



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"The Comfort to Carry You Through the Discipline"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): *Is 40:1-2; Isaiah 7:4-9; 28:7; 30:1, 15-21; 39:5-8; Lev. 26:40-43; 1:4; Job 11:5-6*

Isa. 40:1-2 is a major turning point—like the door swings open into an entirely new atmosphere. Up to this point in Isaiah, the LORD has been pressing the same question again and again, especially from chapters 7 through 39: *Will you trust Me?* The threats were real, the pressures were heavy, and God's people were constantly tempted to lean on something else—another nation, another alliance, another plan. And the LORD kept humbling Himself, speaking with patience and tenderness, calling Judah, calling the kings—even the "good ones"—to lean on Him. That's the kindness of God: slow to anger, overflowing in love, repeatedly saying, "Will you trust Me?"

And yet we watched the failure stack up. Ahaz wouldn't trust even when offered a sign. The priests and prophets were "going through the motions," muddled and stumbling (28:7). And even Hezekiah—who restored worship, Passover, the priesthood—still had a fragmented heart when it came to the "real world" stuff, the national and political pressures. When the Assyrians and death came to the doorstep, he cried out—and God delivered. But when the pressure lifted, he drifted back into the old pattern: God in the "Temple box," and everything else in the "lean on man" box. Chapter 39 ends with that heartbreaking word about Babylon—and Hezekiah's chilling response: *"The word ... you have spoken is good. For there will be shalom and security in my days."* (Isa. 39:8). Then you turn the page...and the LORD comes with a word for the exiles on the other side of that "shalom and security": *comfort, comfort.*

1. GOD'S DISCIPLINE IS REAL—BUT HIS HEART IS STILL COVENANT LOVE

Isaiah 40 begins with a surprise if you're reading straight through. After the disaster spoken at the end of chapter 39, you'd expect doom language—more warning, more thunder. Instead, the LORD opens with a doubled imperative: *"Comfort, comfort My people," says your God.* (Isa. 40:1). That repetition grabs you the way repeated judgment language grabs you—but this time it's tenderness, not force. It's like the LORD is saying, "I know what's coming, and I'm not abandoning you in it." And it's covenant language: *My people...your God.* Exile will try to erase identity. Discipline will make people wonder, "Who am I? **Whose** am I? Was any of this real?" And the LORD answers ahead of time: "You're *still* Mine, and **I AM** still yours."

This is what we need to carry into discipline: not denial, not self-pity, not bitterness—covenant reality. God's discipline doesn't mean God's absence. The LORD can give "bread of adversity" and "water of oppression" and still be the God who says, *"He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When He hears you, He will answer."* (Isa. 30:19-21). He doesn't stop being gracious when the discipline begins. He is a God of justice, yes—but He is also the God who is "longing to be gracious," waiting to show mercy (Isa. 30:18). So the first comfort is this: the discipline is not the end of the relationship. It's the LORD refusing to let His people destroy themselves by leaning on what cannot hold them up.

2. THE COMFORT ISN'T VAGUE—GOD SPEAKS TO THE HEART WITH SPECIFIC HOPE

Then verse 2 shifts into a new set of commands: *"Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call out to her."* (Isa. 40:2). That phrase—"speak to the heart"—isn't just nice words. It's persuasion. It's invitation. It's the LORD aiming comfort like an arrow right into the inner place where fear, shame, regret, and confusion live. He's not merely announcing information; He's calling Jerusalem to respond to love. And what does He tell them to proclaim? Three "because" statements—three

anchors for exhausted souls: Comfort, comfort... *because* her warfare has ended; *because* her iniquity has been dealt with, and *because* she has received from the LORD's hand what is sufficient.

First, "*her warfare has ended*" (Isa. 40:2). That word can carry the idea of "hard service," a period of duress that serves a purpose—a compulsory service to pay off a debt. In other words, God is saying: "This wasn't random suffering. It wasn't pointless. It had an end, and it had a purpose, and it will be 'filled up.'" Second, "*her iniquity has been removed*"—the language connects to making amends, accepting punishment as sufficient (Lev. 26:40–41, 43). And that's where it gets even deeper: in Leviticus, when this word is used in the passive like Isaiah uses it, it's tied to offerings being *accepted* by God—atonement language (Lev. 1:4). That means this comfort is heading somewhere. The comfort is not just "you suffered enough." It's "God Himself has provided what satisfies what justice requires."

3. GOD'S DISCIPLINE IS NOT ONE-SIDED—GRACE IS FOLDED INTO WHAT YOU CAN'T YET SEE

When Isaiah says, "*she has received from Adonai's hand double for all her sins*," (Isa. 40:2), the picture is not of excess, double punishment or God paying Judah back with interest. The Hebrew word translated "double" comes from the idea of something being **folded over**—two sides laid together. That means what's happening here is not one-dimensional. Yes, there is discipline. Yes, there is exile. Yes, there is loss and hardship. But that is only the side you can see. There is another side folded into it—one that is not immediately visible. God is not acting with a single edge; He is working with layered purpose.

And that folded-over side is grace. Even as Judah goes into exile, God is already weaving pardon into the process. Discipline is doing one work—awakening trust, humbling pride, exposing false dependencies—but grace is doing another work at the same time. The LORD is not simply allowing punishment to run its course; He is folding mercy into it. The exile is not just something they suffer *through*—it is something God is already preparing to redeem *from*. That's why this comfort is spoken before the exile ever begins. God is saying, "When all you can see is the hard side, remember there is another side folded over that you cannot yet see—a gracious, abundant pardon that will fully cover what discipline alone could never fix." This is not exact payback. This is mercy layered into judgment, and grace already at work beneath the surface.

CONCLUSION

So here we are: coming out of chapter 39's warning, waking up in chapter 40 like we've landed in a different world. And yet it's still the same God, the same story, the same voice. The tone shifts because hope is now being sustained and unfolded—but it's not a new God, and it's not a new message. It's the fruition of what God has been saying all along: don't lean on what collapses. Don't put your weight on horses, on flesh, on plans that aren't from Him. "*By repentance and rest you are saved, in quietness and trust is your strength*." (Isa. 30:15). And even when we refuse, even when we have to learn the hard way, the LORD still comes after us with covenant comfort.

And maybe that's exactly where you are right now. You're in the "hard service" season. You're tasting the consequences of false trusts. You're in a place where things feel stripped, unfamiliar, and heavy—and you're wondering if you're still God's, or if you've blown it beyond repair. Hear the opening of this new section like it's spoken over you: "*Comfort, comfort My people*," says your God. (Isa. 40:1). The LORD knows how to discipline—and He knows how to carry you through it. He doesn't just correct; He consoles. He doesn't just expose sin; He provides pardon. And He's still asking the question—but now with comfort in His voice: will you trust Me?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you most naturally “lean on man” instead of leaning on the LORD—especially when things feel political, practical, or high-pressure?
2. Why do you think God repeats the question “Will you trust Me?” so patiently throughout Isaiah 7–39?
3. In what ways can discipline make a person question identity (“Who am I? Whose am I?”), and how does Isa. 40:1 answer that?
4. What does it mean for God to “speak to the heart” rather than merely speak information, and how have you experienced that personally?
5. When you hear “double for all her sins,” which interpretation have you tended toward (double judgment vs. double pardon), and how does the “folded double” image reshape your understanding of God’s grace?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, our God, we come to You as Your people, and we ask You to do exactly what You promised: *comfort, comfort*. Speak to our hearts. We confess that so often we have been like Judah—tempted to lean on what seems strong in the moment, tempted to trust the arm of flesh, tempted to make plans that are not from You. Forgive us for our fragmentation—for putting You in one “box” while we handle the pressures of life in another. Teach us the quietness and trust that is truly our strength. Bring us back to repentance and rest, not as a slogan, but as a living surrender.

And *Abba*, for those walking through discipline right now—those tasting the bread of adversity and the water of oppression—let Your covenant voice be louder than their fear. Remind them: “*My people...your God.*” Let them know they have not been abandoned. Let the season of hard service accomplish its purpose, and let hope rise again in their souls. And thank You, Lord, that You do not answer sin with cold scales, but with Your own gracious provision. Thank You that from Your hand You provide pardon—complete, sufficient, and covering. We choose to trust You—wholeheartedly.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.