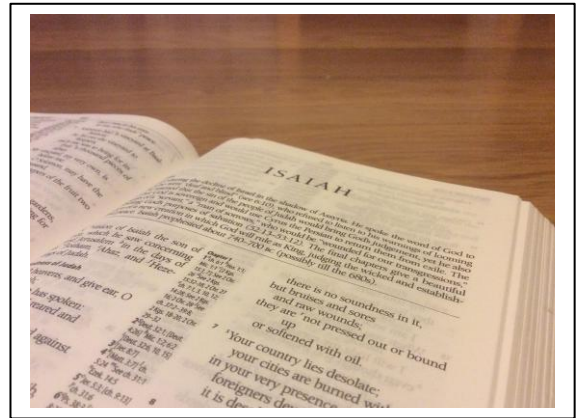


'HEARING HIS COMFORT' # 3

'To hear' is a common and important theme throughout both testaments of the Bible. The ability to truly hear, to comprehend and understand, was the consistent cry from both prophets and Jesus. For example, look at Isaiah 6:9-10 which Jesus quotes in the Parable of the Sower, (Matthew 13:13-17), and challengingly, in Revelation 3:20. How often we fail to hear with understanding a message. Broken communication lies at the route of so many problems.



❖ *What examples do you have in your life?*

Read Isaiah 40:1-11 Israel was in exile and subservient to the Babylonians, punished for hearing God's word but not receiving the message, delivered time and again through His prophets. But God's grace was and is such that He now tells them that He will be delivering them from their distress, and his words should bring comfort.

- ❖ Which verse do you think is the most important within our passage? And why should this bring comfort?
- ❖ If you have time read all the verses of chapter 40 to help you put your answer into full perspective.
- ❖ What relevance does this have for us today nearly 3000 years later?

So, God promises to those who hear and understand his word, his comfort. But what is this? What should we expect? The word comfort has several nuanced meanings.

- ❖ Find a dictionary. Is there an answer there that encapsulates your answer to the above question?
- ❖ What do you think is included and excluded within God's promised comfort?

God is certainly not promising a comfortable life. Christians are not protected from the life events, good and bad, that everyone encounters. But a life committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour produces a world view that meets life's ups and downs from a unique and very different perspective. God's promises are reliable and true. Following the path outlined and demonstrated by Jesus is the way to live our lives, and the way in which we view, approach, and respond to life's challenges. Almighty God is in control. We are in safe hands. There is real comfort in this.

- ❖ Do you have any examples of finding God's comfort when addressing a problem?

Prayer: *Lord, Drop your still dews of quietness till all our strivings cease: take from our lives the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of your peace. Amen* (from a hymn by John Greenleaf Whittier)