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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 2 (Comfort For His People)

TITLE: Program 3 – Strength For The Weary

WEDNESDAY

OPEN

Do you long for truth? I mean, do you want to know: This is the way it is? This is absolute, pure, unadulterated truth? Do you want that? Or do you want to be deceived? Do you want to walk around in a daze because you don't know truth? Or do you want to be caught in a snare because you don't know truth? Do you want truth or a lie? Well I want you to know this Book—the Bible—is truth. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

Our theme this week, Beloved, as we study Isaiah 40 and 41, we haven't gotten to 41 yet. But as we study these two chapters, our theme this week is the strength, the comfort that comes from waiting on God. That word "wait" means "to hope" in God. You can't hope in someone that is going to lie to you. You can not hope in someone that is going to tell you one thing today and a different thing tomorrow. You can't hope in someone that, all of the sudden is here saying, "You can trust me." And then they disappear. I mean,

many of you know that. Many of you have been in a marriage and your mate has disappeared. You were comfortable, and you were trusting in them. And they disappeared. You have someone that said, “I promise you.” But they broke their promise. You have someone that has said, “This is true. I’m telling you. Don’t you believe me?” And in your gut you know you shouldn’t believe them, but you do. And then you find out, “Hey, their word is not valid.” Well as God speaks to Israel in Isaiah 40 and begins this new segment of the book, a segment that talks about comfort, a segment that talks about redemption, a segment that points to the One who was able to bring us all this; and it is Jesus Christ. A, a segment that talks about His first coming, talks about His death, talks about His second coming, and talks about us looking into the lake of fire, where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched, and seeing the fate of those that did not believe truth, but believed a lie. (See Isaiah 66:24) So we’ve moved into this awesome second segment. And as we do, it’s almost like God, in Isaiah 40 and 41, is laying the groundwork—the foundation—for all that He is going to say. He has told them that they are to be comforted. (See Isaiah 40:1) There’s a day coming when their warfare has ended. (See Isaiah 40:2) And He speaks of it as if it’s on the horizon for them because they’re about to go into Babylonian captivity. Or they’re going in soon, not immediately. But He’s giving them His promises ahead of time so that they will know when they go through this trial, when they go through this testing, if they will hope in God, if they will trust Him, that even though they go through it as Isaiah 40:31 says, [they can mount up with wings of eagles, they can run and not be weary, they can walk and not faint.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 40:31) They can make it because they’ve trusted in truth. So He turns to them in Isaiah 40, verse 3 and He says: **“A voice is calling....” (Isaiah 40:3)** And that voice is calling: [“Get ready! The Lord is coming; all flesh is going to see Him coming.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 40:3) Then another voice cries out in verse 6, **“...Call out.’ [And] then he answered, ‘What shall I call out?’ All flesh is [as] grass, and all [of] its loveliness is like the flower of the field.”**

(Isaiah 40:6) You go down the highways of the United States of America, and you see all these gorgeous wildflowers for a while. But then they fade, and the rain comes and they're gone. Or the mower comes and they're cut down. He says, **"The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows [on] it; surely the people are grass."** (Isaiah 40:7) He says, **"The grass withers, the flower fades....,"** he says it again. He wants you to get the point. **"...But the word of...God stands forever."** (Isaiah 40:8) In other words, here is the Book that will not change. Here is the Book that is pure, unadulterated truth. Here is the Book that has the answer for every situation of life, the directions so that you can live righteously. Here is the Book. This is why I want you to go to preceptsforlife.com and download our study guide and study with us the Word of God that is going to abide forever that will not change. Now Isaiah says that when Jesus appears on the scene and He goes up to the Mount of Beatitudes. And there He brings the Sermon on the Mount. One of the things He lets them know [nothing will ever change the Word of God, not one jot or one tittle will ever change in the Word of God. It will all be fulfilled.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:18, KJV) So now he tells Jerusalem, he tells the Jews, **"Get...up on a high mountain, O Zion...."** (Isaiah 40:9) And He's speaking to Jerusalem. He's speaking to the people of Jerusalem. **"...Bearer of good news, lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news...."** He says, "I've got good news." **"...Lift it up, do not fear...."** (Isaiah 40:9) You're not to be afraid. You and I have truth. You and I have good news. And we are to proclaim it. And we are not to be afraid. Now there's legislation that is trying to go through, and it's the "hate crimes" legislation. And that means that if I spoke truth, if I said that this is what God says is sin, if I say, "Listen, if you're sleeping with someone that is sin. That's adultery. And don't be deceived fornicators and adulterers are not going to enter the kingdom of heaven." (See 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) If I say to you, "Homosexuality or lesbianism is wrong," I could be accused of a hate crime. If I say, "There's only one God, and there's only one way," I could be

accused of a hate crime. And they would try to silence me. But what am I to do? I am to give forth the Word even as Israel is to give forth the Word. Why? It's the Word of God. It lives and it abides forever. And it is pure truth. He says, **"...Say to the cities of Judah..."** Zion is to say this to all the cities of Judah around them, **"...Here is your God!"** This is God. **"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him..."** (Isaiah 40:9-10) Now on the first day of this week, I told you about Isaiah 35. [The Lord God is coming with vengeance.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 35:4) [A Highway of Holiness will be prepared.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 35:8) So His arm is coming. His arm is ruling with Him. But listen, **"...Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him."** (Isaiah 40:10) His payment, His judgment—is coming, and His reward. Judgment for those that do not believe this Word, do not live accordingly, who turn and think "Oh, I've got to put my trust in the nations. Oh, I've got other gods. I've got to call on them." Recompense, judgment is coming, but also reward is coming. He's bringing His reward with Him. In Revelation 22:12 tells you the very same thing, [Behold, He is coming. His reward is with Him to give to everyone of us according to our deeds.] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 22:12) Why? Our deeds show our faith, or our lack of faith. And it goes on to say, **"Like a shepherd He will tend His flock...."** (Isaiah 40:11) He's going to deal in judgment with those that will not submit to Him, with those that will not believe Him. But, Precious One, He is coming like a shepherd for those that are His own. Look at what He says. It says, **"Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes."** (Isaiah 40:11) These mamma sheep, He's going to lead those ewes and He's going to do it gently. So, here He comes with His right arm ruling in might, and here He comes in His other arm holding His sheep. You know, 1 Peter chapter 5, the first four verses tell us about when the "Chief Shepherd" comes. (See 1 Peter 5:4) He's speaking about Jesus. John 10 talks about the Shepherd that lays down his life for his sheep, and how he

knows them and how he calls them by name. (See John 10:3, 11) And we look at Matthew chapter 2, verse 6 and I want you to go there for just a minute because it's an important Scripture. In Matthew chapter 2 and it is verse 6. Listen to what it says, **“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the [rulers] of Judah....”** Bethlehem was located in Judah. **“...for out of you shall come...a ruler....”** There we have— He's coming and He's ruling. **“...who will shepherd [His] people Israel.” (Matthew 2:6)** Israel was full of fear. Israel was trembling. Israel needed to know the Word of God. And so what God does in Isaiah 40, and this is so delightful, is, in Isaiah 40, God sweeps them from the present to the future and He shows them: “This is My Word. This is what's going to abide forever. This is what you can trust. Now hope in Me. Wait for Me. Cling to Me. Look for Me because I will cause you to **“...mount up with wings [of] eagles, [you] shall run, and not be weary...[you] shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31, KJV)** That's His promise. And remember? I encouraged you to memorize this week, Isaiah chapter 40 verse 28 through 31. How are you doing? Those are words that you want to hide in your heart. Well, he goes on to say this, all right. This is the One that's coming. And now he want's them to understand something because he's told them Babylon is going to take you into captivity. He wants them to understand who they are to cling to, Who they are to wait for, Who they are to hope in. Verse 12, **“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span...?” (Isaiah 40:12)** Who went and said, “Okay, this is the size of the heavens.” **“...[Who] calculated the dust of the earth by...measure....” (Isaiah 40:12)** Who said, “Okay, this is how much dirt, there's going to be on the earth.” **“...[Who] weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales?”** And then He says, **“Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD...?” (Isaiah 40:12-13)** Who is there that has said, “God, this is the way You create the earth, this is the way You measure things. God, this is the way that You need to do this.” Who did that? It says, **“...Or as His counselor [who] has informed Him?”**

(Isaiah 40:13) Who has sat down at the table with God and said, “Now let me tell You how to handle this.” Now uh now listen, you need to be wise in this. You need to remember this. Who is God’s counselor? **“With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding...?”** (Isaiah 40:14) We’ll talk about it more in just a minute.

PART TWO

O Beloved, are you loving Isaiah? Are you loving the reasoning and the way that he is pointing out who God is; His greatness? Have you downloaded your free study guide? Have you gone to <preceptsforlife.com>? If you have, and if you’re studying with me, you have highlighted every one of these references to “God,” and you stand in awe. Well let’s pick up where I left off in verse 13. He’s asking all these questions to help them see. Hey no one’s done this! God is God. And so he says in verse 13, **“Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD...,”** Who has told God, “Hey, do this.” **“...Or [who] as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult...who gave Him understanding...who taught [God] in the path of justice and taught [God] knowledge...[who] informed Him of the way of understanding?”** (Isaiah 40:13-14) In other words, stop and think. There’s no one outside of God. Now remember he has told them in Isaiah chapter 39, “You’re gonna go into captivity under Babylon. Everything that you have is going to be taken away from you. I mean, Nebuchadnezzar is gonna clean house when he comes. He’s gonna take all your jewels. He’s gonna take all your treasures. He’s gonna take your sons. He’s going to make them serve in his household.” (See Isaiah 39:6-7) So they know that already. So what are they fearing? They’re fearing the nations, but remember, **“...the word of...God [abides] forever.”** (Isaiah 40:8) So what God is doing in Isaiah 40 and 41 is, He is taking them to the future. He is taking them to the coming, the second coming of Jesus Christ. He is taking them and showing, “It’s all under control.” Now what He’s doing is,

showing how great God is, and how nothing the nations are. Listen to what He says, **“Behold, the nations...,” (Isaiah 40:15)** and you were to mark “nations.” I color it green and underline it in brown. **“[Behold, the nations] are like a drop [in the] bucket....” (Isaiah 40:15)** You take the bucket; you’ve thrown away the water. You turn it upside down. Bing! Just one tiny little drop. He says that’s what the nations are like to God. He says, **“...[they] are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales....” (Isaiah 40:15)** You get that speck of dust. You try and get it on the scales. The scales don’t even know that it’s there. He says, **“...Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust...,”** or the coastlands that He’s been talking about. He says, **“Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts for a burnt offering.” (Isaiah 40:15-16)** You want to honor God? You can take all of Lebanon, you can take all of its beasts and it’s not enough for a burnt offering for God. He says, **“All the nations are [regarded] as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.” (Isaiah 40:17)** And you’re fearing? You’re afraid of these nations! Let me ask you a question: Are you afraid of the terrorists? Are you afraid that Iran is going to attack? Are you afraid that Korea is going to have this weapon? Are you just living in fear? Hush! Wait for the Lord. Look to the Lord. Hope in the Lord. Know who He is. He is the Lord. He says, **“To whom then will you liken God...?”** “Here I am. Who are you going to liken to Me?” **“...Or what likeness will you compare with Him? As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith plates it with gold....” (Isaiah 40:18-19)** In other words, they take the idol, he shapes it, he brings it out of the fire. Then he’s got to coat it with gold. It’s man that is making this idol. It says, **“...a silversmith fashions chains of silver. He who is too impoverished for such an offering...,” (Isaiah 40:19-20)** for an idol in their home that is made of gold and his chains of silver or whatever, if he’s too impoverished to afford that, what does he do? He, **“...Selects a tree that [doesn’t] rot; he seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman....” (Isaiah 40:20)** “May I hire you please, I need a god. I don’t have enough to have gold or silver one. Could you come

please?” And he says, “...to prepare an idol that will not totter.” (Isaiah 40:20) “Oh, oh you’ve got to get the bottom smooth or it’s going to fall over. If it falls over it can’t get up again.” What is he saying? He’s saying, “Listen, God is the One that put this whole earth together. **“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you...,”** now listen carefully, you want to mark time phrases. That’s one of the things that we teach you when you observe the text. You’re looking for who, and what, and when, where, why and how. When? He says, “...**Has it not been declared to you from the beginning...?”** (Isaiah 40:21) Now what’s the book of beginnings? Genesis is the book of beginnings, the book of generations. “...**have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth....**” (Isaiah 40:21-22) I mean, men for a long time thought it was flat. God knew there was a circle of the earth. “...**And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers....**” (Isaiah 40:22) I used to catch them as a kid and put them in a jar. It says, “...**Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them...like a tent to dwell in.** [It is He]....” Who is the one that does this? “[It is He] **who reduces rulers to nothing...,**” (Isaiah 40:22-23) to nothing. [He sets up kings and He brings them down,] 1 Samuel chapter 2 says. (PARAPHRASE, 1 Samuel 2:7-8) “[It’s He] **who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He [God] merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble.**” (Isaiah 40:23-24) Remember what we saw, [All flesh is like grass. The flower fades, it’s gone, but the Word of God abides forever.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 40:6-8) “**To whom then will you liken Me...,**” God says. “**...That I would be his equal...?”** (Isaiah 40:25) Are you gonna liken Me to an idol that you fashioned with your hands? Are you going to liken Me to a nation that is like a drop in the bucket to Me? He says, “**Lift up your eyes....**” Get your eyes off of the circumstances. Get your eyes off of the nations. Get

your eyes off of the idols **“...and see who has created these stars....”**
(Isaiah 40:26) Look back, look at the sky. Look at the black of the night.
Look at the stars. Who has created them? And it says, **“...the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.”** (Isaiah 40:26) Look up at the heavens. He’s the God who created the heavens and the earth. **“Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the LORD...,’”** He doesn’t see. He doesn’t know. And besides that, **“...the justice [that is] due me [God had not given me].”** (Isaiah 40:27) He says, **“Do you not know...?”** verse 28, **“Have you not heard? The Everlasting God...,”** “El Elyon,” **“...the LORD...,”** “Yahweh,” “Yehovah:” the Self-existent One. **“...The Creator of the ends of the earth does not become [tired or weary]. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary....”** (Isaiah 40:28-29) “Here you are worried about these nations that are nothing. Here you are looking to these idols and you’re not looking to Me. And I’m the one that created it all.” He says, **“He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. [And] though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD...,”** who hope in the Lord, whose word abides forever, who is absolute, pure truth, who has said, “This is the beginning and this is the end and this is everything in between.” Those, **“...will gain new strength; [those] will mount up with wings [of] eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”** (Isaiah 40:29-31)
What is your precept for life? Remember that God’s Word is His Word. He watches over His Word. You can trust in His Word, it lasts forever. You can hope in Him. You can long for Him. You can wait for Him. You can look to Him. And you will make it as more than a conqueror.