**Notes for Next Sunday**

Second Sunday in Advent

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 40:1-11

**Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ﻿2﻿ Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. ﻿3﻿ A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD, make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.﻿4﻿ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ﻿5﻿ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” ﻿6﻿ A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ﻿7﻿ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ﻿8﻿ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.” ﻿9﻿ You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem,lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!” ﻿10﻿ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ﻿11﻿ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.**

In chapters 1–35 Isaiah prophesies against the backdrop of the Assyrian threat against Judah and Jerusalem, in chapters 36–39 he records Assyria’s failure and warns about the future rise of Babylon, and in chapters 40–66 he writes as if the Babylonian exile of Judah were almost over. He comforts the exiles and spiritual Israel of all times with the promise of deliverance from sin through the incarnation and death of the Messiah. (CSB)

VV. 1-2. A Full Pardon – In our own lives, we face the judgment that we have broken God’s laws. We all fall short of what His holiness demands. But there is a great source of comfort for us. God Himself, speaking through His Holy Word, has issued us a full pardon. This wonderful, comforting message is found in the prophecy in Isaiah 40. He writes of a great day to come, in the time of the Messiah’s kingdom. God has put into motion a plan for universal salvation.   
  
V. 1. *Comfort, comfort.* Repeated for emphasis (“Comfort greatly”). The double imperative is found also in 51:9, 17; 52:1, 11; 57:14; 62:10. (CSB)

This verse presents the theme of the book from chapters 40-66; at the same time it presents the theme of this particular chapter. The verb-form at this point indicates that the Lord would have this comfort reiterated over and over again (Leupold)

God has always a message of comfort for His people, even in times of deep affliction; the end of all His dealings with them is their establishment in holiness and happiness. (Concordia Bible)

V .1. *my people.* After all their unfaithfulness, all their rebellion, all their sins, they are still his people. God remains their God. (PBC)

V. 2. *sin … paid for … double.*† Although Judah could do nothing to make amends for the debt incurred by her sin, nevertheless the Lord would let her receive good things in “double” proportion to the punishment she deserved (cf. 61:7). (CSB)

V. 3. *make straight … a highway.* According to His eternal plan, “the way of the Lord” has as its predestined goal the redemption of all humankind through His Son, Jesus Christ. All obstacles will be cleared from His highway of salvation. His chosen people will come forth from the grave of the exile and survive the rise and fall of empires in order that the Savior might be born.(TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 1:1-8

**The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.﻿2﻿ It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”﻿— ﻿3﻿ “a voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”﻿4﻿ And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ﻿5﻿ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ﻿6﻿ John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ﻿7﻿ And this was his message: “After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ﻿8﻿ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”**

The theme of preparation is found in the text for the Second Sunday in Advent. It describes one of the messengers who prepared the way for the mission, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist. Indirect references also point back to Isaiah and Malachi. Mark prepares us for the coming of Jesus Christ so that we in turn might prepare the way for others through the proclamation of the gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Mark’s is the most compact of the four Gospels. He begins not with a birth narrative as in Matthew or Luke, or a cosmic overview of the incarnation as in John, but with a concise summary of the work of John the Baptist. The good news about Jesus then begins with the prophetic words from Malachi and Isaiah in 1:2–3 and the appearance of John and his Baptism in 1:4–8. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

VV. 2-3. *in Isaiah the prophet.* The quotation that immediately follows (see first two poetry lines) comes from Mal 3:1 but is followed by one from Isa 40:3 (see note on Mt 27:9). Understanding the ministry of Jesus must begin with the OT. What Isaiah says about God applies to Jesus, his Son (v. 1). The passages cited speak of the messenger, the desert and the Lord, each of which is stressed in vv. 4–8. (CSB)

V. 1. *in the desert.* “in the wilderness”: Why the desert? This is the place where God’s people were formed after the exodus from Egypt. It was the staging area for entrance into the Promised Land. So now, with John, the desert is the place where preparation begins for the formation of a new people who will be partakers of the new creation which the manifested presence of God is about to bring. (CC)