

The Herald

Isaiah 40:1-11

*Thank you, Ben. And thank you, New Hope for your prayers.

*One thing is for sure: **This Trierweiler is not perfect; no one is; that's why we need a Savior.**

*Which is why we gather every Sunday in the name of the Risen Lord.

*Every Sunday, hundreds of people join us across MI & US in our online community. One from Alpena:

*"We are more than blessed to be affiliated with New Hope from afar...One of the questions in small group this week was: "If you could choose one house or location to live, where would you reside and why?" Without hesitation my reply was "Traverse City, in order that we could be closer to the **body of believers on fire and in action for the kingdom of God.**" Bravo and to His glory, New Hope!"*

*If you are new with us, we are in Isaiah, who was a pastor/prophet who lived in **globally unsettled times**, ministered in a **politically divided Capital**, yet was confident in **God's unfolding plan**.

***We have preached 48 sermons, in 7 unique themes. (Picture)**

1. *The Problem of Sin*
2. *The Arrival of Messiah*
3. *The Hope of Redemption*
4. *The Calling of Believers*
5. *The Promises of God*
6. *The Judgment of Enemies*
7. *The Coming Kingdom*
8. **TODAY, Final Theme:** *The Life & Death of Messiah*

*More than any other prophet, Isaiah announces the coming of a Messiah who would be **Born (of a virgin); minister (by setting captives free); and die (wounded for our sin.)**

*There are **4 key chapters in Isaiah that form the Heart of Jesus' life/ministry:**

Isaiah 40: **The Herald** (announces Good News of a **King** who rules; a **Shepherd** who holds)

Isaiah 41: **The Warrior** (comes like a **Lion** to fight & wage war for His people)

Isaiah 42: **The Servant** (comes like a **Lamb**, humble, tender and serving His people)

Isaiah 43: **The Savior** (comes as a **Redeemer** to save His people)

***Picture this:** August, 1945. New York City is in full blown celebration. Streets are crowded. Horns are honking. People are singing. The gloom of war is over. The famous "Kiss" happens (George and Greta).

*And paper boys are selling **New York Times** on street corners, shouting with exuberance:

"Extra, Extra Read all about it! Victory over Japan!"

That's Is. 40. A celebration of VJ Day. But instead of **victory over Japan, it is **victory over judgment**.**

*In Is. 40, God's grace breaks into a world to comfort sinners.

*He sends a **Herald** to stand on **street corners and mountain tops**, and shout the **most glorious news** the world has ever heard: ***Your sin has been paid for!***

*And the entire chapter finds its fulfillment in the **person and work of Jesus Christ**.

1. **God delivers "Good News,"** (v.1-2)

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (v.1-2, NIV)

*For 39 chapters, Isaiah has **confronted sin, warned of judgment, and been as busy as a law enforcement officer during Cherry Festival at the beer tent**.

*After 39 chapters of confrontation, the grace of God breaks into the world in ch. 40.

*It shines **like light in the darkness**. It refreshes **like rain on dry soil**. It rejoices, **like news that the Detroit Lions won a Superbowl**.

*It marks a **new section in the novel; Confrontation turns to Comfort**.

*God sends Isaiah to **"speak tenderly"** to the people = to ***speak to their heart***.

*And the comfort God delivers is **Good news of Divine Pardon**:

- Your **penalty** has been paid for.
- Your **punishment** is over.
- Your **prison sentence** is pardoned.

*IOW: God's mercy has arrived. Your sin has a solution. Divine pardon is available.

***Every presidential transition, the big news story becomes "Pardon." "Who? How many?"**

*Since 1900, **the most pardons** were issued by **Franklin Roosevelt: 2,819**.

*The **least number of pardons** were issued by **George (senior) H.W. Bush: 74**.

*Why do Presidents have this power? Our founding founders wrote it into the constitution:

*"The President...shall have **Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons** for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment."* (U.S. Constitution, Art. II, Section 2, Clause 1)

*It is one of **the greatest powers** Presidents have. Nearly **unchecked ability to forgive wrong**.

*Our founding fathers **upheld Justice** in America, but they also **valued mercy**.

*In 1833, **Chief Justice John Marshall** wrote this on the Pardon Power:

*"A pardon is **an act of grace**...which exempts the individual, on whom it is bestowed, from the punishment the law inflicts for a crime he has committed. It is the private, though official act of the executive magistrate . . ."* (Chief Justice John Marshall, 1833)

*Inevitably, Americans have **strong reactions** when pardon is given to *“People who don’t deserve it.”*

*And Americans get most upset if it seems the president uses power to pardon **friends/family**.

But think: *If you had the power, who would you pardon? Governor? President? Speaker?

And: *If you had the power, who would you absolutely refuse to pardon? X-spouse? Boss?

*This is where **the Good News of the gospel** shines the brightest.

*When it comes to Divine Pardon, every single person, me included, are enemies of the cross

***Trierweiler is not perfect. You are not perfect.**

*And God has **never pardoned a single person who deserved it!**

*Yet, God in His great mercy, at great cost to himself, paid for our sin through the cross:

*“God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8)*

*This news is **Comforting**. It speaks to the heart. Divine pardon is available.

2. ...through a messenger, (v.3-8)

- The Delivery Boy (v.3-5)
- The Inspired News (v.6-8)

*This is one of the most famous passages in Isaiah, **quoted often in the NT**.

- **The Delivery Boy.** (v.3-5)

*“A voice of one calling: “In the desert **prepare the way for the Lord**; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”*

*It pictures a Herald who announces a **new spiritual landscape**. He celebrates the **Lord’s entry** onto earth’s stage, and **introduces former sinners** to the glory of God.

***Matt, Mark, Luke, and John all quote this and say it was fulfilled by John, the Baptist.**

*John was the **forerunner of Jesus**; the **Delivery Boy** who heralded **Good News**.

*He traveled country roads; stood on street corners; baptized in rivers.

*His **ministry** was eccentric, but his **message** was full of the power of the Holy Spirit.

*The delivery boy: *“...proclaiming a **baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mk 1:4)*

*He had a **fire in his belly**; **confronted sin**; called for **repentance**; challenged **spiritual frauds**; and gave **hope in the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”**

*New Hope: **Any “Delivery Boy”** who proclaims God’s Word will not just tell you sweet things that make you comfortable, but will also confront things that are wrong and need to change.

*They will faithfully declare:

- *What does God's Word say?*
- *How have we fallen short?*
- *Where can we find hope?*

***A herald** in America who faithfully administers God's Word will answer all these:

*What does God say? He confronts people and nations who reject God's Word.

*How have we fallen short? America continues to walk in defiance of the King.

*Where is our hope? Our one hope is **a sweeping revival of our nation, as people turn to the Lord in repentance, and follow a new path of the Risen Savior.**

- **The Inspired News. (v.6-8)**

"A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?"

*"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. **The grass withers and the flowers fall**, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, **but the word of our God stands forever.**"*

*This famous passage is **quoted twice in the NT**, one is 1 Peter 2:

*"...you have been born again...through the **living and abiding Word of God...**"*

*God wants Isaiah to cry out the word. Declare it to the people. Because God will fulfill it!

*His Word stands forever. It endures. It stands the test of time.

*New Hope, the Word we open does not just **give data to inform**, but **has power to transform**.

*Within these pages, the Word is called:

- Lamp/Light
- Sword
- Fire
- Hammer
- Mirror
- More valuable than Gold/Silver
- Sweeter than Honey
- Endures forever
- Refined 7x
- Pure Milk
- Meat
- God-breathed
- Flawless

***Around 1800, England was engaged in a long war with France's emerging empire.**

*The key weapon of their infantry was **the sword**, forged of steel, but often subject to defect.

*A soldier whose **sword breaks in battle** is as worthless as a **preacher without a Bible**.

*In 1798, a British man named **Thomas Gill** came up with a new way to forge steel and test swords that would withstand the rigors of battle.

*The “Gil Sword” became the prized possession of infantry and cavalry.

*And on every blade that came through his testing, Gill had stamped the words:

“Warranted Never to Fail.”

*Summary: God told Isaiah to declare this Word of comfort and hope to a nation. It is a Word that was “Warranted Never to Fail.” In time He would fulfill these words, by sending His Son.

3. ...and it's all about Jesus! (v.9-11)

- A King who rules. (v.9-10)
- A Shepherd who holds. (v.11)

*The Lord **sends** the Herald into the world, to **shout** good news, and **spread** it with enthusiasm.

*“Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, **herald of good news**; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, **herald of good news**; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, **“Behold your God!”**”*

***One year ago, I wrote a word on my bathroom mirror to govern the year: ENTHUSIASM.**

*More than anything, I wanted genuine **enthusiasm** when I talk about the Risen Lord

*This is what God calls this Herald to: enthusiasm; boldness; courage; confidence.

*Climb the mountain and shout...so your voice can be heard.

*Enter cities and testify...so that people can hear the news.

*This picture of **enthusiastic Herald** should challenge us to **be bold in our faith; to take our Bible to school/work; to overcome fear and share our faith with friends and co-workers:**

*And the reason for excitement is **who Jesus is, and what Jesus has done.**

- **A King who rules. (v.10)**

*“Behold, the Lord God comes with **might**, and his arm **rules** for him; behold, his **reward** is with him, and his **recompense** before him.”*

On a national/global level, this is the truth that has given me confidence the last 44 weeks since COVID began: *God is the Ruler yet!

***A doctor asked me this week: “How have you handled all the changes this last year?”**

*With great hope and confidence in a Risen King, who rules the nations with authority.

- **A Shepherd who holds. (v.11)**

*“He will **tend his flock** like a shepherd; he will **gather the lambs** in his arms; he will **carry them** in his bosom, and **gently lead** those that are with young.”*

*There is not a **more tender verse in the Bible about the character of God.**

*“He tends; gathers; carries; gently leads.” **Our God is TOUGH...AND TENDER.***

***This is the single truth that has comforted me in times of personal difficulty:**

*When I am at my weakest, God will personally carry me like a Shepherd holding a lamb

*New Hope, Jesus is **Lion and Lamb. Warrior and Servant. King and Shepherd.**

***As King,** He rules the nations; oversees leaders; directs history; unfolds His plan.

***As Shepherd,** He comforts us in weakness; carries us in affliction; holds us in pain.

Action Steps:

- **Receive your divine pardon.**

*You're not Perfect! But Jesus is. And His punishment on the cross gives hope to the world.

*Your sins are paid for. Your punishment is over. Receive the gift of divine Pardon.

*No, you don't deserve a pardon. But it has been given *while you were still a sinner.*

- **Memorize the Word of God...starting with 1 Peter.**

*If God's endures forever, one of the best things we can do is hide it in our heart. Memorize.

*After Isaiah, our next series will be 1 Peter. The call to: *"Be Prepared. Stay Alert."*

***Starting February 7th,** Tim & Patti Dietlin will lead a 14 week class, memorizing 1 Peter.

***1 verse a day; 7 verses a week. (105 verses)**

*I believe we can find at least **25 people willing to memorize the book.**

*Some of you will say: *"I can't memorize that much."*

*To which I say, *"The class leader, Tim, is blind and has done it. What's your excuse?"*

- **Be a Herald!**

*This passage calls us to joyful enthusiasm to take the message of our Savior and announce it!

*To be a Herald of good news. One who says with joy: ***"Behold, your God!"***

***Christmas Journey** – *"The Thief"* (ironically named Harold) explains the cross of Jesus.

***The Promise** – *"The Narrator"* (Also Harold) explains the events of life, death & resurrection

- **Politically, be confident:** Christ is King
Personally, be comforted: Christ is Shepherd

*We are citizens of a Kingdom, who follow a King, and He rules nations with absolute authority.

*We are sheep of a pasture, who are loved by a Shepherd, who knows our every need.