

WARM-UP

- Do you like nature? What about it do you enjoy the most?
- What is your comfort food? Why do you like it so much?
- Whose voice or words comfort you the most? Recall an instance explaining this.

WORD ¹*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."* **ISAIAH 40:1-3**

(Read also **ISAIAH 40:4-11.**)

While God's people had a long history of stubbornness and unfaithfulness, God has a long history of consistency and faithful love. Even when they did not do what was right, God loved them still. And even in exile and judgment, God brought comfort and hope. Starting with Isaiah 40, the focus of this book shifts to hope, restoration, and victory. In this lesson, we will look at how God's character and actions bring us comfort.

1 | The Lord has spoken.

“And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” **ISAIAH 40:5**

For a child or a person in danger, a loving voice of a parent or a firm voice of a person in authority brings comfort, relief, and protection. While we may associate God's voice with volume, He can also speak in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12). Regardless of how He speaks, His word is reliable, true, and final. Through the prophet Isaiah, God comforts His people that the glory of the Lord will be seen by all together. This passage alludes to Christ, through whom God's grace is revealed in the flesh. We know Christ through God's word, the Bible. How do you respond when someone you trust speaks? How do you respond when God, your Creator and heavenly Father, speaks?

2 | The word of the Lord will stand forever.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. **ISAIAH 40:8**

Nature and human life, even in all its beauty, will fade. Only God's word will stand forever. The Bible shows us that God is faithful to fulfill all His promises. His word is both timeless and timely. It is true forever and yet very real in our daily situations. God's word meets our deepest needs and from it we find true strength and hope. This is comforting and a source of strength and hope. Share about how God's word has been timely for you recently.

3 | The Lord is both mighty and gentle.

¹⁰*Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.* ¹¹*He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.* **ISAIAH 40:10-11**

God loves each of us and expresses His love in response to our particular brokenness and burdens. While He allows some of us to freely dwell in His presence like sheep in pasture, He also seeks out those who are hurting and in need of reassurance. He gathers us in His arms and carries us in His bosom. This is a beautiful picture of both God's might in leading His people and His gentleness in caring for the brokenhearted. How is God's might and tenderness to His people reassuring? Why do you think He said, *Speak tenderly to Jerusalem* (Isaiah 40:1)?

In the New Testament, John the Baptist's ministry was a fulfillment of this prophecy: *"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God"* (Isaiah 40:3). He was referring to Jesus Christ, who is Lord and Savior, the embodiment of God's glory, and the tangible expression of God's love, mercy, and grace.

APPLICATION

- In what area of your life do you need hope and comfort? Which part of today's lesson encouraged you to trust God?
- Do you believe the word of God stands forever? How can you go deeper in His word this week?
- Think of one person or family that needs to experience both the might and gentleness of God in this season. How can you be a blessing and encouragement to them?

PRAYER

- Thank God for speaking to us and for being reliable and true. Pray you would trust Him and find comfort in Him every day.
- Lift up your situation and needs to God today. Ask Him to provide for you and fulfill His promises to you and your family.
- Pray that you would encourage others to know God and find comfort in Him this week.



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