

November 30, 2021

[Isaiah 40:9-11](#)

In this passage, the prophet Isaiah is addressing people who are in exile. Seemingly cut off from God, hopes and expectations for the future are shattered. When I think about what they may have felt, I bet a lot of us feel that way sometimes, too. We wonder where God is when life doesn't go as planned. The verses prior to this passage (Isaiah 40:1-8) offer comfort for God's people -- he urges them that comfort that can be found in the Lord and his Word.

Verse 9 continues to command the people to joyfully seek God and declare that He is here. I love the personal pronoun used -- "Here is YOUR God!" The prophet is emphasizing that God is not distant or far off. He wants each of us to claim our own unique relationship with Him as our personal Lord. And this is indeed good news! Isaiah urges us to not be afraid to claim this news as good.

Verses 10-11 go on to describe both the power and gentleness of the Lord. Verse 10 describes God as a prince coming "with power" and ruling with "a mighty arm" -- which assures us that He is strong and powerful beyond measure. Nothing is out of His control. And also, in verse 11, we are reminded that He deals gently with us -- "like a shepherd...He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart." What a beautiful picture that God can be so powerful that even the wind and the waves obey Him, but He also loves us so much that He "carries us close to his heart."

Just like the people in Isaiah's time, our futures are unknown to us. But we are held by an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving God.

Even in the midst of trials or uncertainty, how can we look for God carrying us close to His heart? To have eyes to see the small graces and how God is carrying us through these times? How can we pray for more faith -- to trust that He has the power to do anything and yet also surrender to His leading us like a shepherd?

Dear Lord, Help our unbelief and give us more faith in you. Thank you for giving us a picture of your great power and your gentleness and desire to care for us. Help open our eyes to the ways you are moving in our lives. Help us seek you in joyful anticipation as we look forward to the birth of your Son, your ultimate expression of love for us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Charlotte Marie Sturtz