



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

October 20, 2021

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.”

(Isaiah 40:5)

Did You Know?

- We learned before that **Isaiah**, son of Amoz, is often thought of as the greatest of the writing prophets. His name means *“The Lord is salvation”*. He was married and had at least two sons.

- He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah, beginning his ministry in 740 BC, the year King Uzziah died. He lived during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian Empire and the decline of Israel.

- We also learned that Scholars date the Book of Isaiah between 740 and 680 BC. Many of them challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote both halves of the book (chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66) that bears his name.

- Theologians divide the book of Isaiah into two parts: 1. *The Book of Judgement* (chapters 1-39); 2. *The Book of Comfort* (chapters 40-66). Based on this division, our today's reading belongs to *The Book of Comfort*. This part starts with this verse: **“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.”** Here the double imperative means that comfort greatly.

- The passage included in today's daily message consists of rhetorical questions. These are used to persuade the people to trust in the Lord, who has the ability to deliver, strengthen and restore his people.

(The NIV Study Bible; Isaiah)

Personal Insight

In my understanding, the meditation below draws our attention to what Micah formulated with these words: **“And what does the Lord require of you? ... to walk humbly with your God.”** (Micah 6:8)

It is the acknowledgement of **“the glory of the Lord”** (verse 5) and accepting the call when God says: **“Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”** (Isaiah 55:3)

It also involves our commitment to learn and to pay attention to the Holy One's guidance. To be 'educated' we need a humble heart and the trust that our 'Teacher' really has the know-how.

God offers us not just simple knowledge, but life itself, as we can deduce it from the verse above. This offer expands from the covenant with Abraham - **“... I will bless you; ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”** (Genesis 12:2-3) - to Jesus - **“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”** (John 10:10).

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



The Greatest Teacher

Who was it that taught [the Lord] knowledge?

Isaiah 40:14

READ Isaiah 40:12 – 14

“I don’t get it!” My daughter slapped her pencil down on the desk. She was working on a math assignment, and I’d just begun my “job” as a homeschooling mom/teacher. We were in trouble. I couldn’t recall what I’d learned thirty-five years ago about changing decimals into fractions. I couldn’t teach her something I didn’t already know, so we watched an online teacher explain the skill.

As human beings, we’ll struggle at times with things we don’t know or understand. But not God; He’s the all-knowing One—the omniscient One. Isaiah wrote, “Who can . . . instruct the Lord as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?” (Isaiah 40:13–14). The answer? *No one!*

Humans have intelligence because God created us in His own image. Still, our intelligence is just an inkling of His. Our knowledge is limited, but God knows everything from eternity past to eternity future (Psalm 147:5). Our knowledge is increasing today with the aid of technology, but we still get things wrong. Jesus, however, knows all things “immediately, simultaneously, exhaustively and truly,” as one theologian put it.

No matter how much humans advance in knowledge, we’ll never surpass Christ’s all-knowing status. We’ll always need Him to bless our understanding and to teach us what’s good and true. – By **Jennifer Benson Schuld**

REFLECT & PRAY

Jesus, I praise You as the One who knows everything. Teach me what You want me to learn, and help me to love You with all my mind. Amen.

In what types of situations are you thankful for God’s omniscience? How does knowing that Jesus understands everything encourage you?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Scholars generally divide the book of Isaiah into two major sections. Chapters 1–39 deal primarily with warnings of divine chastening upon the people of Judah, represented often by Jerusalem; chapters 40–66 focus on God’s promises to deliver and restore Judah from the coming season of discipline they’d encounter in captivity in Babylon. As such, Isaiah 40 launches this section of promise and hope by reflecting on the greatness of God with whom they have a special relationship. This dramatic overture of His majesty is of critical importance because it serves as a reminder to the people that though they’d be distanced from their homeland, God was more than capable to bring them back and restore them—initially to the land and ultimately to Himself. It’s that assurance of His abiding care that underscores the offer of comfort in Isaiah 40:1. – By **Bill Crowder**

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