

To really appreciate Isaiah 40, you've got to go back and read the first 39 chapters, because there's nothing but judgment, until chapter 40 when there's an incredible message of hope and comfort as a reminder that God is sovereignly in control. In this chapter, we can find three important things God would say to people who are shattered by hard circumstances.

### I. You Better Know Who Your God is in the Midst of Shattering Circumstances.

The best way to persevere in hard circumstances is to do everything you can to see that 'who God is' is intersecting with your circumstances.

The Hebrew word for 'know' in v. 21 and v. 28 refers to an experiential side that is beyond cognitive knowing – where a person enters into an intimate relationship so that they rest and trust in that person.

Where we need to grow in our intimacy with God:

- A. Look at How God's Power and Authority are Never Frustrated by the Decisions of Earthly Rulers
  - a. v. 15-17 "Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales; Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless."
  - b. 22-24 "It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. Scarcely shall they be planted, Scarcely shall they be sown, Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, When He will also blow on them, And they will wither, And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble."
- B. Look at How God's Love for His People is Never Diminished Even in the Worst of Circumstances (v.10b-11)

We are His reward and His precious people that He tenderly cares for in the very midst of shattering circumstances.

In this chapter, the power and tenderness of God come together! He's powerful and He's personal.

### II. You'll Need to Love God's Word and Be Living for More than this Present Moment if You're Going to Keep from Losing Heart in those Difficult Circumstances.

- A. Look at How God's Word is Set in Contrast to the Frailty of God's People (v.6)
- B. Look at How God's Word has Already Been Fulfilled in the Past
  - a. V. 3-4 promise and predict the first arrival of the Messiah – Jesus Christ – and talk about John the Baptist preparing the way.
  - b. V. 5 talks about something even greater than Jesus' first arrival on this earth. It says the 'glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.'
- C. Look at Where God's Word Points Us in the Future

Doing this will change how you live!

All the earth didn't see Christ's first arrival when He was born in a manger, but when He returns next time every eye will see His glory and every knee will bow to worship Him.

Matthew 24:29-30 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

This chapter promises that Jesus is stronger than Satan and the evil in this world. His glory will one-day reign supreme over all the earth.

V. 5 gives you a hope-sustaining, perspective-changing motivation for living for eternity and not allowing your immediate circumstances to dictate what you should feel and do next.

D. Look at How This Changes Your Ability to Persevere Right Now

Isaiah 40:31 "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

This verse is about us and the effect it should have on us because the intent of God's Word is always bigger than information. It should lead to a transformation in how we think and live.

Isaiah 40:29 "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength."

You may think God needs you to be strong, but He actually needs you to be weak and know you're weak. That's when He gives power and strength. The word 'wait' in v.31 means to be full of hope and to look with eager expectation so that you can be steadfast and persevere as an expression of your faith.

To wait effectively you've got to learn to see more than the obvious, and to do that, you've got to learn to see life through the lens of God's Word.

Sometimes by the grace of God, you're going to soar, but most of your days on this earth will be made up of walking, even baby steps, to the glory of God – empowered by the grace of God. Endurance is what it's all about.

For Discussion:

1. Read Isaiah 40 together...
2. In what ways can you demonstrate "being still" in your own life?
3. How can we better know who our God is in the midst of shattering circumstances?
4. Where do you need to grow in your intimacy with God?
5. How do we find hope in our future with God's Word?
6. What can we do to get better at looking at the world through the lens of God's Word?