

“How To Comfort The Church”

Isaiah 40:2

May 10, 2020

INTRO:

- Have you ever been frustrated by someone telling you to do something... but NOT explaining how to do it?
- Ever been frustrated by knowing where you need to go, but not knowing how to get there?

Ever felt like you would have more “get-to” attitude if God’s “have-to’s” came with more “how-to’s”?

- If yes... You’ll be **blessed & comforted** today!

CONTEXT:

- A. Sermon Series: “Gospel Gardening” (CCC “patterns”)
 - a. Gospel thread woven throughout the Old Test.
 - b. Patterns of Promises & Power & Presence...
 - c. Garden, Ark, Patriarchs, Psalms ^(91&46), Prophets
 - d. Jude 1:1-4... “contend for the faith...”

- B. Last week’s sermon... **Isaiah 40:1**

“Comfort, comfort My people, says your God”

(a small text... with a gigantic treasure of truth!)

5 Hebrew words... EACH epitomizes COMFORT!

*Biblical “comfort” is the faithful fruit of a believer’s
righteous right-standing with Christ
in redeemed restoration. - JDP*

“a miraculous restoration...” - Calvin

*Comfort **IS** divine confidence! - JDP*

*We **CONTEND** for the faith by **COMFORTING** the family
of God... and Christians comfort the family of God
by contending for the faith!*

T/S: Last week... ***God’s gospel comforts God’s people!**
(The Comforter captures the comforted. - JDP)*

VIDEO: *“Acts 1:8 & Isaiah 58 Revisited”*

C. Today’s sermon... **Isaiah 40:2**

T/S: *We shift from being **TOLD** to **TAUGHT** to comfort*

BIG IDEA:
God teaches God’s people how-to comfort!

PREVIEW:

1. Comforters **INFORM**
2. Comforters **INSPECT**
3. Comforters **INSPIRE**

T/S: Let's begin with v.2 by reading v.1 in reverse:

Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.

- Who is talking? *Christ our Creator*
- To whom is He speaking? *His people thru His people*
- What is He saying to us? *Comfort God's people*

TEXT:

Now let's look at v.2

*Speak
tenderly/comfort-ably
to Jerusalem, (NOT Judas)
and
cry/call out to her (bride)
that her warfare
is ended,
that her iniquity
is pardoned (paid-for),
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double
for ALL her sins.*

I. Comforters **INFORM**

1. Preach & Proclaim

Speak...

Go into ALL the world and preach the Gospel...

Faith comes by hearing, hearing the Word of God

Truth in love (Eph. 4:15) is God's comfort recipe!

Titus 2:15 commands comforters to "inform"

Go and make disciples... (*Inform, Inspect, & Inspire!*)

II. Comforters **INSPECT**

2. Heart Inspections (ours & others)

Speak tenderly/comfort-ably

- Are you speaking **WITH** the **right heart?**
- Are you speaking **INTO** the **right heart?**

literally, "to the heart"; not merely to the intellect.

to speak to the heart of another is to soothe, or persuade, or comfort.

Evangelize as you edify, and edify as you evangelize. – Keller

***** Illustration *****

Jackson & Angela were comforted in a new way when she was in the hospital (and the woman in the bed next to her died during the night)...

Angela said Jackson: ***"Do not fear! Be comforted... remember our God and how His family is praying for us... unlike we have ever experienced before."***

3. Church vs. Crowd

Speak tenderly ***to Jerusalem***, (NOT Judas)

To Jerusalem - The direction is not merely to speak to the people in Babylon, but also to comfort Jerusalem itself lying in ruins.

We comfort the Church... we confront the crowd! - JDP

Dear Christian brothers & sister...

WE are Jerusalem!
Miraculously, metaphorically, and missionally...
we **ARE** Jerusalem.

We ARE Zion!
(see Zion described as God's "messengers" = 40:9-11)

4. "Missional Conjunction"

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, **and***

5. Com-passionate Zeal

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and **cry to her** (bride)*

NOTE: *this different than "speaking tenderly" – this calls for bold rebuking at times! (Titus 2:15 & 2 Timothy 4)*

*Herein we find the root understanding of
"the CALLED" of Christ! -JDP*

Please note:

“Comfort” does not say: *“You’re not so bad...”* and *“Don’t worry, God is love, so everything is going to be ok.”* **No.** Comfort says with an empathetic & loving Christ-likeness: **“Repent & obey”** (read John 3:36).

The called of God do God’s calling! - JDP

Please think about it:

- Comforters champions 1st John
- Comforters champions Titus
- Comforters champions Ephesians
- Comforters champions:
 - > **The Pentateuch**
 - > **The Psalms (91 & 46) Speak and cry-out = rod and staff**
 - > **The Proverbs (3:5-6)**
 - > **The Prophets**
 - ~ Isaiah (here & last 2 weeks)
 - ~ Jeremiah (“peace, peace...”)
 - ~ Nehemiah (“we repent...”)
 - ~ Ezra (Zerrubabel)
 - ~ Haggai (“I put holes in ...”)
 - > **The People of God!**
 - ~ Comfort, comfort My people
 - ~ John 3:16
 - ~ 1 Thessalonians 2:8

- Comforters champions **Beatitudes**
- Comforters champions **Fruit of the Spirit**
- Comforters champions the **full armor of God**
- Comforters champions **1 Corinthians 12-13**
- Comforters champions **Acts 2...**
- Comforters champions **Romans 8...**
- Comforters champions **Hebrews 10,11,12**

Speak and cry-out = rod and staff

III. Comforters **INSPIRE**

6. **Repent & Receive**

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that her warfare*

In Job 7:1; Job 14:14...

this life is a warfare; saints have many enemies to engage with, sin, Satan, and the world; many battles to fight, a great fight of afflictions, and the good fight of faith...

Spurgeon

*"The great Lion of vengeance has not roared
unless sin has provoked him." (1866)*

7. Divine Mercy

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that her warfare **is ended**,*

*"ended" is used of "filling to overflowing", not just
filling up to the limits of something, but filling so as to
go beyond its limits:*

*"For Jordan over-flowed all his banks at the time of
harvest" (Josh. 3:15).*

8. Consequence for Sin

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her
warfare is ended, **that her iniquity***

her iniquity (better, **her guilt**)

Isaiah 53 teaches that God put upon Jesus Christ our "iniquities" (v. 6), that He, having been bruised for our "iniquities" (v. 5) might justify those who believe on Him: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11).

Your "INIQUITY" vs. "sin" = your "sentence" vs. your sin...

Iniquity is like sin's "penalty or punishment" vs. the particular sin & its defining description.

- ie. Murder is an evil sin
- ie. A "life sentence" in prison is that sin's punishment
- The two are highly related & yet different by definition
- **Jesus Christ's sacrificial atonement covers both...**

9. Blood Bought Gospel

*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity **is pardoned**,*

The word implies not exemption from punishment, but the fact that the punishment had been accepted, and had done its work.

10. Amazing Grace

*Speak 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***

***"has received"** = now & not yet...
like the gospel's promise of eternal life...*

11. Over-flowing Faithfulness

*Speak 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***

...double grace, while she deserved double punishment.

– Geneva Study Bible

***"double"** = look back at the verse...*

- **RELIEF** - "her warfare is ended"
- **RESTORATION** - "her iniquity has been pardoned"
- R & R = double comfort... cf v.1 *"Comfort, comfort" 2X*

12. Forever Forgiven!

*Speak 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.*

T/S: *I pray that today... you learned how love...
 ...you were taught how to comfort...
 ...you were compelled to contend and to comfort...
 ALL to the glory of God!*

CLOSE:

1. We **Preach / Proclaim**
2. We **BE loving & empathetic**
3. We **identify the true family of God / Church**
4. We **use missional conjunctions**
5. We **exemplify com-passionate zeal**
6. We **defy political correctness & we identify sin**
7. We **cherish and share God's mercy**
8. We **grow from our consequences over sin**
9. We **worship Jesus for His blood-bought Gospel**
10. We **thank God for His miraculous & amazing grace**
11. We **celebrate Christ's overflowing faithfulness**
12. We **champion Christ's forever-forgiveness!**

Let's Pray

VIDEO: *"Comforting the Church in Kenya"*