
Sermon Text Discussion Notes 12/23/2018

Isaiah 40:1-11 – “Our Only Comfort in Life and in Death” by Drew Hunter

Overview

All human beings need to be comforted by God in the deepest, truest sense of the word. Not to feel cozy and comfy, but to have a deep, stable hope for our souls – which often feel weary, guilty, depressed, disappointed. In Isaiah 40, we see that God speaks words of great comfort to his people:

1. God Comforts with Grace (v. 1-2)
2. God Comforts with His Presence (v. 3-5)
3. God Comforts with His Word (v. 6-8)
4. God Comforts through Christ (v. 9-11)

Quotations

“We all have our own ideas of what glory should be. Our culture is filled with messages about what glory looks like. It looks like wealth. It looks like individual freedom of expression. It looks like being born in the right place, to the right family, making the right connections. It looks like getting a great platform in the world, and displaying talent and skill. It looks like power. And Advent says to that: we have it wrong.” – Drew Hunter

“One of the greatest and most supernatural acts that can ever happen to a human being is this: That you would look at Jesus at Advent, and look at Jesus on the cross, and *see God’s glory and the riches of his grace*. We see a God whose love is too great to come according to our values—to come in arrogant splendor and welcome all who measure up. No, his love moves him to come in humility, to die in weakness, and to welcome all who are open to receiving his grace in this way.” – Drew Hunter

Heidelberg Catechism, Question 1: *What is our only comfort in life and death?*

That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: In fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by His Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to life for him.

Understanding & Application

- 1) Pastor Drew spoke about a variety of potential heart idols that we desperately seek to find comfort in (i.e. control, security, peace, approval, success, etc.). Which heart idols have you bowed down to during this Advent season? Why do you cling to this idol this time of year?
- 2) Pastor Drew spoke about misconceptions regarding the heart of the message of Christianity, highlighting the way Isaiah 40 compares with Chapters 1-39. How might you say the core message of the Bible in a sentence? How does this message change how you live tomorrow?
- 3) The ‘comforting’ words spoken to God’s people in v. 6-8 do not seem to be very comforting at first glance. What made them comforting to Israel back then and comforting to us still today?
- 4) Do you tend to think of Jesus like the mighty warrior, who “comes with might, and his arm rules for him” (v. 10) or like the tender shepherd, who “will gather the lambs in his arms [and] carry them in his bosom” (v.11)? How might both of these realities bring us comfort?
- 5) How have you been comforted by God’s grace, God’s presence, God’s Word, or God’s Son recently? How might you try to comfort others with the same comfort you have experienced?