

God's Comfort For Difficult Times

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. I'm Timothy, and it's good to be here this morning and to preach God's word. It shouldn't take someone long to figure that out, to figure out that this world has many problems.

And I'm confident most of you know more about what I'm talking about than I do since I'm only 19. But for those my age and younger, I'm sure that if we haven't figured that out, we sure will very soon.

And we've heard about some hard things from Joe and Nathan, hard things that we can choose. But there are a lot of hard things in life that come our way that we don't choose and that we can't always control.

And this world is filled with brokenness and sin and death. This world we live in is one characterized by constant change.

And uncertainty. We deal with health crises. There are wars that go on. We deal with broken relationships.

[1 : 40] This is all the result of sin. We deal with broken relationships and death. We have to deal with dashed hopes.

Like I said, uncertainty. And in this world, life never turns out exactly how we expect. Like I said, most of you, I'm sure, know more about this than I do.

So like I said, it shouldn't take someone long to find out that this world we live in is a broken world. A world in need of redemption. And as we're going to be in Isaiah 40 this morning, I'd like to point out that we have, we deal with day by day things like depression and hopelessness in light of these difficult times that we deal with.

And I'd submit to you that in ancient Israel they had these difficult times as well just as we do today.

[3 : 03] Isaiah the prophet he ministered in Judah during four the reigns of four kings the kings Uzziah Jotham Ahaz and Hezekiah and this is later in the history of Israel and Judah.

Israel and Judah they were not unified and that was a big problem. They were divided. There were two kingdoms. There were supposed to be one kingdom as God's people but because of sin and rebellion they were divided and there was constant wars.

In Israel the northern kingdom they had no good kings. They had no good leadership. In the southern kingdom of Judah where Isaiah the prophet was they had some they had some better kings like Uzziah he feared the Lord.

but even at the end of his life Uzziah was not wholly faithful. This reminds me of many things that we deal with today.

Different uncertainty. Uncertainties and problems wars. And because of sin Isaiah the prophet he's an emissary from God and he comes the first half of the book of Isaiah is we can think of the first half of Isaiah as the book of judgment.

[4 : 44] Isaiah is 66 chapters total and chapters 1 through about 35 that section of Isaiah is focused on pronouncing judgment upon all the sinful nations and upon all the world.

And then the second half of Isaiah verses 40 and onward to 66 is focused on comfort after judgment. So we see this world is filled with brokenness and sin and rebellion against God.

And the prophet Isaiah he comes to pronounce judgment upon all those who are in rebellion all the nations. but throughout all of this through judgment pronouncing judgment but also comfort we see that Isaiah is pronouncing promises of a coming Messiah Jesus Christ who is the Redeemer.

We see promises of redemption for Israel the regathering of his special people in the Old Testament. and we see promises of as you see later in Isaiah 53 the suffering servant and the

future kingdom where he will reneate all things and make all things new.

And Isaiah chapter 40 is the very beginning of the book where he focuses on comfort after judgment. Isaiah chapter 40 And turn with me to Isaiah chapter 40 I'm sure you are already there.

[6 : 33] Isaiah chapter 40 verse 1 says this Comfort yes comfort my people says your God speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare is ended that her iniquity is pardoned.

For she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. So Isaiah is pronouncing comfort for Israel. And you see all throughout Isaiah 40 he's emphasizing the greatness of God and preparing the way for this Messiah Redeemer.

But fast forward to verse 27 This morning I'd like to focus on God's comfort for difficult times from verses 27 through 31 It says this Why do you say O Jacob and speak O Israel my way is hidden from the Lord and my just claim is passed over by my God Essentially they're thinking God must not see us because of all the troubles that we're going through all these troubles and this judgment God has probably forgotten the promises that he has made to us the promises that he gave to his people of redemption and of the future kingdom So they're dealing with despair and distrust of God They say my way is hidden from the Lord and my just claim is passed over by my God

But look in verse 28 He asks them a few questions He says this Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The everlasting God the Lord the creator of the ends of the earth neither faints nor is weary His understanding is unsearchable He gives power to the weak and to those who have no might He increases strength Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength They shall mount up with wings like eagles They shall run and not be weary They shall walk and not faint God's comfort for difficult times I want us all to remember this that we will face hard times in life and when we do our hope and comfort must come from the character of our great God

[9 : 29] Our hope and comfort must come from the character of our great God As you see here in verses 28 through 31 I'm going to present to you this morning from Isaiah 40 five comforting truths to get us through hard times Here we're going to look at five comforting truths to get us through hard times that we all face in life Truth number one Are you ready?

Truth number one comes straight from the text Look in verse 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God Truth number one is this The Lord is the everlasting God Everlasting What exactly does that mean?

That means that He is the Alpha and the Omega He is the beginning and He is the end He is the first and the last He is the same back then as He is today That means that our Heavenly Father is the same God who created the heavens and the earth at the very beginning He is the same God who parted the Red Sea for Israel and brought His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm He is the same God who brought Israel across the Jordan who parted the Jordan and who felled the walls of Jericho who gave them the land of Canaan and He is the same God who presided over the worldwide flood and He is the same God who has protected His people throughout all generations and He is the same God

Jesus Christ who came and provided sight for the blind and He is the same God who healed the lame He is the same God throughout every generation Psalm 90 verses 1 and 2 Moses says this He says O Lord you have been our dwelling place in all generations in all generations before the mountains were brought forth wherever you had formed the earth and the world even from everlasting to everlasting you are God so the Lord is the everlasting God and that's comforting because we understand that the world we live in is not everlasting we live in bodies that will be broken and they are broken we are not everlasting in our physical state but we have a God who is everlasting and He is constant throughout every age and I find that to be very comforting

Revelation 1 says I am the Alpha and the Omega says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come the Almighty so comforting truth number one is the Lord is the everlasting God the second truth comforting truth from Isaiah 40 here is this the Lord is the creator of the ends of the earth see in verse 28 have you not known have you not heard the everlasting God the Lord the creator of the ends of the earth he is the one who spoke galaxies into the existence at the beginning of time because the Lord is the creator of all things that's comforting because we know that because he is the one who made all things perfectly he also can and will remake anything that is broken he has the power to remake what is broken and to bind up what is lacking

[14:12] Isaiah 45 verse 18 says this for thus says the Lord who created the heavens who is God who formed the earth and made it who has established it who did not create it in vain who formed it to be inhabited I am the Lord and there is no other God is the creator of the ends of the earth he is the maker of all things we can find comfort in that because he has the ability to remake all things and he will at the end of time so not only is God the everlasting and he is the creator but going on it says this is comforting truth number three he neither faints nor is weary that means he is all powerful so we have the everlasting

God our creator God but our all powerful God almighty God he does not faint or grow weary because God is almighty and he never grows faint or weary that means he is always able he is always able no matter the problem he is the God the almighty God who parted the Red Sea for his people and saved them from orchestrated salvation from the Egyptians you see in the book of Isaiah here it shares a historical interlude about the reign of Hezekiah and the Lord saved the people of Jerusalem from king Sennacherib king of Assyria the Assyrian armies were marching against Jerusalem they had defeated and destroyed so many surrounding cities pagan nations and the king of

Assyria is taunting those men in Jerusalem saying have the gods of all these other nations saved them from me and what do Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah do they go and they pray to the almighty God and do you know what happens says the angel of the Lord went into the camp of the Assyrians and slew and slew so many I believe it was it was thousands and thousands I don't remember how many exactly but he slew and it was 360 thousand men of the Assyrians and that induced the king of Assyria to turn around and go back to his home country God is almighty and he is fully able so he saved his people from the

Egyptians he saved his people from the king of Assyria but also think about in the New Testament when the believers in Jesus Christ in the city of Damascus hear that this this killer of believers in the Messiah is coming this killer named Saul of Tarsus imagine you fled to Damascus to get away from all these all the Jews are trying to kill you you find that oh they're coming to kill me here but then imagine what you think when you hear whoa okay that Saul of Tarsus he's incapacitated because he's blind and then you hear that oh he believes in Jesus Christ too it's like only God only the almighty God can orchestrate salvation like that and turn a killer into a missionary an apostle to spread the gospel to nations all over the world so the

Lord does not faint and grow weary we do faint and grow weary our almighty God he's with us day by day his arm is not shortened as the scripture says Ephesians 3 verse 20 says now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us to him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever amen so our Lord is almighty the orchestrator of salvation our fourth comforting truth from Isaiah is we've seen that we've seen already that God is everlasting he's the creator he's almighty the fourth truth from

[19:36] Isaiah is this his understanding is unsearchable it means he is omniscient he knows all things his understanding is beyond everything that we can conceive in our own finite minds because God knows all things we can be assured that everything is under control and even as Joe mentioned before he can redeem the problems that come into our lives because he knows all his understanding is beyond us Isaiah 46 it says this about God's understanding it says remember the former things of old for I am God and there is no other Isaiah 46 9 I am God and there is none like me declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things that are not yet done saying my counsel shall stand and

I will do all my pleasure Romans 11 you see that Paul says oh the depth of the riches the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out for who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his counselor or who has first given to him that it shall be repaid to him or earlier in Isaiah 40 he asked who has directed the spirit of the Lord or as his counselor has taught him so we can be comforted knowing that our almighty God knows infinitely more than we do about the problems that we face in life and he can redeem those problems so our Lord's understanding is unsearchable the fifth comforting truth for us from Isaiah 40 is this look continuing on verse 29 he gives power to the weak and to those who have no might he increases strength even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall verse 31 but those who wait on the

Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings like eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint verse 31 says those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength so our fifth comforting truth this morning is this the Lord strengthens those who wait for him the Lord strengthens those who wait for him those who place their trust and place their hope in the almighty everlasting God believing his promises because of who he is faithful those who place their hope in the everlasting almighty God who knows all things he will strengthen them and in this context in Isaiah he's speaking about he's comforting Israel through telling them of the coming Messiah who will make all things right who will regather Israel today we live as redeemed believers in Christ but I submit to you we're living between something we're living in a time of tension this Christian life it's filled with trials tribulations we live in frail physical bodies that do not last forever we live in a tension between the already our salvation in Jesus Christ our savior has come we live between the already but also the not yet of final redemption when we will receive new bodies glorified with Jesus Christ we live between we live in that tension so we are in a sense waiting for the coming of our savior to take us to heaven with him and

[24 : 34] Isaiah is telling the Israelites that those who wait for the Lord place their trust in him but also those who wait for the coming of the Messiah believing that he will come and he is God is faithful to his promises those who wait for him shall renew their strength so when we trust God because of who he is when we trust God he gives us new strength to persevere in life you might be thinking how can this be that we can find that we who are weak we who live in dealing with trials and tribulations and the depravity of sin how can we find strength 2nd Corinthians 4 says this the apostle Paul writes this 2nd Corinthians 4 16 he says to the Corinthians therefore we do not lose heart even though our outward man is perishing yet the inward man is being renewed day by day says for our light affliction speaking about this life for our light affliction which is but for a moment is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

the world so so that so that we lose sight of the eternal the things which are not seen because he says we do not lose heart because we do not look at the things which are seen but the things which are unseen because the things which are seen, everything around us, we're in a temporary state. But the eternal, the eternal is unseen. Jesus Christ will come and he will remake everything that is broken.

So we do not lose heart. Also, we understand that according to later in 2 Corinthians, we can glory in our weakness because God's grace is sufficient for our every need.

Jesus Christ provides for us everything that we need to live holy for his glory. And he will provide us strength because he is the object of our hope.

[27 : 50] Also, turn back to Isaiah with me. I mean, you see in Isaiah 26, Isaiah writes, you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, speaking to the Lord.

He says, trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength. So the whole point I would like us to remember this morning is that we will face hard times in life.

We do face hard times in life. When we do, our hope and comfort must come from the character of our great God.

He is the object of our hope. You see, what is the result of God giving his people strength, those who wait for him?

Verse 31 of chapter 40 in Isaiah says this, they shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

[29 : 07] You know what I hear eagles do? In storms, great storms, what eagles can do is they can fly above the storm, above the clouds, so that the storm, the rain, and the thunder, all that is below them.

It says, God shall renew the strength of those who trust in him. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. So you can think through God's strength, you can ride above the storms of life because our trust is in him.

That doesn't mean we never get bogged down and we can become discouraged, but we remember that our eternal hope and trust is in God.

God is everlasting. He is almighty, the orchestrator of salvation. And he can strengthen those who trust in him.

They will run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. So our hope and comfort must come from the character of our great God for God's nature, who he is, is the greatest comfort and encouragement we can have because he is the orchestrator of salvation.

[30 : 37] In Jesus Christ, we have all that we need to live godly. So this morning, I would like to exhort you to believe that God is indeed almighty.

He is all that he has said he is in his word, as we see here in Isaiah 40, and that he is able to complete his promises of redemption.

Focus your eyes on our future hope in Jesus Christ. As Titus says, looking for the blessed hope, glorious return of our great God and Savior.

So believe that. So I'd ask you three questions today. Think with me. Do you believe we live in a world of uncertainty, brokenness, and death?

I'm sure we can all nod, yes we do. But then this, do you believe God's promise of future redemption? That he is everlasting, the creator, having all power and all knowledge?

[31 : 59] But then thirdly, what will you do when uncertainty, brokenness, and death come your way? I exhort you, read.

Today go home and read the whole chapter of Isaiah 40 and ask the Lord to speak through his word and teach you about who he is. Because Isaiah 40 is all about the greatness of God and the weakness of human flesh.

As you see earlier in the chapter, all flesh is grass. Its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. I encourage you to go home today and read Isaiah 40 and ask God to open your eyes and renew your trust in him.

So remember that when we face hard times in life, and we will, our hope and comfort must come from the character of our great God. The words of this song remind me of what we've been discussing today from Isaiah 40.

When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrow like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

[33 : 38] Though Satan should buffet, the trials should come, let this blessed assurance control that Christ hath regarded my helpless estate and hath shed his own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, oh, my soul. Oh, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trumpet shall resound and the Lord shall descend, even so it is well with my soul.

Amen. And thank you, Lord, for all your good blessings, things. Thank you for being our good creator and our redeemer.

We praise you for all that you have done in redemption throughout all of history and I pray that our hearts would be renewed in your truth. May you give us wisdom.

[35 : 02] I pray that we would enjoy sweet fellowship today as saints. May we encourage each other to press forward faithfully, trusting you as our redeemer, the one who is faithful to the promises of his word and you are holy.

You go before us and give us greater wisdom. We trust you in Jesus' name above all names. Amen. Amen. Thank you.