

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 40:12 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the comfort and pardon offered by God through Jesus Christ, the glory of the Lord, and the importance of trusting in the word of God.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-31, Matthew 3:3, John 1:14, Hebrews 1:1-2

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the submission of Jesus to death and the anticipation of his glorious return. The preacher describes Jesus as the good shepherd who sacrifices his life for his sheep and will continue to care for them. The preacher also highlights the greatness of God and the need to prepare for his coming. The sermon concludes with a reminder to put our trust in the eternal Word of God rather than in earthly things.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament.

And if you're following along in your Bible, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 40, beginning with verse 12, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Character of God. And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. Shall we turn now to the prophecy of Isaiah, beginning with chapter 40.

They say that repetition is the key to learning. And so we will tell you once more that the book of Isaiah is often called the miniature Bible. Sixty-six chapters equating to the sixty-six books in the Bible.

Isaiah is divided into two definite sections. Thirty-nine chapters with the Old, twenty-seven in the New. Even as the Bible is divided into two distinct sections.

Thirty-nine chapters in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New. So you have these parallels between Isaiah and the whole Bible. Now, as you enter into this second section, which would be chapter 40, it is like entering into the New Testament.

It is a whole new tone. There's a whole new excitement as we contemplate now more fully and completely the promised Messiah and the glorious age and kingdom that he will set up. The first part of Isaiah would

be as man relating to God through the law.

Now we begin to relate to God through his grace towards us in Christ Jesus. And so the second section of Isaiah begins with the words, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. So the prophet is commanded to comfort the people.

Now, he has been going through some heavy prophecies. There are difficult days that are facing these people. They are going to be carried away to Babylon.

They're going to be experiencing a period of captivity. And they're going to be judged for their iniquity and they're turning their backs on God. But now the word of the Lord is comfort.

There's a new day. Your sins have been taken care of. So speak comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The pardon of the iniquity through the work of Jesus Christ, who made provisions whereby God can forgive you your sins. What a comforting thought to know that every sin, every wrong thing that I have done is totally and completely forgiven, atoned for by Jesus Christ, pardoned because of his shed blood. And what words of comfort, my sin, oh the bliss of this wonderful thought, my sins, not in part but the whole, were nailed to the cross and I bear them no more.

It is well, it is well with my soul. Oh, what comfort to know that there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. That I can relate now to God in full confidence through the work of Jesus Christ.

Oh, the glorious comfort in our hearts. So speak comfortably, the Lord said. Paul in writing to the Corinthians said, now the God of all comfort, comfort you with the comfort where with we were comforted when we were in our afflictions.

Paul said, I know what it is to be comforted of God. And now may God comfort you with that same comfort that I experienced when I was going through the trials. And then Paul brought out something quite interesting.

He said, if I was afflicted, it was really for your sake that I might experience the comfort of God in my affliction so that I would be able to comfort you then in your affliction. You know, there are a lot of things that we go through in life and we come out the other side. We say, now, why did I have to go through that? And we can't at the moment, see any good practical purpose of our having to go through that particular trial or experience.

But while we were going through, we did experience the grace of God and the comfort of God in our hearts. And God brought us through. And then later on, we come across someone who's going through a similar experience and we're able to say, you know what? I went through that.

And this is the scripture that God gave to me. And this is the way God worked in my life. And this is what the Lord wrought in my life through this.

And you're able then to comfort with the comfort where with you were covered. And you realize, oh, Lord, I had to go through that whole mess so I could deal with this guy. So be it.

Her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand ample for all of her sins. Now, in the Old Testament, if you were brought to the judge and you had stolen an ox from your neighbor, you would have

to recompense double for what you had taken. So here is the idea.

You have paid the recompense. You've done the double. You've paid.

So now we get the prophecy of John the Baptist. How do we know that this is the prophecy of John the Baptist? Because Matthew gives to us a commentary on this particular verse. And he tells us that Isaiah was speaking of the ministry of John the Baptist.

You know, the New Testament makes one of the Old Testament. And so the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. For every valley shall be exalted or filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The crooked will be made straight, and the rough places plain. Now, it was the custom in the Orient that when a king was to visit the province, that they would go out and they would work on the highways, repairing them. They would remove all of the debris.

They would straighten the paths. They would fill in the gullies. They would level out as much as possible the raised places.

They tried to prepare the path for the king. King is going to come, make a straight path, fill in the valleys, bring down the hills. And thus, the King Christ Jesus, John was heralding his coming.

And he is the voice of that one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his way. For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The glory of the Lord was revealed in Christ Jesus.

John said, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

And so, this whole prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, John proclaiming the coming of the Lord, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. Jesus said to Philip, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father, the glory of the Lord. That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, which we have touched, for the Word was manifest and we beheld him, John said.

And then also in Hebrews, that wonderful verse, that God who in various times and in different ways spoke to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his own dear Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, who is the effulgence or the outshining of his glory, his express image, Christ, the express image of the Father, the glory of the Lord revealed to man in Christ Jesus, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Now, several times we have this kind of phrase in Isaiah and in the other prophets. It's sort of saying, look, this is going to be because the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

I mean, when God speaks, you just, in fact, a lot of this is in past tense because God spoke it. It's as good as already done, even though it isn't done yet. It's as good as already done because God spoke it.

And as Paul was dealing with this particular grammatical problem, as he was talking about God speaking of the son of Abraham before he was ever born, as though he already existed. A real grammatical

problem. He spoke about Isaac in a past tense before Isaac was ever born.

And Paul dealing with this grammatical problem said, for God is able to speak of things as though they existed even before they exist, because he knows they're going to exist. And so God says, I have spoken good. That means it's done.

The voice said, cry. And Isaiah responded, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all of the beauty, goodness is really handsomeness or beauty. Thereof is as the flower of the field, the beauty like the flower of the field, the grass withers, the flower fades because the spirit of the Lord blows upon it.

Surely the people are grass and the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God shall stand forever. And so you have that which is transient, that which is passing and that which is permanent. What is transient? Our life here on this earth, all flesh.

It's like grass. The grass withers, gets wrinkled. The flower fades.

The beauty goes. I feel so sorry for those people who their big thing in life is being beautiful. I feel sorry for them.

There's an old Swedish proverb, good looks don't last, good cooking does. I think they were trying to encourage the boys to find a good cook rather than a beautiful woman. The flower fades.

The life is passing. We're here just for a short appointed time. The strongest, the most powerful, the grass withers.

It's sort of shocking to see some of those fellows that were my heroes when I was growing up. When I was a freshman, those guys that were the seniors, the big guys on the football team, I've met some of them lately. It was sort of a shock, you know, sort of bent over and weak and crippled.

And man, they used to be awesome terrors, you know. But the grass withers. The flower fades.

But there is something that lasts. And it is so important that we put our investment in things that last, that we put our values in the things that last. How sad it is for those who have laid up only on this earth and for this earth and have nothing for the eternal.

The word of God lasts. Put your confidence and your trust in God's word, not in the flesh. If you put your trust in the flesh, you're going to be disappointed.

All flesh is like grass. It will fade. Put your trust in the word of God.

It will last and endure forever. Oh, Zion, Jerusalem, that bring us good tidings, get thee up into a high mountain. Oh, Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up your voice with strength.

Lift it up. Be not afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, behold your God.

So let the cry go out of Jerusalem, crying unto the people, behold your God. You remember John the Baptist said, behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And then the promise, behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand.

His arm will rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him and his work is before him. So the hand of the Lord, the strong hand, the arm of the Lord, he's going to come.

He's going to establish his kingdom. He's going to rule. His reward is with him.

And when Christ does come, when we meet him, we are to be rewarded for those things that we have done while in these bodies. Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, Jesus said. His reward is with him.

And he does speak of the rewards that we will have in heaven. And he warns us of the works that we do, that we be careful of the motivation, that we not just be doing them to be seen of men, for he said, then you have your reward. You have the praise and the applause of man.

But do your works in such a way that your father is glorified. And your father, which sees in secret, will reward you openly. The Lord is coming.

He's coming with a strong hand. He's going to rule the world. In the first coming, he came in weakness.

As the suffering servant to die, he submitted himself unto death. When the Lord comes again, it's going to be with great glory. Then shall they see the sign of the son of man coming with clouds and great glory, with power, with authority, and going to rule.

His reward is with him. And he shall feed his flock like a shepherd. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

I give my life for the sheep. He will now feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with his arm.

That is the little young newborn lambs. He will carry them in his arms. And he will carry them in his bosom.

And he will gently lead those that are with young, those ewes that are about ready to give birth. He will be gentle and all with them. All the beauty of the Lord.

And I love these pictures. I love the picturesque speech as he describes our relationship to the Lord. We are the sheep of his pasture and the Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He shall feed his flock, gather the lambs in his arm, carry them in his bosom, gently lead those that are with the beautiful, beautiful. And now he describes God.

Behold your God. He describes him, describes him in awesome terms. The greatness of God.

Children are always asking the question, how big is God, Daddy? Is he as big as the telephone pole? They're awfully big, the little kids. And the question so often, how big is God? He's so big that your mind can't comprehend it. So vast that you can't grasp him with your thought.

Your brain isn't sufficient to grasp the concept of God. For he measures the waters, that is all of the waters of the oceans and the seas. He measures them in the hollow of his hand.

Think of the Pacific and the Atlantic and all. There it is, right in the hollow of his hand. How big is God? When I consider the heavens, the work of fingers.

Pretty awesome. Face to face, Lord, let me know. Face to face, Lord, let me see you.

Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments, but first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C3260. Again, that's tape or CD number C3260.

As we come to a close in today's program, we'd like to recommend a resource just for women. Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas, buying presents, decorating, cooking, the list grows longer every day. Without realizing it, we can easily forget the true meaning of why we celebrate our Lord's birth.

For this reason, the word for today presents A Season of Joy, an audio Bible study that reflects the true meaning of Christmas. Hosted by Kay Smith, wife of Pastor Chuck. Kay reminds us to spend time at the Lord's feet despite our busy schedules.

Guest speakers also include Elizabeth Elliott, Sheila Walsh, and Marge Caldwell, exhorting us to remember that it's through Jesus Christ that our season of joy can be peaceful and complete. Also ask about Pastor Chuck Smith's tract entitled, How Can a Man Be Born Again? Available in both Spanish and English, this would make the perfect addition to Christmas cards or gifts. To order your copy of A Season of Joy and How Can a Man Be Born Again, call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California 92628.

And remember the word for today would like to assist you this Christmas in spreading the gospel of Jesus to your family, friends, and coworkers. Please call our customer service department to help you in finding that perfect gift that will reflect the true meaning of Christmas. And if you call right now and mention this radio ad, the word for today will give you a 20% discount on any resource carried by the word for today.

Once again, that number to call is 1-800-272-9673. And for those of you that would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you would like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well, coming up next time on the word for today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today.

And now with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck. Well, we've got some exciting lessons ahead as this latter portion of Isaiah is just so rich and so blessed. We've got so many great, great studies ahead of us as we finish Isaiah.

Father, we thank you now for the work of your Holy Spirit and your love within our lives. And Father, we're so thankful for your help. We thank you, Lord, that we can wait upon you tonight, that our strength will be renewed, that we might be able to mount up with wings as eagles, that we can run and not be weary, that we can walk and not faint.

That the Lord, the creator of the heavens and the earth, who stretched out the heavens like a curtain, who measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, has said to us, fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will help you.

I will strengthen you. I will hold you by the right hand of my power. Thank you, Lord, for your help for us who are weak.

Thank you for your presence. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your goodness, your eternal goodness.

Thank you, Lord. Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California

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