

*“God is Speaking in a Voice for You to Hear”*

Text: Isaiah 40:1-11

The young boy Samuel must have been very startled. A voice kept on calling out to him in the night. He thought for sure that it was the priest Eli and kept running back to him saying, “You called me, here I am.” Eli told Samuel that he had not called him and that he should go back and lie down. After the third such incident the priest knew that God was calling Samuel so he gave him these instructions: “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.’” (I Samuel 3:9)

We know that the Lord did call Samuel on that occasion and Samuel became a noted leader of the Israelites and certainly one of the key figures of the Old Testament. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom he also created the world.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

After the time of Samuel and before sending of his Son into the world, God sent the prophet Isaiah who spoke the words of our text. In them he spoke of the work of John the Baptist who would prepare the way of his Son our Savior Jesus Christ. God has a message of hope for his people of Isaiah’s day who were experiencing many troubles. It was a word of comfort that would be fulfilled in the coming of our Savior. As he spoke these words we can know for certain that-

# **GOD IS SPEAKING IN A VOICE FOR YOU TO HEAR**

**I. It is found in His word**

**II. It announces His coming to you**

## **I.**

**A.1.** Shortly before his death, the football player Reggie White underwent a spiritual awakening. Reggie White was known for his abilities as a defensive lineman and also for his faith and was called “The Minister of Defense”.

Reggie’s friends saw him studying Hebrew and thought that he was converting to Judaism.

In the past, like many others in Christianity, he had used the phrase that God was talking to him. He finally came to the conclusion that his idea of God speaking was wrong. It wasn’t God speaking, but Reggie White. He had come to the conclusion that the only God spoke was through his word. That is why he was studying Hebrew so that he could understand what God was saying in the original language of the Bible.

God says, “Comfort, comfort, my people” Against the backdrop of the exile to Babylon in 587 B.C. there would a calming attitude of God towards his people. He says: “She has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” This means that their sins have been more than made up for and forgiven. It is a certainty!

**2.** God is now preparing the way for this to happen. In the world of their day, representatives of dignitaries prepared the roads of the coming of these people. Roads had to be cleared and straightened out for safe travel to occur. Obstacles needed to be cleared out of the way for the great visit and entrance to occur.

In this case it had to do with the sins of the people. Their sins had caused their plight of the exile, but they

would return after 70 years as God had promised them in His word.

**B.1.** This is certain for it is God himself who is speaking these words to the people. In the New Testament, St. Peter wrote to first century Christians about their rebirth because of the promise of God's word. As proof of this he quotes what Isaiah wrote in our text.

Promises abound in any age, but only God's word is certain. The people could be assured and we can be assured today because these are God's very own words. God is promising the coming of his own Son and the entire season of our celebration has to do with the keeping of that word.

**2.** The people of their day or any day, such as ours today, have an ending. Unless our Lord's Second Advent comes soon we will all die. We understand that as part of our lives here. Verse 8 of our text says: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

In talking with someone the other day, the word forever came up. He responded to me by saying, "Forever is quite a promise!" It certainly is and it is from the mouth of God.

## II.

**A.1.** All that is spoken in our text is preparing for the coming of God's own Son into the world. It is quite a way off in the future as these words were written. Immediately before them, was good news for their future. They would not remain in captivity forever. It would be for a short time by comparison.

In addition to Jesus, the coming of John the Baptist is promised in our text. The Gospel lesson for today says: "After me comes one mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8) This is quite a statement from

John. It was the servant's job to wash the feet of guests. John wasn't even worthy for that task in his own estimation!

**2.** John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus as he called the people of his day to repentance. In this Advent season there is a sense of that as well for us today. It was because of our sins that Jesus came into the world. As we know our Savior has come and will come again, we repent of our sins and focus on the life that he gives to us.

**B.1.** Isaiah says: "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." What a picture this gives to us of our Savior Jesus Christ. We have seen the pictures of Jesus holding a lamb in his arms. The shepherd's care covers all the flock and whatever the need. We have certainly all taken comfort in David's words at one time or another: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

The other day in the eighth grade classroom we got into a discussion of sheep. Mr. Benning indicated that he had raised sheep in his youth. I asked him if he had any observations. He told us that sheep would follow each other no matter where they are going. Does that sound familiar? That is why the shepherd's care is so important. Here again is that wonderful picture of our Savior's care for us.

**2.** We have accepted that things change in our world of today. At times it is a challenge to keep up with changing trends. We would say that some are good and some are not.

God's word and promises to you never change. During the last year of his administration, Sir Winston Churchill heard some men talking about him at a public event. "They say he's becoming senile, a younger man would be better." As he sat down and looked at them, he said, "And they say he's deaf!" God speaks his promises to us and they are very clear and bring us joy in this season and forever. Amen.