

Isaiah 40:1-11 The Comfort of the Gospel

This text is the turning point of the book of Isaiah. For 39 chapters Isaiah has proclaimed the judgement of God upon the sin of Israel, and without repentance promises exile. Now even before the exile begins Isaiah turns to a note of hope and comfort which ultimately points the end of exile and hope found in Jesus, the promised Messiah.

Read Isaiah 40:1-11

1. (vs. 2) The first note of comfort Isaiah strikes is one of forgiveness. In the sermon Tim spoke of double forgiveness. Not only does God in Jesus bring us the promise of putting aside all our sin but also adding to us everything that Jesus has won for us on the cross. What does Jesus win for us on the cross, and what would be the impact on our lives if we trusted the fullness of double forgiveness?

Forgiveness is the end of exile. Meaning all of the impacts of sin on our world are undone in the work of Jesus.

New future for our world. The promise that he will return to make all things new and that we will be a part of that future. This will address the fear of death, give boundless hope, give us a vision of that future so that we might desire to give the world a foretaste of it in our work as the body of Christ.

Acceptance not based on our work but his work. We don't need to be "good enough" for his acceptance – we are accepted in Jesus. Some say that undercuts motivations for obedience – but it wouldn't be free obedience if we are doing this to be accepted. Obedience is the response of gratitude to his free offer of grace.

Forgiveness – the covering of our sin.

2. (vs. 3-11) In the ancient world when a King was coming to a town in his realm a messenger was sent ahead (a voice in the wilderness) inviting the people to prepare. Part of the preparation was road work. Isaiah is announcing that a King is coming. From the passage name as many qualities and attributes of the character and reign of this King?

Vs. 8 – He is true to his word

Vs. 9 – He has the power and authority to make all things new for he is the Lord of all creation.

Vs. 10 – His reward is with him – the only thing that is not his is us – his reward is to bring us into the kingdom – we are his reward, his wealth, his delight, his treasure.

Vs. 11 – He will gather us lovingly to himself.

Vs. 12 – He will deal gently with our weaknesses

3. In light of those qualities what would we expect his kingship to look like in our lives?

There are no right or wrong answers here simply the opportunity to reflect on the nature of His Kingship and what that means for our lives. He is true to his word so we can trust him. His power animates our hope for the future. That he delights in us, loves us, treats us gently moves us to desire his healing touch. The desire of this question is to bring us to yearn to be under his reign both individually and for our world.

(5-8) In these verses Isaiah is comparing the glory and word of the Lord with earthly things. Earthly things wither, fade, diminish, but the glory and the word of the Lord stands forever.

4. **Read Romans 1:18-25.** Paul says that what sits at the heart of the problems of this world is that we exchange the glory of God for earthly things. We were created to find our worth, significance, identity purpose in God and God alone – but we have exchanged that to find our worth, significance, identity and purpose in earthly things. What will be the impact on us, our relationships, our world when we make this exchange?

Because these things diminish our sense of worth, self, value, significance will diminish and fade with them.

Because these things diminish it will fuel and insatiable greed and lust for these things to get them and keep them.

Because these things diminish we will step all over others to grab and hold.

5. (5) Jesus is the glory of the living God that is revealed. What will be the impact on us and on our lives if we root our sense of self, identity, significance, worth and purpose in Jesus and his work?

It will be lasting and won't be diminished by circumstance.

It will be rooted on his double forgiveness – that we are loved and accepted.

It will be in step with our created purpose – releasing us to the joy of living into our true humanity and true purpose for which God created us.