

COMFORT MY PEOPLE

By Rev. G. Grant Verdoold
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TEXT: Isaiah 40: 1-5

1 “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God. 2 “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.” 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; 5 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see *it* together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Key Verse: Verse 1

“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says your God.”

This is a sterling hope for a New Year! This is a resolution for a wonderful New Year! Do you hear GOD? HE repeats Himself. HE says it twice! “Comfort, YES, comfort my people!”

The Hook:

What a sweet title! A sigh of sweet comfort! GOD calls “MY people”! What a cheering revelation! GOD calls us “HIS people”! Hear it again! “MY people.” We are HIS!

How much meaning is couched in those two words, “MY people”. Here is specialty! We are GOD’s object of attention! Here is divine favour! We are the recipients of GOD’s benevolence! Here is blessing! We are the recipients of GOD’s bounty, receivers of HIS kindness!

The whole world is GOD’s. The heavens, even the heaven of heavens, are The LORD’s, and HE reigns among the children of men, but HE says of only a certain number, “MY people” of those HE has chosen. For those whom HE has purchased to Himself, HE says, “MY people”. While nations and peoples by the millions are passed by as merely being nations, GOD says of us that we are HIS people! HE says here, “MY people”!

In this word, purchased, there is the idea of proprietorship. It teaches us that we are the divine property of GOD Almighty! Have you ever considered that? GOD purchased us! We are HIS property! We belong to HIM! We are the object of HIS personal care and attention! We are HIS people!! “For the Lord’s portion *is* His people; Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.” Deuteronomy 32: 9. What a comfort for us, to be called HIS people!

My friends, all the nations of the earth are GOD’s. “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.” Psalm 86: 9. The whole world is in HIS power and sway. “21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” John 5: 21-23.

Indeed, HIS people, HIS chosen people, HIS favoured people, are HIS holy possession! HE has done more for them. HE has bought them with HIS own blood! HE has brought them close to Himself! HE has set HIS great heart upon them and has loved them with an everlasting love!

HE has loved HIS people so much that the revolutions of time shall never be able to diminish it! Nothing can diminish those precious, comforting words, “MY people”! Oh hearers, can you, by faith, put yourself in that number who believe that GOD calls you “MY people”?

What a comfort to be able to look up into the heavens tonight and with confidence say, "My LORD and my GOD!" John 20: 28b. Can you say, as Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."? Matthew 16: 16b.

Oh yes, I am YOURS, and YOU are mine, LORD! Yes, we are HIS, and that holy relationship entitles us to call HIM "ABBA", "Father", "Daddy"! "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."'" Romans 8: 15. We can call out to the Father who always hears, always answers, and always cares!

We are GOD's and HE is our GOD by that sacred, hallowed, enshrined, unprofaned, revered fellowship in which I delight to hold with HIM!! That comforting presence that comes when GOD is pleased to manifest Himself unto us is like no other!

Can you, beloved, put your hand on your heart and find there the indentures of the contract of GOD Almighty? The charter of love divine? The settlement of peace? The convention of grace? The bargain of holy mercy? The compact of Calvary? The warranty of eternal life? The transaction of Kindness? Can you, my friend, can you? Can you, by faith, lay hold of Jesus' precious garments and say, "My Christ"?

If you can do this, then GOD calls you, "MY people"! For, if GOD be your GOD, and Christ be your Christ, then The LORD has a special, holy, particular favour towards you!! HE says to you now that you are the object of HIS choice! You shall be accepted in The Beloved Son! "to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1: 6.

How careful GOD is of HIS people, those of whom HE says, "MY people"! Take note how anxious HE is not only for their life, but also for their comfort!

HE does not say, strengthen, strengthen MY people. HE does not say to the angels, protect MY people. HE does not say bolster, steel up your sinews, or get back in the game MY people.

HE says comfort, yes comfort MY people! Friends, HE would not have us only as HIS living people, HIS preserved people, BUT HE wants us to be HIS happy people! HE wants us to be HIS rejoicing people!!

Yes, HE likes HIS people to be fed in pastures green. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." Psalm 23: 2. HE likes to give us good things and make glad their hearts! "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." James 1: 17. GOD not only gives the bread, but HE gives the honey too! HE will not only give the milk but will also give the wine! "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55: 1. All the sweetest things your hearts can desire are the gifts of GOD.

HE gives comfort! "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. HE repeats Himself. HE says it twice, and when GOD repeats Himself, it means that what HE says is important.

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. This is The Father's yearning heart! HE is careful even for the little things of HIS people.

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. Comfort the ones with the tearful eyes.

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. Comfort the ones with an aching heart or with a downcast spirit!

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. Comfort the ones with a moaning soul, for GOD Almighty says, Comfort MY people!

The Book:

For whom is GOD's comfort sent? It is sent by the Holy Spirit to HIS people. The Holy Spirit is the Great Comforter. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—" John 14: 16. It is only HE that can truly console the saints.

The Holy Spirit is not limited nor ever thwarted in HIS holy mission to revive, comfort, quicken, recharge, enliven, or invigorate HIS people!

We often talk about the insinuations of the devil. I often hear us bemoaning the fact someone has been attacked by Apollyon, the evil one, or has had a struggle with Beelzebub, the lord of lies, and many are often talking about him.

Allow me to remind us all, there is a flipside to all of this!

For if evil spirits assault us, then the Holy Spirit can guard and protect us! It is my firm belief that the blessed Holy Spirit is often employed by GOD, The Father to throw into the hearts of HIS people comforting thoughts. There are many sweet thoughts which we have by the way, when we sit down, and when we rise up, which we rarely, if ever, attribute immediately to The Holy Spirit. Most often these beautiful, calm, lovely, consoling, and soothing thoughts are the work of The Holy Spirit. These tender, holy thoughts often come directly from the heart of GOD through the Holy Spirit.

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. Our GOD does this wonderfully.

GOD uses ministers of the gospel and pastors to comfort HIS people. Ministers and pastors should be a comfort to GOD's people, but I am sure that they cannot do it unless they preach the gracious good news and good, sound doctrine from GOD Almighty.

I cannot see how a pastor can console the hearts and minds of The LORD's family without a Holy Theology. LORD forbid that we should adopt a careless or defunct theology. That would comfort no-one!

To know the unsearchable riches of Christ, to know the eternal promises of GOD Almighty, to know the sufficiency of an all-sufficient Saviour and glorious Redeemer, is to preach the wonderful gospel of the LORD, Jesus Christ, who is the originator of it all. For there I can find something to comfort the child of GOD!

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1. It is a solemn duty to remind, reprove, exhort, invite, console and comfort the people of GOD. To step into the pulpit with little to say of myself and ready to tell some of the grand gospel truths, the holy, everlasting truths with more unction of The Holy Spirit! Oh, to have more unction! I desire to have a refreshed spirit quickened by The Living GOD! I do not seek some metaphysical subject to hard to learn. No! I seek refreshment for your souls, sustenance for your starving spirits, the wonderful truth of The Almighty GOD, for a holy discourse based on our awesome Saviour's love! This is what we need! To know of the divine grace that is relentless from The LORD of all grace, to know the rhapsodies of The Living GOD which quell the darkness, to sense The Master's presence, being near to GOD and hearing the flutter of Seraph's wings, to enjoy the fullness of joy that can never be understood, these give song to my spirit, and the gospel informed by the sweet cheering words of a suffering servant-Saviour, our ever-living Jesus Christ. These bring comfort to GOD's people!

"¹⁰ Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53: 10 & 11

Are you comfortless? GOD speaks comfort to you! Are you an orphan? Psalm 68:5 says, "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows, is God in his holy habitation." Are you poor or homeless? Friend, "A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend *who*

sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18: 24, that is Christ Himself. “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God. Isaiah 40: 1

If you have a weather-beaten soul, go to GOD now, for HE is the great comforter of HIS people! HE calls to you today, friend! Right now, and at this very time, HE calls you! “I *am* the Lord, and *there is* no other; *There is* no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,” Isaiah 45: 5E is the door. “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10: 9. HE is the goo

John 6: 45-48. Jesus is not one choice of many. HE is The ONLY choice!

HE is the only choice because: HE is the bread of life. “I am the bread of life.” John 6: 48. HE is the light of the world. “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.”” John 8: 12.

HE is the good shepherd. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” John 10: 11. HE is the resurrection and the life. “²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”” John 11: 25 & 26. Believe in HIS all-eternal love. HE is the way, the truth, and the life. “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”” John 14: 6. HE is the vine. “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.” John 15: 1.

GOD loves to see HIS people happy! “And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12: 9, “through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5: 2,

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!” Philippians 4: 4 Rejoice in HIS grace.

I happened to see a YouTube video of dancing shrimp, yes, you heard me right, dancing shrimp! They were dancing in ecstasy, throwing themselves into convulsions and contortions of delight. So, I thought, if they can dance, so can I! And I thought, did GOD make these little creatures happy?

Does HE desire that I should be miserable? NO! Wonderful, true religion is this, keep yourself from being polluted by the world, or as the NLT says, “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.” James 1: 27

Be in harmony with what GOD says! Our faith is meant to have joys in it! Actually, it is an irreligious thing to go moping about miserably through GOD’s creation!

I know sometimes we can’t help ourselves, but hear what Solomon says! “Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works.” Ecclesiastes 9:7. This does not so much refer to the eating and drinking as it means to live with a joyous countenance! We need to understand that GOD loves us and loves the work we do. We need to live with a happy heart, a captivated, blissful, jubilant and pleasant heart! Live with a heart of jubilee!

GOD loves us, and we profess to love in return. “We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4: 19. “And the second, like *it, is* this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12: 31.

Right! So, we should love! We should love those who for some reason or another don’t love themselves and want to escape this world as quickly as possible.

We should love and comfort GOD’s people. I spoke with a man this week and spent some time with him just trying to help him see that while the world is cold and cruel, there is a GOD who loves and treasures him. A GOD who sent me to spend that time with him and show him the love and care that GOD has for him.

Because bruised reeds give little music, and the smoking flax makes little fire, we then should comfort those who are not comforted. Share GOD's comfort when it is not socially acceptable. Share GOD's comforting word in season and out of season.

"17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls— 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3: 17 & 18. GOD's mercies are everlasting! "The Lord has appeared of old to me, *saying*: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with lovingkindness I have drawn you." Jeremiah 31: 3

GOD's mercies have not failed nor faltered; therefore, we are not consumed! Tell someone! Go and cheer someone! Really! I bid you, in The LORD's name, to go and seek out the needy, the distressed, the poor and the lonely, and give them this holy food. This is food for the soul! "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1.

Tell them the new covenant. "31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'" Jeremiah 31: 31-34.

Remember this! Share this! GOD is your GOD! HE loves you! He cares for you!

"24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God." Ezekiel 36: 24 -28

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There is so much left! Oh, the mercies of GOD! The mercies of a merciful GOD!! "2 Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on Me."

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we, through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15: 2-4.

Like Paul said, I beseech you brethren which have a tendency to comfort the saints. There is no loss of subjects here! For starters, GOD provided in the present 40 years. HE raised up the prophets to proclaim the mercies of an all merciful GOD. "22 *Through* the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 *They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*" Lamentations 3: 22 & 23.

Whisper in the ears of the downcast, there is grace and redeeming love, awesome, relentless grace, awesome, relentless redeeming love, the love of a great GOD and HIS grace. "18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; 20 But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 1: 18-20.

The Took:

This actually blew my mind this week when I saw this for the first time. We are going now to see how comfort and the church are related. Church and comfort are key words to us.

Both words, church and comfort, come from the same Greek root word, "Klesis". Klesis is translated as call, called, or to call. The only difference between church and comfort are their prefixes.

Our English word "church" is translated from the Greek word "ekklesia". Ekklesia or Church means "those who are called out", specifically those who are called out of the world.

Now, "comfort" is translated in the New Testament as "paraklesis". The prefix "para" means "alongside" and "klesis" which as we said earlier means "to call" or "to be called". Thus paraklesis, or comfort means to come alongside.

So, the New Testament view of the church was as people, people Jesus rescues out of the world and then places alongside other rescued people for the purpose of serving in ministry for Christ's kingdom.

We have been comforted by GOD, so we can become comforters to others. In this way we become more in the image of Christ and more fit for eternity.

So, in simple terms, the church (ekklesia) is comprised of people whom Jesus has called out of the world and placed alongside (paraklesis) of other called out people. We believers are placed alongside others in the body of Christ doing whatever is necessary in helping others to fulfil GOD's will for HIS church!

Here's the idea. The only refuge is faith in Jesus Christ! Christ is the only substitute! Comfort your heart here friend! "For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;" Psalm 103: 11. Time would fail me to tell of HIS preserving, sustaining, pardoning, supplying mercy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort," 2 Corinthians 1: 3

God never gives us a duty without providing the means to perform it. HE never asks us to make bricks without straw! So, when HE tells us to comfort GOD's people, we can be sure that there are means by which many can be comforted. Let me hint at just a few things from the ever-lasting gospel.

"*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Romans 8: 1

"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." Isaiah 40: 28

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service." Romans 12: 1

"And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, *as it is* this day." 1 Kings 3:6

"For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You." Psalm 86: 5 "Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;" Luke 1: 78

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Peter 1: 3

"But the mercy of the Lord *is* from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children," Psalm 103: 17

"Therefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4: 18.

Comfort one another! Comfort your hearts and praise HIS name today! "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." Isaiah 40: 1, and praise HIS glorious name forever!!!