Isaiah 40              3-17-05

“The Lord is my Shepherd!”

1. **Intro:**
   1.1. St. Patricks Day – He was neither Irish nor Roman Catholic. He was born in Britain. Carried off by pirates at age 16, & forced to work as a slave in Ireland. After 6 years there, during which he experienced a conversion, he escaped & returned to Britain & his family. He had a night vision in which he received a call to **evangelize Ireland.** He became the greatest single force in the Christianization of Ireland.¹

   1.2. Prayer – May we cry as Samuel did, “Speak Lord your servant hears.”

   1.3. This is the 2nd division of Isaiah. (My favorite)
      1.3.1. You’ll see there is more to God’s character than judgment…he is full of Mercy & Grace & eager to lavish His love on His people.
      1.3.2. You’ll hear how different it is & why some claimed there must have been 2 Isaiah's!
          1.3.2.1. Until you read Jn.12:38-40 where Jesus quoted from both divisions of Isaiah, & said it was the same Isaiah.

          1.3.3. Isaiah will now focus on God’s **deliverance of & His comfort & care** for His people.
          1.3.4. 2nd Division Outline: The Purpose of Peace(40-48); The Prince of Peace(49-57); The Program of Peace(58-66).²

2. **HEARING VOICES! (1-11)**
   2.1. Hearing voices? (see 3,6,9)
       2.1.1. Voice of **Comfort; Voice of Confidence;** & Voice of **Consolation.**

   2.2. **A VOICE OF COMFORT!** (1-5)
   2.3. (1) Q: Remember the weeks/months following 9-11?
       2.3.1. If America received words of encouragement like, “you'll rebuild again”, “planes would fly again” before Sept.11 they would have meant nothing to us…but they sure would be words of comfort afterward!

       2.3.2. Isaiah is writing words of comfort 1 century before they were needed. [before Judah would fall to Babylon]
          2.3.2.1. They sure would become **words of hope** during their exile in Babylon. And words of hope still for us today!

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¹ The Church in the Middle Ages; pg.53,54
² G. Campbell Morgan.
2.4. Wow! Double comfort from God!
2.4.1. Such tender speaking, wooing love, speaking to the heart.
2.4.2. True religion must always grip the heart.
2.4.3. The world is full of hurting & comfortless hearts.
2.4.4. Even in the church, as Joseph Parker said, “There is a broken heart in every pew.”

2.4.5. To accept God’s comfort, it necessitates some hurt in your life in which to comfort!
2.4.5.1. Yes, your own life becomes a hospital ward where you are taught the divine art of comfort.
2.4.5.2. You will be wounded so you can bind up.
2.4.5.3. Q: Do you ever wonder why you are having to experience some great sorrow?
2.4.5.4. God will apply the anesthetic He once used on you to them.
2.4.5.4.1. Then you will know why you were afflicted.
2.4.5.5. “God comforts us not to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters.” John Henry Jowett

2.4.6. Poem: They tell me I must bruise the rose’s leaf,
Ere I can keep & use Its fragrance brief.
They tell me I must break The skylark’s heart,
Ere her cage song will make The silence start.
They tell me love must bleed, And friendship weep,
Ere in my deepest need I touch that deep.
Must it be always so With precious things?
Must they be bruised & go With beaten wings?
Ah, yes! By crushing days, by caging nights, by scar
Of Thorn & stony ways, These blessings are!

2.5. (2) Q: What were the 3 words of comfort? [ended, pardoned, received]

2.6. Double (∥∥ØκØ κεπηελκεπηελ)– two sided, fold over, 2 sided. {ie. One side mirroring the other} Fair judgment not double judgment.

2.7. Be Comforted - The Lord knows how to measure your chastening, & that He forgives, & gives you new beginnings.

2.8. (3,4) Using hyperbole, the prophet called the people to smooth a highway in the desert.
2.8.1. These words demand a spiritual renewal in preparation for Messiah’s advent.
2.8.2. Hearts must be prepared in repentance, & then Messiah can come.
2.8.2.1. Mt.3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
2.9. This was claimed by John the Baptist in his unique ministry preparing the coming of Christ. [But this task is also for us all]

2.9.1. It is the picture of us making a Highway for God, along which He will move toward His ultimate accomplishment.

2.9.2. (4) Our highway system seeks to do the same thing.

2.9.2.1. Get on the I-15 South. Just south of Tem part of the valley is filled in. And then through the great arced bridge where the hill is cutaway for the road to go through.

2.9.3. There are no mountains too high for God, nor for the people of faith.

2.9.3.1. I guess we could sing with the Supremes, “Ain't no mountain high enough. Ain't no valley low enough. Ain't no river wide enough to keep me from loving you!”

2.9.4. Q: Which mountain is in front of you?

2.9.5. Q: Are there any obstacles that need to be removed in your life?

2.9.6. Q: Have you rolled out the Red Carpet for Christ in your life?

2.10. (5) The Lord’s glory would be seen in the deliverance of Israel from exile.

2.10.1. Just as they were delivered from Egypt; & were to be in the NT at Calvary through the Resurrection, & at the 2nd Coming of Christ.

2.10.1.1. There it will be seen in the fullest measure!

2.11. A VOICE OF CONFIDENCE! (6-8)

2.12. In contrast to the world’s transience is the permanence of the Word of God.

2.12.1. Appl - If it feels like you are in a spiritual exile (feel cast out, or banished), then you need to make God’s Word central again in your life.

2.12.2. Q: What plans can you come up with to make His Word more central in your life?

2.13. Be Confident…His Word will stand in spite of the frailty of man.


2.15. (9) High mountain – When you’re at the base you see little. Go higher & you can see for a few miles. Higher the scene expands. But, the summit it is breath taking! [Ex: Gettysburg platform]

2.15.1. The Christian life is the same. When we 1st believe in Christ we see little of Him. The higher we climb the more we discover His beauties. One day we will gain the summit & be able to say, “I know whom I have believed”!

2.15.2. Get up dear saints to the High mountain! - “Upward to heaven! Nearer to God!”

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3 Spurgeon; June 25th.
2.16. “Behold your God” - Share the good news with others. Shout it aloud!
2.16.1. Often times Christians are very good at offering loud praises to God in church, but are much less vocal when facing an unbelieving & questing world. 
2.16.1.1. Sing of God’s power... but also Speak of it!
2.16.2. Ps.96:2 “Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.”
2.16.3. Ps.71:15 “My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure.”
2.16.4. Only God could have empowered his exiled people to speak of good news.
2.16.4.1. Like a couple days ago when Ashley Smith read to her captor during her seven-hour hostage ordeal. She read to him ch.30 of The Purpose Driven Life. Resulting in being freed and ended the Atlanta standoff?

2.17. (10,11) Now look at this wonderful linkage of the Power of God(10), & the Love of God(11).
2.17.1. He is Powerful & Mighty; yet Careful & Gentile.
2.17.1.1. See “arm” in both verse.
2.17.2. There are 2 reasons for Jesus return! (Judgment & Blessing)
2.17.2.1. Picture here Mt.25:31-34.
2.17.3. Here is a gentle picture of a shepherd leading his sheep w/all the qualities of loving concern for each individual sheep w/in the flock.
2.17.3.1. He’s bound not to lose one!
2.17.3.2. It’s the theme of Ps.23 & John 10.
2.17.4. This isn’t some “soft skinned, hand manicured shepherd” you’ve seen in some children’s book.
2.17.4.1. This shepherd is a leader who risks his life for the sheep’s protection & safety.
2.17.4.2. He’s not a hireling that flees in times of danger.
2.17.4.3. He would even die for them that they might live!

2.18. (10) He will right all wrongs.

2.19. (11) A prediction beautifully lived out by Jesus Christ.
2.19.1. A Good shepherd will provide for His sheep. He protects them from harm.
2.19.2. He uses his rod to chase off the enemy & his staff to lift them out of precarious places they get themselves into!
2.19.3. Feed – Actually the entire work of a shepherd.
2.19.4. **Gather & Carry** – the young lambs recently born.
   2.19.4.1. They are the weakest members of the flock.
   2.19.4.2. You know what He is talking about here, those of you who have/had babies. You respond to their cry at night. You go in & pick them up in your arms & hold them tightly to your chest. You shhh them, you bounce them, you rock them. Their fears flee, they're calm again.
   2.19.4.3. **Note:** Not over his shoulders but against His chest!

2.19.5. **Gently lead** – The ewes that were nursing.
   2.19.5.1. They couldn't be forced along by driving them, so He tenderly leads them.

2.20. **Q:** Which work of the Good Shepherd do you need most tonight?
   2.20.2. [2] Do you just need to be held? – Feel His closeness!
      2.20.2.1. **He will carry them** – sometimes He does it by pulling them from some trials. Other times he could carry them by giving them a very simple faith. [ex: They take Gods promises just as they stand. With every trouble they run straight to Jesus(Joe & Amish)]
   2.20.3. [3] Are you so worn-out you need to be carried? – Let Him do it!
   2.20.4. [4] Do you need direction in your life? – He seeks to lead you!
   2.20.5. Sheep, He already knows you are prone to wander, lag behind, grow weary, or get into mischief.

2.21. Verses 1-11 are the introduction to the rest of Isaiah’ book.
   2.21.1. Note then, the conclusion here is the same as was the intro.

2.22. **Be Consoled**...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you All the days of your life; And you will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.