



Sermon Notes from 22 December

Hear the Word of Comfort! (*Isaiah 40:1-5*)

by Pastor GL Wong

Christmas is God's means to bring comfort to us, and this is ultimately fulfilled through the birth of Jesus Christ.

The comfort that comes through Jesus:

1) The reality of Christ

w1-2 – God draws the attention to the comfort He desires to bring to His people. He is gentle and speaks tenderly to them in the midst of their hardship. He reminds His people that despite their disobedience, they are not defined by where they have gone or by how far they have gone but who they are in His eyes: a dear child of God. He tells them that their hardship and difficulty has ended (v2). God's comfort does not just address the external problems of life, but also the internal heart problems within. His comfort for His people ultimately requires the fulfilment of perfect justice (v2). We are not forgiven by an absence of justice; we are forgiven by a satisfaction of justice. God's comfort to all His people comes through Christ. He cares for us in our hardship even when it is a result of our own faults. This is the reality of Christ's comfort!

2) The road to this comfort

w3-4 – Preparation is needed to receive comfort from God. The preparation needed is of the heart: repentance – the turning away from sin (Isa. 57:14-15). Ultimately, repentance is the right posture for the receiving of God's comfort.

Luke 3:4 – John the Baptist was straightening the hearts of people for Jesus' ministry. He was not telling them to do good works to be saved but exhorts

the people to prepare room in their hearts for King Jesus. Jesus Christ came not to dwell with the high and mighty or the powerful and impressive, but those who are lowly, contrite and broken – those who confess their neediness, and are willing to align themselves rightly to God's will. He calls for us to turn away from vices, private sins and temporal comforts that would never satisfy, to Jesus Christ – the one that satisfies and endures.

3) The result from this comfort

v5 – The glory of God is revealed through the coming of Christ in the flesh. When Christ comes again, all flesh will see Him in all of His glory.

Luke 2:25 – Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel (God's promise of comfort to His people), and when he saw Jesus, he was delighted and blessed God, for he knew Jesus was the one (Luke 2:29-32). As he received God's promised comfort, he experienced peace in his heart. For all of us who believe and behold Jesus with eyes of faith, we receive the comfort of Christ that declares a unique peace to the world (Jn. 14:27)! It is God's intention that anyone who has received His comfort in affliction is equipped – able to comfort others in their affliction (2 Cor. 1:3). In the eyes of God, we are able to reach out and bring comfort to others.

May the God of comfort who has comforted us bring through us, His perfect, saving comfort to those whom we love this Christmas!