God. That's covenant language. God's saying, you're still my people. I'm still your God. I've not cast you off forever.

My covenant promises still stand. Stand. I'm still intent on blessing you and making you a blessing to the whole world. So these Israelites, they would pine away in Babylonian captivity for 70 years, but a time would come when it would end.

It would be over. And that because God does not discipline his children forever. Dads, you don't discipline your children forever. You discipline them, and all discipline is painful, or it's not discipline. But your discipline ends, and you come with comfort to the erring child. And so it is with God and his children. Psalm 103 celebrates, you will not always accuse, nor will you harbor your anger forever. Maybe you know some people who are like that. They always accuse. They never forgive and forget. But your God will not always accuse, nor harbor his anger forever.

[ 14 : 15 ] He does not treat us as our sins deserve, or repay us according to our iniquities. If he did, he would punish us forever. But for the children of God, he does not.

Indeed, later in this book, in chapter 57 and verse 16, God says, I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry. For then the spirit of man would grow faint before me, the breath of man that I have created.

I was enraged by his sinful greed. I punished him and hid my face in anger. Yet he kept on in his willful ways. And we might well expect to hear of a further discipline coming.

But what follows is, I have seen his ways. Yes, they're errant. They're going astray. But I will heal him. I will heal him. And I will give, I will guide him and restore comfort to him, creating praise on the lips of the mourners in Israel.

So this comfort, God coming to his people in Babylon, is all of grace, undeserved. But God is the God of all grace, and he saves the undeserving.

[ 15 : 28 ] So in compassion for them, God is charging his servants, comfort, comfort my people. Do you see his heart in that?

Speak tenderly, verse 2. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

In other words, her hard service, which was the 70 years of captivity in Babylon, that is completed. It's come to an end. It's over.

That's the comforting word. It served its purpose. God doesn't punish his people forever. He knows just the discipline that we need, just the severity, just the length of it.

And so God is good to us in his discipline of us. Not one day too long or too hard, and Judah's hard service has been completed. Enough, God says.

[ 16 : 38 ] It's time for comfort. Go comfort my people. Now the rest of our text this morning, verses 3 to 11, divides up into three voices.

And the first voice tells us that the Lord is coming with salvation in a way that will reveal his glory to all. That's verses 3 to 5. A voice. There it is, the first voice.

A voice of one calling. In the desert, prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up.

Every mountain and hill made low. The rough ground shall become level. The rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed. And all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

So the message is clear. The Lord has not forgotten you in Babylon. And may I say to you who are troubled, the Lord has not forgotten you in your troubles.

[ 17 : 37 ] The comforting promise is that He's coming to save you. He's coming to deliver you. Now that was a hard promise to believe in captivity. The ruthless Babylonians had destroyed them and were keeping them in captivity.

We're not willing to give them up. And there was no help in sight at all. Nothing on the horizon to raise their hopes. There's just this naked promise.

Oh, but it's the promise of a God who cannot fail. I wonder, are there many obstacles and hindrances in the way of God's deliverance of you, in your problems, in your troubles?

Yes, there's many obstacles. Here they're pictured by mountains, hills, valleys, rocky, rugged terrain. But as Zechariah 4.7 says, what are you, O mighty mountain?

Before the Lord, you will become level ground. And so before the Lord who is coming, all these obstacles must give way.

[ 18 : 45 ] The picture is like a bulldozer preparing the way for a new interstate in Tennessee. Every unmovable mountain and hill will be cut down, made low.

And every valley will be filled in and raised up. And the crooked will be made straight. A highway for God will be prepared for him, for he rules over all.

He's coming, and nothing can stop him. He will save you in a way that reveals his glory. That's the message of comfort.

Could they believe it after 70 years in Babylon? Well, they're given an encouragement to do so at the end of verse 5. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

This isn't the mouth of a madman like Putin promising something he can't deliver. This is the mouth of Yahweh. This is the mouth of the Lord by whose word the heavens were made, their starry hosts by the breath of his mouth.

[ 19 : 54 ] What an encouragement to believe the unbelievable promise. You don't need favorable circumstances then to believe his word.

The naked promise from him is enough. For God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act?

Does he promise and not fulfill? Will? His word never comes back empty, but always accomplishes what he sent it to do.

Why? Because his word is not a dead letter. His word is not like yours and mine. It just goes out and those sound waves just fizzle off into nothing.

They don't create our own reality like some would like to express, that you can speak your own reality into existence. No, but God does just that. His word is living and active.

[ 20 : 53 ] Jesus says, My words are spirit and life. His words carry within it the very power to do what it says. So that's the first comforting voice.

The Lord is coming with salvation for you in a way that will reveal his glory. But there's a second voice now heard and it just underscores the certainty of God's word being fulfilled.

Listen for the voice, verses six to eight. A voice says, cry out. And I said, what shall I cry? All men are like grass and their glory is like the flowers of the field.

The grass withers and the flowers fall because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall. But the word of our God stands forever.

So what had happened to the people of God down in Babylon, scattered throughout the vast empire? Well, their troubles and their hardships had twisted their perspective.

[ 22 : 04 ] They had allowed their circumstances to distort their vision so much that man now looks big and God looks small to them.

They'd seen the mighty man, Nebuchadnezzar, and all that he and his powerful army of man could conquer as they conquered the world.

They had come and destroyed God's own city, Jerusalem. They had seen him burn down God's temple, defeat and scatter God's people, holding them bondage for 70 years.

These mighty men were some of the obstacles, some of the unmovable hills and valleys and rough terrain that stood in the way of believing the promise that God would come and deliver them.

And so God says to his discouraged people, you need a pair of glasses to correct your vision. Here, take my word as your glasses, my truth with which you will see things as they really are.

[ 23 : 13 ] So do you have them on? Yes, I do. So what is man? All men are like grass.

Just grass, huh? Even men like Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty army, all men like grass. And what is their glory like?

What is their power, the things that make them so awesome and fearsome to you? All their glory is like flowers. And what happens to grass and flowers?

The grass withers and the flowers fall. Oh, so these strong men, they wither and fall, do they? Why is that?

Because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Oh, you mean all I have to do is... And they're destroyed?

[ 24 : 19 ] Yes. The breath of the Lord blows on them. And he will say later in verses 23 and 24 that this God brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground then he blows on them and they wither and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

This is the Lord who's coming to save you. He simply blows on the mighty and they come to nothing. Surely then the people are grass. The grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.

So men are fragile and passing, but my word will never pass away. Do you see the comfort and encouragement to have God's word correct our vision?

Our vision of God, our vision of man. about the people in my life that bring me fear and anxiety.

[ 25 : 29 ] It's the word of God that cuts them down to size. What are they? They're grass. Their very best about them is but a flower that wilts.

So cease from man whose breath is in their nostrils and the next one that they need to live is in the hands of your God and he cannot give it to 185 mighty men, 5,000 mighty men of Sennachera.

This book enables me to see God is big and people are small and this is the reviving of our hope. God's promises will prevail.

His word simply cannot fail. So we must, in our discouragement, come to this book. So discouraged saints, does this book have anything to say to you about your circumstances, the things that have you discouraged?

Is there anything here? Any word from this God who but speaks and it happens? Scour the Bible to find it. Ask brothers and sisters, pastors, help me find a verse that deals with this problem that I'm having and then memorize it and then meditate on it and recite it 10 times a day.

[ 26 : 51 ] Plead it, pray it, apply it to your situation and then rejoice in the comfort of the promises of this big God who cuts men down to size with but a breath.

Well, there's a third voice mentioned in verses 9 to 11 and here are further instructions for those who are bringing a word of comfort from God to His discouraged people.

Verse 9, You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice. There's the third voice in the passage.

Lift up your voice with a shout. Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah, behold your God. Notice, it's a good word that the prophets have to bring.

It's good news. It's gospel word that speaks of God's deliverance and it's a true and reliable word and so the messengers of God are not to be shy about it.

[ 28 : 03 ] They're not to be afraid, oh, I can't be too bold in announcing this deliverance for fear that it might not happen and then what would I look like? A false prophet. No, this is the word of God so don't be shy about it.

What God says will happen so get up on a high mountain where everyone can hear you and lift up your voice with a shout so that no one will be able to escape this word and proclaim to them the salvation of the Lord.

What's the message that they're to so confidently proclaim? It's all about their God. It's all about the one who the first voice said was coming to save them.

And now the voice is saying, here he is. He's come. The first voice said, he's coming. He's coming and he will save you in a mighty display of his power.

Now this third voice says, he's here. Do you see him? Look at him. Behold your God. It's a call to fix our eyes on our God. Verse 10.

[ 29 : 14 ] See, behold, look, look, the sovereign Lord comes with power and his arm rules for him. It's as if in vision the prophet sees him coming right now.

And who is he? He's the sovereign Lord. Remember who it is that's coming to deliver you. The sovereign Lord of the universe, the king of the one's kinging, the Lord of the one's lording, the master of earth and sky and sea and all things in them.

He rules and he reigns in sovereign power. Do you see him? And sometimes we don't see him. And that's what this book is meant to do.

Behold your God. See him. Do you see him as reigning? In our times of discouragement, brothers and sisters, our great need is to know our God.

It's to have the knowledge of God brought front and center to our minds. We get our eyes too much on the mountains that won't move and the problems and all that discourages us and not enough on the God who reigns.

[ 30 : 24 ] He reigns with power over every single problem we have, every person, every situation, everything. He's a mighty warrior king whose arm rules for him.

His arm is his strength in action. And his reward is with him.

His recompense accompanies him. His reward, the reward for his victory, the spoils for his victory, they're coming with him.

He's bringing the plunder. It's his own people. He's bringing back from captivity the flock of his sheep. And we read that not only is your sovereign lord a mighty warrior king whose arm rules for him, but he's also a gentle shepherd, verse 11, who tends his flock like a shepherd and gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart and gently leads those that have young.

You know, it's the combination of the attributes of God that reveal his glory, isn't it? He's both the lion and the lamb in one person.

[ 31 : 47 ] He has majesty and meekness. Where do you find that in anyone? Is that not what young ladies are looking for in a man?

Tough and tender. We have majesty and meekness in this one who's coming to save us. Manhood and deity.

Full deity as Athanasius defended. Warrior king, gentle shepherd with wrath to crush and love to embrace.

An arm of power to crush his and our enemies to set us free but also with that same arm to gather the lambs and carry them close to his heart.

It's an arm that rules and it's an arm that carries. Never a warrior king more fierce than he. Never a shepherd more gentle than he.

[ 32 : 54 ] He's sensitive to each weakness and each need of every individual sheep. Oh, this little lamb he won't keep up. We'll pick him up and carry him close to my heart.

That's what we are a people close to his heart. Oh, these you with the young ones they're carrying we can't drive them too hard and so he gently leads them. That's how he leads his people.

That's how he cares for them. Special treatment for you according to your every need. You the people close to his heart. So this is your God.

There's none like him and we'll see more of that theme next week as we continue on through this chapter. And just as he promised here in these verses God did come and he did save his scattered people from the captivity in Babylon.

He brought them back to the land that he had promised to give them and all in a way that revealed his glory. It was with an awesome display of his sovereign power and his grace for his people.

[ 34 : 01 ] So that prophecy had its immediate fulfillment in bringing the scattered people of God out, redeeming them from bondage and bringing them back into the land.

But that physical deliverance in no way exhausts the fulfillment of these comforting words. Rather, these words pointed to a greater fulfillment of them when God himself would come in the person of Jesus Christ to deliver his chosen people from their captivity to sin and Satan and to free them from

guilt and eternal punishments.

So, some 700 years after Isaiah wrote chapter 40, the Israelites were still under foreign domination. No longer Babylon, they were delivered from Babylon but now under the Persians and then the Greeks and now 700 years later under the mighty Roman Empire ruling over them.

And only in the hearts of a remnant was hope kept alive during all that captivity. 700 years. The last 400 years of that captivity under foreign domination had been years of silence, absolute silence from heaven.

there were no voices heard bringing the word of comfort from God. There were no prophets speaking. And then one day a voice was heard in the desert of Judea crying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[ 35 : 44 ] Repent the sovereign king whose arm rules for him has come and his winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the weed into his barns and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And with many other words, John the Baptist exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. Not timid, not fearful.

Bold proclamation. The king has come. He's coming and has come. Prepare for him.

Prepare the way for the Lord. Luke says, this is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, voice of one calling in the desert. Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled up. Every mountain and hill made low. The crooked road shall become straight and the rough way smooth and all mankind will see God's salvation.

[ 36 : 47 ] You remember, it wouldn't just be for the Jews that Jesus came. It wouldn't just be the Jews that would come to see glory in this Jehovah God.

At his birth, Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God saying, my eyes have seen your salvation which you've prepared in the sight of all people.

Isaiah 45. All people. A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. So in the coming of God's Son, the glory of God was revealed to all mankind.

Indeed, the Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being. And in seeing him, the world saw the glory of God.

Revealed in his person, revealed in his works, his miracles, his words, his cross, his resurrection, his ascension. This was nothing less than the coming of the Lord spoken of in Isaiah 40.

[ 37 : 54 ] He's coming. He's coming in great power to deliver you and his glory will be seen by all. Behold your God, Isaiah said.

And John the Baptist in announcing him to Israel says, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

In other words, this is how God can announce in Isaiah 42 that the hard service of his people is over and that their sin has been paid for.

This is how God's people can say in Isaiah 12, 1, although you were angry with me, Lord, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. How is God's anger turned away?

How is it that our sins are paid for? You know, Isaiah is going to tell us in chapter 53 that it will be by the suffering servant of the Lord who was pierced for our transgressions, who was crushed for our iniquities and the punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.

[ 39 : 07 ] We all like sheep had gone astray. We had turned each one to his own way and the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. It was on the cross that God the Son takes upon himself the debt of our sin that we couldn't pay and he pays it in full for us.

God's anger that we deserve was turned away from us and put on his suffering servant son so that he got the wrath we deserve and we get the comfort that he deserved.

Sin's forgiven, paid for in full. captivity to sin and Satan completed, over with. Sweet comfort indeed fulfilled in Christ's first coming.

But now here we are 2,000 years after his coming. Here we are brothers and sisters exiles, strangers in a foreign land under foreign domination a world that's under the control of the evil one. John tells us. Still waiting for the Lord to come. It's time to come back perhaps discouraged, maybe losing heart at the way things are going in the world at large or in your life circumstance.

[ 40 : 30 ] You know, we're so good at forgetting the word of encouragement. Hebrews tells us you've forgotten the word of encouragement that addresses you as sons. And the Bible is called that.

The word of encouragement to us. And that's what we find here in Isaiah 40. And the whole Bible is full of promises from him who cannot lie. He said that he will, he who is coming will come and not delay.

Hebrews 10, 37. And then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. For he's coming not with his glory shielded and hidden for the most part but now even more greatly revealed, uncovered for who he is. He's coming in power and great glory the scriptures say and all mankind together will see it. There's coming a great display of the glory of Jesus.

Look! Revelation 1, 8. Look! He is coming and coming with the clouds and every eye shall see him even those who pierced him and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[ 41 : 45 ] It will be a day of great glory and then the unbelieving will be cast into the lake of fire where the punishment is forever and never does end and then a cosmic reversal of the curse and everything made new a new heavens a new earth the home of righteousness and God forever dwelling with his people the Lord Jesus with his bride the shepherd with his sheep gladness and joy will overtake us and sorrow and sighing will flee away forever.

The mouth of the Lord has spoken and the word of our God stands forever. So are you preparing? That was John's message. The king is coming.

Prepare the way for the Lord. He called them to repent to turn from their sins and to trust in this coming Savior. That's the way you prepare.

That's the way I prepare for his second coming. Are you repenting and believing the gospel?

Believers keep holding on to the promises of your God.

Drink them in for your comfort and joy. Don't shut your heart to the comfort that God brings to you in his word. Let it sink in. Let it be as real to you as your problems are.

[ 43 : 09 ] The word of God spoken comfort them. Comfort them. Twice he's telling his prophets. Do you see his heart toward you dear believer in whatever it is that you need to be delivered from or through.

What a favored lot is yours to be a part of the people of God. That's something we see in Isaiah 40. Let's sing it as our response to the Lord.

The favor that is ours to have. This God is our God. His love is our unmovable rock. It's number 275 in your hymnal.

Let's stand. And sing it to the Lord. Let's pray together. Our mighty king and gentle shepherd we bow in your presence and acknowledge that we need to know you better.

We need to see you big and to see man as small. We need to stop fearing man. We need to stop serving man. We need to fear you and serve you.

[ 44 : 18 ] And we thank you for this demonstration and opening up of your heart that you love to comfort your people. And the disciplines of this life and the child training will only last as long as is absolutely necessary and you will pour out your comforts into our hearts.

Thank you for your words of comfort. Bring them right up close to the hearts of those who are troubled this morning and bring them to rest upon your unfailing love.

May that unfailing love rest upon us even now as we put our hope in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.