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ISAIAH 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her <u>sin</u> has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

sin = immorality or disloyalty to God



And the <u>glory of the Lord</u> will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

glory of the Lord = amazing presence of God

The grass <u>withers</u> and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass <u>withers</u> and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever."

withers = dries out and dies

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You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news 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!" <u>Zion = the hill Jerusalem is on</u> Judah = southern kingdom, home of Jerusalem



Our God Reigns

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, good news; Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness: Our God reigns, our God reigns!



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He had no <u>stately form</u>, He had no majesty; that we should be drawn to Him. He was despised and we <u>took no account</u> of Him. Yet now He reigns with the Most High.

> stately form = impressive or royal appearance took no account = paid no attention



It was our <u>sin</u> and guilt that bruised and wounded Him. It was our sin that brought Him down. When we like sheep had gone astray, our Shepherd came;

And on His shoulders bore our shame.

sin = immoral or disloyal actions, words, or thoughts bore = carried



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Out of the tomb He came with <u>grace</u> and majesty. He is alive! He is alive! God loves us so! See here <u>His hands, His feet, His side.</u> Yes, we know He is alive!

> grace = forgiveness and love His hands, His feet, His side = Jesus' scars from His death for us



How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, good news; Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness: Our God reigns, our God reigns!



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But I'm grateful for your mercy, and I'm grateful for your grace.
And because of how You've poured out Yourself, I have come to sing this song out in praise

> grace = forgiveness and love poured out Yourself = Jesus death for us

Imela, Imela Thank You! Thank You! Okaka, Onyekeruwa Great and Might creator of the world Imela, Imela, Thank You! Thank You! Eze m Oh My King

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How dark is it? 2 polls... How are you doing? •Politics •Relationships challenged by politics •Virus & all the secondary effects: isolation, conflicts, economic hardship, loneliness, misunderstandings, ... •The "normal" challenges of life! What helps you keep going? What hope do you have that tomorrow will be any better?

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The Story of Israel		
Т	he "one new humanity" of God	
2000 BC 1500 BC 1000 BC 500 BC Jesus' birth		
God 's promise to Abraham to form a great people 2100 BC		
Moses forms and leads the people out of Egypt 1440 BC		
Joshua leads people into the land of Canaan 1400 BC		
The dark days of the Judges 1390 BC		
The monarchy 1050 BC		
Civil war and the split kingdom 930 BC		
The 'death dark ' days of the Exile 586 BC		
	1-39: mostly about the dark days 40-66: about the hope after the dark days	



says your God.

and proclaim to her

Isaiah 40:3-5	
A voice of one calling:	
"In the wilderness	
prepare the way for the Lord ;	
make straight in the desert	
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 people will see it together.	
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."	
*	

Isaiah 40:1-11

1-2: Comfort & restoration for those deserving punishment

3-5: God is coming personally to rescue, so prepare

- Voice announcing God's arrival
 - Surprise: God is the one on the move!
 - People are to prepare for His grace-filled arrival
- Call to prepare for God's arrival in our desert
 - Humility: Sorry and ashamed by our sin
 - Longing for change (weak as we are)
 - Hopeful for God's deliverance
- Glory = God's powerful presence: mercy & justice
- 6-8: All people "see" = observe and experience
- 9-11: God's spoken will cannot fail to come

Isaiah 40:6-8

A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass,

and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

The grass <u>withers</u> and the flowers fall,

because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.

The grass <u>withers</u> and the flowers fall,

but the word of our God endures forever."

withers = dries out and dies

Isaiah 40:1-11 1-2: Comfort & restoration for those deserving punishment 3-5: God is coming personally to rescue, so prepare 6-8: God's promises always come & all people are frail The best qualities of the best people will fade away quickly Whether working for God or against God Hope in better people doing a better job will always lead to failure (often bitterly) God's purposes and promises are unstoppable! Especially: His plan to comfort & restore

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Isaiah 40:9-11	
You who bring good news to <u>Zion.</u> go up on a high mountain.	Zion = Jerusalem's location
You who bring good news 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 he rules with <mark>a mighty arm.</mark>	
See, his reward is with him, and his <u>recompense</u> accompanies him.	
He tends his flock like a shepherd:	recompense = compensation
He gathers the <mark>lambs in his arms</mark>	for harms experienced
and carries them close to his heart;	
he <mark>gently leads</mark> those that have young.	

Isaiah 40:1-11

- 1-2: Comfort & restoration for those deserving punishment
- 3-5: God is coming personally to rescue, so prepare
- 6-8: God's promises always come & all people are frail

9-11: Proclaim God's presence: Mighty and Gentle

- God's punished people again proclaim His glory
- The message: God's saving presence!
 - Salvation is neither more nor less God with us
 - Not a message and not a messenger: God Himself!
- He comes in power, with blessing, and in gentleness

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- 1-2: Comfort & restoration for those deserving punishment
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The Big Idea

God the Son has come mighty to save and gentle to carry like no one else and like nothing else can for all who will trust in Him

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Christian hope is <u>not</u> in...

- •Trying harder
- •Better teaching or better discipleship
- •Loving people more
- •Loving God more
- •A new technique
- •A new vision
- •Better leaders
- •Better followers
- •More comfort
- •Lower expectations



Believing that God exists and has saved us And now He leaves it up to us

This is **not** Christian hope!



Christian hope is ...

- the living presence of God with us = Emmanuel
- The **Son of God** came and gave <u>**His**</u> life to give <u>**us**</u> life
- The **Holy Spirit** lives within us Mighty to save! Gentle to carry!
- So make it known!



The Big Idea

God the Son has come mighty to save and gentle to carry like no one else and like nothing else can for all who will trust in Him

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Application

Be hope-filled through the presence of God with us •A messenger of hope who doesn't have hope is not very convincing! •Salvation is neither more nor less than the living presence of God in and among us

- The Son of God personally came to purchase salvation
- The Holy Spirit has come to live within each child of God
- God is life and light!
- •Deeply trust the presence of God with us
 - Sometimes His work isn't what we thought it would be
 - Yet where God is, there is always life and hope!

Application

Be hope-filled through the presence of God with us

Be filled with the presence of God

•The glory of God is His life-giving and joy-giving presence

• Jesus said to the Father: "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." *John 17:22-23*

Application

Be hope-filled through the presence of God with us

Be filled with the presence of God

•The glory of God is His life-giving and joy-giving presence

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." *Ephesians 5:18-20*

• "Live under the influence" of the Spirit of God!

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How to "live under the influence" of the Spirit •Ask God for it in prayer, and really mean it •Prepare for His gracious presence

- Like preparing for a housecleaner when greatly needed
 Greatest need is not pre-cleaning the house but...
- Be humble: Sorry and ashamed by our sin
- Long for change (weak as we are)
- Be hopeful for God 's good work

•Be conscious of the will, words, and presence of God •Trust what He says, and obey what He reveals •Together

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And He will work!

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom**. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are **being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord**, who is the Spirit." *2 Corinthians 3:17-18*

Application

Be hope-filled through the presence of God with us Be filled with the presence of God

Join God's work by bringing this Good News to others

•A voice crying: "God **has come** to rescue us!"

• Shout this good news from the mountaintops!

•With other Christians: keep en-couraging each other!

- "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
- Where the Spirit is, there is life, light, and freedom!
- •With not-yet-Christians: keep pointing to the Source
 - Hope is not in people, including us!
 - There is real and wonderful hope in the presence of

The Big Idea

God the Son has come mighty to save and gentle to carry like no one else and like nothing else can for all who will trust in Him "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord!" Where the Lord is, there is life and freedom We have Christ in us, the hope of glory! Always have courage in Christ ightarrow make Him known

Prayer of Confession

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

PSALM 51:1-2, 7

transgressions, iniquity, sin = immorality or disloyalty to God

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dawning = the first appearance Immanuel = Jesus Christ, God with Us King of Heaven now the Friend of sinners, humble servant in the Father's hands, filled with power and the Holy Spirit, filled with mercy for the <u>broken man.</u>

broken man = people with sin and shame

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Yes, he walked my road and he felt my pain, joys and sorrows that I know so well; yet his <u>righteous steps</u> give me hope again— I will follow my <u>Immanuel</u>.

> righteous steps = obedience to God the Father Immanuel = Jesus Christ, God with Us



He fights for breath, he fights for me, <u>loosening</u> sinners from the <u>claims of hell</u>; and with a shout our souls are free death defeated by <u>Immanuel</u>.

> loosening = freeing claims of hell = unending punishment Immanuel = Jesus Christ, God with Us

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For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26





God Most High in a manger laid Lift your voices and now proclaim Great and glorious <u>Love</u> has come to us Join now with the <u>hosts</u> of heaven

> face = loving attention that protects and blesses gracious = show mercy and forgiveness

Come we to welcome <u>Emmanuel</u> King who came with no crown or throne Helpless He lay, the <u>Invincible</u> Maker of Mary, now Mary's son

> face = loving attention that protects and blesses gracious = show mercy and forgiveness

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face = loving attention that protects and blesses gracious = show mercy and forgiveness

Glory shining for all to see Hope alive let the Gospel <u>ring</u> God has made a way He will have the praise Tell the world His name is Jesus

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Glory shining for all to see Hope alive let the Gospel <u>ring</u> God has made a way He will have the praise Tell the world His name is Jesus

> face = loving attention that protects and blesses gracious = show mercy and forgiveness

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Stay for Zoom Breakout Rooms

Let us be hope-filled and overflowing, because...

God the Son has come mighty to save and gentle to carry like no one else and like nothing else can for all who will trust in Him