

December 13, 2023

Comfort vs. Comfortable

[Isaiah 40:1-2](#)

*Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-2)*

“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.” As a mom and a teacher, it is not uncommon to provide comfort with a hug or an encouraging word throughout the day. As a mom and a teacher, it is also not uncommon to be in need of comfort.

Sometimes I come home ready to put my feet up and forget the troubles of the day.

As I was reading this passage and thinking of my own responses to the word comfort, I realized something. In this passage we are not asked to be comfortable; we are asked to provide comfort. There is a distinct difference between the two. A difference that I wonder if the Church has lost sight of. Our command is not to comfort ourselves but to comfort Jerusalem.

Perhaps you are asking, why? Why are we told to comfort? The passage continues, “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” We are told to proclaim that the people are no longer in debt. There is a world of people who need to hear the tender, not angry, words that their penalty of sin is paid.

One day in a school, in a workplace, or watching the news will quickly remind you that there are a world of people living in darkness.

Too often we complain about the effects of sin while sitting comfortably in our grace. We must follow this command and comfort God’s people.

How can you and I share the good news that through the grace of Jesus we have freedom?

The world around us needs to hear the comfort of grace. We sing about this grace, we read about this grace, we write about this grace, but we need to proclaim this grace to those who are outside of the walls of our churches: those on the mountains and in the valleys of our community.

Prayer: God we proclaim this grace at the baseball and soccer fields, within the jobs we work, maybe we are even willing to walk the streets with the “backpack” people or sit in the recovery meetings. May our words be kind, tender, comforting – grace has been given, our debt has been paid. Amen.

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