

Isaiah Chapter 40

by Stephen Kaung

God is the God of all comfort, and He desires to comfort us through the promise of His presence with us and the ministry of John the Baptist.

Duration: 42:59

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1

Topics: "Isaiah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Isaiah chapter 40, specifically verses 1-5. The passage begins with God comforting His people and declaring that their time of suffering is over and their sins are forgiven. The preacher emphasizes that even though we may feel discouraged and overwhelmed by our problems, we should remember that God is everlasting and His understanding is limitless. The exhortation is to wait upon the Lord, as those who do will renew their strength, soar like eagles, run without getting tired, and walk without growing weary. The sermon highlights God's desire to comfort His people and reminds listeners of the importance of trusting in Him and His promises.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40. We'll read from verse 1 through verse 5. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her time of suffering is accomplished. That her iniquity is pardoned. For she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, made straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low. And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken. Verse 31.

But they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not tire.

They shall walk and not faint. We know that the book of Isaiah can be very roughly divided into two parts. From chapter 1 through chapter 39 is the first part.

And there you'll find the prophet is more concerned with history. And the second part begins from chapter 40 through chapter 66. And there in this part, which is a very distinct part, the prophet Isaiah is not so much concerned with history, but rather with prophecy.

The theme of this part of Isaiah actually agrees with the name of the prophet. We know Isaiah means the salvation of the Lord. So here you'll find in this second part, it deals mainly with the salvation of the Lord.

It tells us of the work of redemption of our Lord. It tells us of our Redeemer. It tells us of those that are redeemed.

So in this second part of Isaiah, you'll find it is altogether concerned with this matter of salvation, of redemption, of deliverance that comes from the Lord. And this part begins with a cry. It is the cry of the Lord through the prophet to his people.

And the cry is, comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Because of the unfaithfulness of the children of Israel, they were chastened of the Lord. And the chastening was of such nature that they were even taken into captivity.

But here you'll find the Lord returned to them in mercy and in grace. And the word of the Lord to his afflicted people was, comfort ye, comfort ye my people. God considered their punishment as enough.

God had forgiven their iniquities. And God was now returning to his people. God said, be ye comforted.

Now dear brothers and sisters, I believe we all need to be comforted. The word comfort in the original simply means calling to one's side. Calling to one's side.

That is to say, to come to your head, to exhort you, to encourage you, and to comfort you, to strengthen you. And that is the meaning of the word comfort in Greek. And of course, when it refers to a person, it is the comforter, parakletos.

One who is called to your side, to take up your cause, to plead for you, to help you, to render you every help that you need. And that is the meaning of the word comfort and comforter. Now brothers and sisters, our God is the God of all comfort.

You remember in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 3, Paul said, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Compassions, and the God of all encouragement. Now the word encouragement, in some version, it is translated comfort. It is the same word.

Our God is the Father of Compassions. He is full of compassion, the Father of Compassion, and the God of all comfort, who encourages, that is, comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to encourage or comfort those who are in many tribulations, any tribulation, whatever, through the encouragement or comfort with which we ourselves are encouraged or comfort of God. Our God is the God of all comfort, and our Lord Jesus is the consolation of Israel.

You remember in Luke chapter 2, Simeon, he was looking for the consolation of Israel, and this referred to our Lord Jesus. And of course the Holy Spirit is the another comforter. Why? Because our Lord Jesus was a comforter to His children, to His disciples, when He was with them.

And now He was going away, but He promised to send another comforter, another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will be with them and in them, and will never leave nor forsake them. He

was with the disciples forever to be their comfort, to be their comforter.

So dear brothers and sisters, remember that our God is the God of all comfort. This is His very name. This speaks of His, reveals of His very nature.

It is His wish to comfort us, to strengthen us. Sometimes He may have to discipline us, and yet, do not misunderstand Him. He has no desire just to punish us.

Instead, He is the consolation. He is the comfort. He is the comforter.

We all need to be comforted. Sometimes, because of our sins, because of our failures, because of our unbelief, God has to chasten us to discipline. And during the time of chastening, it is not a pleasant and joyful time.

But even so, you'll find His Lord comforter. You remember in Psalm 23, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Sometimes we enter into the valley of the shadow of death. Sometimes we may enter into His discipline. Yes, His staff comforts us.

You know, the staff is to help, is to rescue, is to lead, and certainly His staff comfort us. But don't forget His rod comforts us too. Even though sometimes He may have to smite us.

He may have to apply the rod upon us, and make us feel. And yet, you'll find Thy rod comforts us. Why? Because He is the God of all comfort.

The reason why He disciplines us is because He loves us. In the very fact of His rod, there is the expression of His love. If He doesn't care, if He does not love us, He will not even chasten us.

It is the rod of love, the rod of comfort. I remember I read somewhere in a book, once a youngster said his parents did not love him. Why? Because his parents never disciplined him.

The rod was never applied on him. Thy rod. And sometimes it may not be because we have sinned, we have failed, therefore we fall into discipline.

Sometimes like Paul and Timothy in 2 Corinthians. You'll find in 2 Corinthians, Paul mentioned how God is the God of all comfort, how He encourages him, how He comforts him in all his tribulation. Now certainly, Paul went into tribulation not because he was unfaithful, but because he was too faithful.

You know, sometimes because you are faithful to the Lord, you will get into problems, you will get into trouble, you will be persecuted, or you may have tribulation. Not because there is something negative in your life, but because God is working something positive into your life. In tribulation, you will be comforted, that you may comfort those who shall be in tribulation.

In order that the Lord may use you to minister to those who are in need, He allows you to go through tribulation and be encouraged and comforted, that you may encourage and comfort those who are in need. That's positive. So dear brothers and sisters, our life is full of problems.

Our life is full of all kinds of circumstances. Sometimes because of our failure, we are disciplined, and other times because God wants to work something positive in us that we may be useful in His hand. And

when we are under all kinds of circumstances, do we need to be comforted? Is there anyone that does not have the need of comfort? Look at Paul.

Well, surely Paul is a spiritual giant. He is strong, but does he need to be comforted? You read 2 Corinthians, and you'll find 11 times the word comfort is used. I hope you'll go through it and find all the places where the word comfort or encouragement is used.

Even Paul needs comfort. How he was concerned with the conditions of the Corinthians. He sent Titus to them, and he made an agreement with Titus to meet him in Troas.

But when Paul came to Troas, and Titus did not come back, Paul was so concerned that he couldn't work. The Lord opened a door for him in Troas, and yet he couldn't work. He went to Macedonia, and then when he met Titus, when Titus came, Titus was late, and when he arrived, Paul was comforted by the very presence of Titus, and also the glad tidings that Titus brought back.

Paul needed to be comforted. There is no one that does not need, at one time or another, to be comforted. Now, some people probably need it more than other people, but how we all need to be comforted.

And thank God. He is the God of all comfort. It is His word to His afflicted people, comfort ye, comfort ye, my people.

It is the desire of the Lord to comfort us, and the word comfort, of course, we know, is more than just consolation. It means strengthening, to strengthen us. As Paul says in Philippians, I can do all things through Him who comforts me, and that word comforts me, who strengthens me.

This is our God. Now, how did God comfort His people? The nation of Israel was in captivity, and how was God going to comfort them? By what would God comfort His afflicted people? Was it just by bringing them back to Jerusalem? Was it just by turning the captivity? Remember, these were the outward circumstances, but the real comfort that God comforted His afflicted people was by the promise of the coming of the Messiah. In other words, the comfort of the Lord is His presence with His people.

When He promised to come back, when He promised to be with His people, behold, thy King cometh. Behold, the Lord is now with you. Now, when the Lord comes back to His people, then His afflicted people were comforted.

In other words, comfort is not just trying to change your circumstance. Comfort is not just trying to bring you into a better position. Now, all these things will happen, but remember, the real comfort that God comforts His people is with Himself.

He comforts us with His coming. Is there any comfort better than that? You know, sometimes in our feelings, especially when we are surrounded with problems and troubles, especially when we are under tribulation or discipline, our feeling is the Lord has left us. He has forsaken us.

And oftentimes you'll find a psalmist will cry out, why, why do you leave us? Where are you? Why don't you speak? Why do you keep your silence? Where can I find you? And oftentimes you'll find this is the agitation, the turmoil that will spring up in our soul, because we feel the Lord has left us. He has forsaken us. He has turned His back to us.

He remains silent to us. We cry, and He does not answer. Now, brothers and sisters, it is true.

So far as our feeling is concerned, oftentimes we find we are under such a kind of circumstances, and we will not be comforted. No matter what people say, no matter how people say it, we just refuse to be comforted. Why? Because the Lord has left us.

The Lord has forsaken us. He has shut His ears towards us. He turns His back to us.

That is our feeling. Oh, if only He would return to us. Then all these tribulations done do not matter anymore.

No, the greatest problem is, what is the greatest hardship to a believer, not difficult situation? It is the feeling of being forsaken. If the Lord is present with you, no matter how hard you are comforted, there is strength. But when you feel the Lord has left you or forsaken you, then you are finished.

Think of our Lord Jesus. Throughout His life, the sense of the presence of His Father was ever with Him. No matter what happened to Him, there was that comfort with Him.

And even when He was crucified on the cross, He was surrounded by His enemies. Oh, how the people ridiculed Him, how Satan tried to use every means to hurt Him and to harm Him, and yet when He was on the cross, He could pray, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. His Father was with Him.

There was strength. But when He came to the twelve, and the sun was darkened, and there you find our Lord Jesus from twelve o'clock, He began to cry out, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Here you find the very presence of His Father. He was all alone as a sin offering for the whole world, and He couldn't stand it.

He cried out in desperation. Now, brothers and sisters, that is the hardest thing to a believer. Oh, sometimes you may feel, you may think that God has left you.

You may think you are alone, and you find yourself completely collapsed. You do not know it. You need to be comforted.

And how are you to be comforted? By the return of the Lord. If only He will come back to you, you do not mind what circumstance you may be in. That is not a problem.

You will have the strength to bear it. His coming to you is your coming. But has He ever left you or forsaken you? So far as your feeling is concerned, it may be true.

But dear brothers and sisters, you know that He has never left you nor forsaken you. He is waiting to appear to you. And the reason why it seems there is a veil, there is a covering, is because He wants to.

Oh, how the Lord Himself is our comforter. There is no one that can comfort us than our Lord Jesus. He is our consolation.

And His being with us is our strength. God spoke to the children of Israel, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people. But how did the comfort come to them? You find there was a process.

Immediately after the cry of comfort, there was a cry in the wilderness. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of Jehovah. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Of course, historically we know that this prophecy was fulfilled with the coming of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the voice in the wilderness. John the Baptist was sent before the coming of Christ to prepare the way for the Lord, a highway for the Lord.

You know, sometimes God cannot reach you. God wants to reach you, but there is no way. Sometimes we are all desert.

Sometimes there are valleys and mountains, crookedness and roughness in our lives, and the Lord cannot reach us. There is no highway for God to come to us. And because of that, certain preparation is necessary.

Before Christ should come to the nation of Israel, John the Baptist must be sent first as a forerunner to prepare the way of the Lord. And of course we know the way he prepared was calling the people to repent. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The nation needed to repent before they were ready to receive the Messiah. And dear brothers and sisters, in principle this is true with us too. God is the God of all comfort.

It is his wish to comfort us and to strengthen us, but sometimes he has no way to reach us. It is not that he does not want to comfort us. We think that we need comfort and he delays.

Not so. It is because there is no preparation of heart. There are valleys in our lives, hidden, secret, low, sins, weaknesses in our lives by valley there.

Sometimes there are mountains and hills in our lives. Unbelief, vanity, pride, like mountains standing in the way. Sometimes there is crookedness.

Other times there is roughness. Crooked and rough. It reminds me of two brothers, Esau and Jacob.

Jacob is crooked and Esau is rough. And you know we have both Esau and Jacob within us. There is that crooked Jacob in us, not straight, and there's the rough Esau in us.

And the crooked place, the valleys need to be raised and filled, the mountains need to be leveled, the crooked need to be made straight, and the rough need to be smooth. Brothers and sisters, how often we desire to be comforted, we long to be comforted, we are waiting to be comforted, and all the while the Spirit of God is working in us with the ministry of John the Baptist. In other words, the Spirit of God is convicting us, is bringing us into repentance.

He is dealing with the crookedness and the roughness of our lives. He is dealing with the hills and mountains and the valleys of our lives. And unless our hidden valleys are raised, exposed, our mountains are removed, our crookedness are made straight, and our roughness are smooth, He has no highway to reach us.

Thank God He is faithful. He is coming to us, but there must be repentance. We must accept the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting us and convincing us.

We must allow Him to deal with us until we are ready. We are ready to receive Him as our King, as our Shepherd, and truly, as our brother mentioned before, He will come as a Shepherd to us. He will take us in His arms.

He will carry us. That's the comfort. The comfort will come, brothers and sisters.

But it has to come by way of the ministry of John the Baptist. Because unless it comes that way, we are not ready for it. But dear brothers and sisters, you know, when we are discouraged, we are discouraged.

We want to be comforted, and yet we do not want to be comforted. So here you'll find God said, Why sayest thou, Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from Jehovah, and my right is passed away from my God? Even though God spoke the word of comfort to His people, and yet His people did not believe it. His people said, My way is hid from Jehovah.

My right is passed away from my God. God just does not care. And if He does care, what can He do? They forget that our God is the God who measured the way, waters in the hollow of His hand, kneaded out the heavens with His stand, dressed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed a mountain in a balance and a hill in scales.

Beautiful. Wonderful. If you think of that, He measured waters in the hollow of His hand.

There is just the right amount of water in this world. If there are too much water, the earth will be overwhelmed, drowned. You know, God measured the water in the hollow of His hand.

He kneaded out the heavens with His stand. How wide, how big is heaven? We are lost with astronomical figures. And God measured the heavens with His stand.

Everything is measured. He grabs the dust of the earth in a measure. He weighed the mountains in a balance.

Everything is balanced. There is no weakness in Him, both in His power and in His love. And yet, brothers and sisters, sometimes we can get so discouraged.

All we see is our problem. We want to be comforted, and yet we refuse to be comforted. And we say, no, it doesn't.

It won't do. God doesn't care. He cannot do anything with me.

This is just finished. God says, why? Why do you say that? Dost thou not know, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainted not, nor tired? There is no searching of His understanding. Have you forgotten who God is? Don't you remember that His understanding is so great, He knows everything? And because of that, the exhortation of the Lord to those who are so discouraged is, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings and eagles. They shall run and not tire. They shall walk.

If you are in need of comfort, and yet you are not comforted, if you are discouraged to the point of despair, remember this. God said, you wait upon Him. He is waiting there for you, but He exhorts you to wait upon Him.

He is coming to you if you just wait. Just wait upon Him. And by the word wait, we know, wait in the scripture does not mean you sit back passively.

No, that's not waiting. Wait is an active, passive waiting. It is true, by waiting you do not struggle or strive, and yet by waiting you wait with expectancy.

You be still before the Lord, and yet you are waiting upon Him with expectancy, with belief, with faith. And if you wait upon the Lord, what will be the result? You will mount up with wings as eagles. Some people who know eagle tells us, you know the way that eagle flies, eagle does not need to flip its wings so often to make it fly.

Eagles will be on the height waiting for the jet stream of the air. When the jet stream comes, he just mounts up with wings as eagles. He spread his wings, and there he mounts up.

That's the way eagle flies. And brothers and sisters, if you wait upon the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord comes like the jet stream, and you just spread your wings of faith, all the mountains will be under you. All the difficulties and the problems will be under you.

There you soar, soar. And another translation of this very verse is, they shall be renewed as the eagles. According to Jewish rabbinical tradition, they said an eagle every 10 years.

Now this is not science, this is tradition. They said every 10 years, an eagle will soar towards the sun until it is scorched. And then it will fall into the sea.

And as it hits the sea, it will be molted and will have new feathers and rise again. And this will happen 10 times. And the 10 times when an eagle is 100 years old, then he will fall to the sea and appear no more.

Now that's tradition. But we know that eagles age. Some people say eagle lives long age, renewed.

And that is to say, the feathers of an eagle will be molted, will shed off the old feather and take up new feather. Therefore, it's like a new eagle. Its strength is ever renewed like an eagle.

Transformed. Brothers and sisters, if we wait upon the Lord, He is the God of all comfort. As we wait upon Him, we will be comforted.

We will be molted. We will be transformed. We will be renewed.

There will be no oldness, ageness. We shall always be young in flesh. Mount of us with wings and eagles, renewed as eagles.

And we shall run and not tire. So far as God would, we shall mount up with wings and eagles. We will fly towards Him.

So far as us would, we shall run and not tire. Oh, brothers and sisters, often we run the race of life and we get tired. There is a cause before us.

God has put us in a course. We have to finish our race. And yet, in running, we find ourselves getting tired.

No. If you wait upon the Lord, you shall run and not tire until you reach the end. And you shall walk and not faint.

Walk speaks on towards the world. So far as our life towards the world is concerned, we are walking through the world and we shall walk on in righteousness and faith. So, dear brothers and sisters, here you find our God is the God of comfort.

Oh, how He desires to comfort us. Do not give up. Wait upon Him and you will be comforted.

Our Heavenly Father, how we praise and thank Thee for Thy Word. Thou dost speak the words of comfort to us. Thou art the God of all comforts.

Thou art the consolation of Israel. Thou art the another comforter. Oh, Lord, how we praise and thank Thee.

Oftentimes, we feel we need to be comforted and as if Thou dost not comfort us. But, Lord, we praise and thank Thee. Thou art waiting for us.

Thou art preparing a highway that Thou mayst come to us and be our comforter. We pray that Thou will comfort those who need to be comforted, encourage those that need to be encouraged. Lord, we pray that we may wait upon Thee and mount up with wings and eagles.

We may run and not tire, walk and not faint. We praise and thank Thee for Thy Word because they are true. They are living.

Make them true and living to us by the working of Thy Holy Spirit in our lives. We praise Thee in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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