

American Pastors Network



Return to God Sunday V

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

SAMPLE SERMON

Why Return to God?

He is Worthy
A Study of Isaiah 40

HOW TO APPROACH RETURN TO GOD SUNDAY V:

RETURN TO GOD Sunday is an opportunity for a congregation to take inventory of their relationship with the Lord. If their fellowship is strong and sure, then today is a day of re-affirming, rejoicing and looking forward to another year of service to the Savior. For some, today is a day of reflection, possibly repentance and rededication to Christ. For all, it is also an opportunity to cast a vision for “spiritual ground” the Lord might have His people intentionally pursue. We are suggesting that churches join in unity on **February 1, 2026**, but we also recognize that your calendar may need to be adjusted for your church’s plans and needs. Whatever the case, we strongly encourage each pastor and church leader to lead their flock through a day of reflection and renewal. In addition to the Sunday morning focus, we also want to encourage you to stage a special time of prayer, maybe on Sunday night or the following week, where your church gathers and cries out to the Lord. We have produced a follow up devotional guide to give to your congregation and for the eight days following RTG Sunday, they will study God’s word together and look even deeper into their walk with the Lord. Between Sunday morning, the devotional guide and a special night of prayer and worship, your church could be poised for revival! That is our hope and desire!

2026 THEME:

As we look across the landscape of the Evangelical church one of the concerning attitudes that we see in many churches and in the hearts and minds of Christians is a casualness or nonchalant approach to who God is and how we ought to respond to Him. Our God is to be revered and honored and we should look upon Him with awe and in the Biblical sense with a holy fear. Yet in our search to make Christianity and the Bible more “relevant” we have mistakenly lowered our view of God. Without an elevated view of God our worship declines which then degrades our appreciation of His word and then our ethics, morals and behaviors follow. Could it be that much of our spiritual laziness, compromise of conduct, and even our sloppiness in doctrinal matters is connected to our deflated understanding of the majesty and greatness of God. This year we want to elevate our minds and heart and once again be captivated by the worthiness of God.

Isaiah 40 is a wonderful passage that will zero in on four major qualities or attributes of God and why He alone is worthy of our repentance which should cause us to run back to Him in reverence and worship. In addition to this portion of Scripture, we have written a simple, yet profound follow up devotional considering the names of God. Over the years, great theologians and churchmen have directed God’s people back to God’s many names and identities in the Bible to stir us to realize His glory. Our underlining premise is that if the people of God will see clearly the power, mighty and exclusivity of God it will cause them to see their insignificance and need for this God. Their drifting from Him will cause them to turn and return into His waiting arms. May you and your people be struck again with the fact the Our God is worthy and we need to return to Him!

SAMPLE SERMON

TEXT: Isaiah 40:12-31

AIM: To proclaim the greatness of God and challenge listeners to humble themselves under His power, knowledge, sovereignty and comfort.

INTRODUCTION: In 1995, Dr. Donald W. McCullough wrote a book that many overlooked and even downplayed at the time, yet now 20 years later is seen as brilliant and prophetic. The book was entitled THE TRIVIALIZATION OF GOD: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity. McCullough began to sound an alarm on what he saw was a slippery and perilous path that the evangelical church was taking. In the comments about the book it said: “It may well be the worst sin of the church at the end of the twentieth century where we have lowered the view and reverence of the God of the Scripture to a human level.” What began to happen in the 1980’s and 90’s, and I was around to bear witness, was a desire to be more relevant in our **context** of ministry and in doing so we weakened the **content** of our message. There was a shift and a slide in our approach to explain and present who God is and what He expects in our desire to introduce people to God. We did not want to seem scholarly, heady, rigid or dogmatic, so there was an attempt to make God, Christianity and the Bible hip, approachable and human. We did not want to seem religious or sacred, but real, authentic, relatable and within reach. We began to de-emphasize long held doctrinal truths having determined that “if we present that aspect of who God is or what God expects, the unbeliever will turn away and will be lost forever!” Now listen, I know that Paul said that we should be “all things to all men to reach more” yet the Apostle never meant to complete gut and dilute the message of our faith.

A greater problem then emerged, as this once innocent idea of reaching the unchurched and unsaved with the gospel seemed to morph, Christ followers began to embrace and enjoy and settle for this “Christianity-lite” form of the faith. Levels of seriousness in our walk, diligence in our study and passionate pursuit of holiness transformed into a casual discipleship at best. What McCullough said in 1995 grew and grew to what we have in many churches and faith communities, a lazy faith and a dumbed down version of the God of the Universe.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS?

What were some of the troubling outcomes and evidences from this trivialization of God?

- Music became shallow, emotionally driven and lacking any deep theological accuracy. Remember the early reformers believed that music was a vital means of keeping the church straight doctrinally. Worship should be first the exaltation of the glory and majesty of God. Worship services focused on our feelings and many songs could be mistaken for a love song by dropping Jesus’ name from the lyrics.
- Prayer is absent and is almost an optional activity. It is seen in the way that we pray and how we approach the throne of God. You can hardly find a church that actually takes time in their worship services to lead the church in prayer and most concerning is how we actually address the Lord. It is like we are calling up a buddy and seeing if they want to go out for pizza. If how a church prays publicly is a demonstration of their idea of dependence on God, we can see why the church is declining.
- Nonchalant approach to engaging in the activities of the world and the ease in which believers are adopting worldly practices. There seems no concern with not keeping some daylight between what the unsaved world sees as acceptable and normal and what the child of God should and does participate in. It used to be that our view and fear of God would shape our pursuit of holiness and godly living.
- Hand in hand with our causal approach to the world, is the way we look at and deal with sin. Tolerance of sin has become standard operating procedure. Condemnation of any immorality or unrighteousness would be seen as bad business when trying to reach the world. Words like iniquity, wrath, condemnation and other sin identifying terms are invisible from most pulpits. We focus on “good news” without reference to “bad news” and the reason we need redemption. We are then puzzled as to why the world does not see their need for a Savior when they don’t understand the seriousness and consequence of their sin.
- Sadly, much of this has been caused because of silly and mediocre preaching from God’s pulpits. You are hard pressed to find an evangelical church on a Sunday that is taking God’s people deep into the scriptures and speaking with Holy Ghost authority to prick the heart and renew the mind. And if a preacher does attempt to challenge, he is broadly criticized giving illustration of Paul’s warning to Timothy of those coming to have their ears tickled and rejecting sound doctrine.
- And I guess the saddest and central evidence to all that this slide has stripped the Church of is that we are missing the AWE OF GOD. The kind of awe that caused Moses to take off his sandals whenever he came into the presence of Jehovah. The word GLORY means heavy, weighty and impressive. And when God’s people fall under the awe and glory of God’s presence, much like the Apostle John experienced in Revelation

1 on Patmos, they should be thrown to the ground in worship and struck with a holy fear. That does not characterize today's evangelical church.

HOW TO CHANGE COURSE?

There has to be a RETURN TO GOD.... a heartfelt, revival like, conscious turning away from where we are headed and what we are doing and what we are believing, and once again become captivated by the awesomeness of God. I know that sounds too simple and not very earth shattering advice, but it is what is needed. Yet if we do know how great, how awesome, how magnificent, how incredible this God is – WHY WOULD WE WANT TO RETURN TO HIM and return Him to the rightful exalted position where He deserves to be? We won't! That is why we need a fresh reminder of how great God is!

BACKGROUND ON ISAIAH 40: To do that let's go back to the great book of Isaiah and see how the prophet describes the God whom we need to return to and why He is worthy of our repentance, our fear and honor!

As we know Isaiah is a sort of "Mini-Bible" all in one book. There are 66 chapters in the book, as there is 66 Books in the entire Bible. There are 39 books in the Old Testament focusing on announcing the coming Messiah to rescue Israel from their sin and the oppression they are experiencing at the hands of pagan countries. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah discusses the GROANINGS over Judah because of their disobedience, ignoring of prophetic warnings, and disregarding the numerous calls for repentance. But then just like the Bible, we come to the 27 New Testament books and the announcement of Messiah's appearance and the GLORY that comes from knowing and receiving God's Son. Isaiah mirrors this in his last 27 chapters where he focuses on the GLORIES that will come to God's people when the anointed One delivers them.

To transition from the GROANINGS to the GLORIES, Isaiah must reacclimate Judah to WHO GOD IS AND WHY HE IS WORTHY OF OUR REPENTANCE, PRAISE AND ADORATION. He must also convince them that this God wants to deliver His people and that there is NONE LIKE HIM!

CHAPTER 40 – the hinge chapter – moving the reader from the GROANINGS of their sin to seeing the GLORY that awaits....so where does Isaiah start.... the GREATNESS OF GOD.... the GLORY of God.... the reason why GOD is worthy of our repentance, worship, and our fear. So, let's look at what Isaiah wrote....

Isaiah 40:9–31

[9] Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" [10] Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. [11] 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. [12] Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and

weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? [13] Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? [14] Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? [15] Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. [16] Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. [17] All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. [18] To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? [19] An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. [20] He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. [21] Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? [22] It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; [23] who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. [24] Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. [25] To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. [26] Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. [27] Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? [28] Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. [29] He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. [30] Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; [31] but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

SERMON OUTLINE: HOW DOES ISAIAH DESCRIBE THIS GOD WHO IS WORTHY FOR US TO RETURN TO HIM?

I. CREATOR GOD – UNCONTAINABLE POWER

- A.** As you work through this text you recognize that Isaiah is weaving a tapestry of the attributes and unique qualities only found in the God of the Universe.
- B.** And so, in these 22 verses he will state an attribute, go to another and then later on go back and rehearse it again. There are FOUR distinct aspects of God that Isaiah will address.
- C.** The first is HIS POWER found in being the CREATOR GOD.
- D.** Look at v. 10.... He declares the might and authority of God – and we know that OUR CREATOR HAS BOTH MIGHT TO CREATE AND HAS AUTHORITY OVER CREATION.

[10] Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

E. And then look at v. 12.... God used His OWN HANDS as the measuring devices of the heavens and the earth....as only the CREATOR can do.

[12] Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

F. Drop down to v. 18.... Isaiah then affirms that there is ONLY ONE GOD – the true and living God – who is SOVEREIGN CREATOR and there is NO ONE LIKE HIM!

[18] To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

G. How about v. 22...God the CREATOR sits on His throne overseeing all that He created. The world and universe and everything in it are UNDER HIS CREATIVE CONTROL.

[22] It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

H. VV 26 and 28.... Finally, he reminds us of HIS GREATEST CREATION – MANKIND – we are his creation!!

[26] Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

[28] Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

I. Isaiah lays out for his readers and listeners that the FIRST REASON we need to turn away from our disobedience and sinful past and return to God is because of HIS UNCONTAINABLE POWER as evidenced in all of His CREATION.

J. He is the CREATOR of the heavens, earth and all that is in it.

K. He holds the world together.

L. REMINDS ME OF WHAT BOTH APOSTLE JOHN AND PAUL WROTE IN REGARD TO JESUS....

John 1:1–3

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Colossians 1:15–17

[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- M.** Because Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and He has all of the same attributes and qualities.... we know that the same UNCONTAINABLE POWER in God the Father is in Christ and so when we consider Christ, we recognize HIS POWER AS CREATOR.
- N.** All of that to say.... we would not need to REPENT or TURN BACK TO or FEAR or RETURN TO a God that has no authority, power or sovereign control – BUT WE KNOW THAT OUR GOD DOES
- O.** He deserves our worship, honor, our respect and for sure our FEAR...but also we MARVEL at the fact that this POWERFUL GOD desires to know us personally and bless us with that power. Use that POWER for our benefit!
- P.** WHY WOULD WE NOT WANT TO SUBMIT AND SURRENDER TO HIM.
- Q.** Mankind tries to contain Him, control Him, bargain with Him and even tries to duplicate His abilities BUT WE FALL SHORT EVERYTIME.
- R.** IRL: This past year I had a retina tear in my eye. Lost complete sight in my left eye. Got to an amazing doctor and in a few days I was in the operating room and having it repaired by laser. Wild! I was on the table and I was able to make out with limited vision, the needle going into my eye, fluids and bloods being extracted, flash of the laser and then reinserting fluid to hold it in place. Over the next few days the fluid would disappear and my sight be restored. ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE! However as I was on the table it dawned on me. Medicine and doctors have been able to figure out how to repair and fix the body. Even do organ transplants. BUT THEY HAVE NOT FIGURED OUT HOW TO CREATE AN EYEBALL!!! They can't create!
- S.** Mankind can never and will never have the UNCONTAINABLE POWER OF THE CREATOR GOD.... therefore, we need to respect him and fall at his feet in fear and repentance.

II. COUNSELOR GOD – UNFATHOMABLE KNOWLEDGE

- A.** There is a second attribute or quality that Isaiah identifies in chapter 40 and it has to do with GOD'S KNOWLEDGE. What He knows, how much He knows and that there is NO ONE who knows all that God knows.
- B.** Again, look at the passage and let me highlight a few passages....

C. Look at vv. 13-14...God seeks counsel from NO ONE!

[13] Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? [14] Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

D. Again, look at v. 21...God's unfathomable knowledge has not been hidden from us. We are not surprised. We must acknowledge that there is no one like Him!

[21] Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

E. And then vv. 27-28...Because our God knows everything, we can never hide anything from HIM!

[27] Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? [28] Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

F. It is said that KNOWLEDGE IS POWER....and if that is true then there is NO ONE MORE POWERFUL in regard to knowledge then the Lord God.

G. Our COUNSELOR GOD has UNFATHOMABLE KNOWLEDGE.... the depths of which have not been fully captured. His knowledge is infinite and far beyond the limited finite knowledge of mankind.

H. Friends, God knows everything. There is not a subject that He is not an expert on.

I. God is never surprised. He not only knows about stuff, He knows its source, KNOWS when things will happen, and just when you think you have figured God out....you realize that there is more that is unknown.

J. HE knows the beginning and the end and everything in between!

K. Even worse is that God shares his knowledge or tries to tell us what He knows and we refuse to LISTEN TO HIS KNOWLEDGE.... which is exactly why Jeremiah had to remind them of his knowledge...

Jeremiah 25:3-4

[3] "For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened. [4] You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets,

L. Beloved we not only know VERY LITTLE COMPARED TO GOD.... what we know usually gets us in trouble!!

M. Listen to what else the Bible says about the mind and knowledge of God....

Romans 11:33–34

[33] Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! [34] “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

1 Corinthians 2:15–16

[15] The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. [16] “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

N. MANKIND CANNOT and WILL NOT ever know all that God knows – He has superior wisdom and knowledge.... He knows about how life works, how the world works, what is going to happen in the world and in the future.... He has plans and purposes that are far beyond what we know.

O. SO WHY WOULD WE CONTINUE GOING IN A DIRECTION THAT YOU HAVE TO ADMIT WILL LEAD TO DISASTER.... why not return the One who KNOWS everything and even more?

P. RETURN to the God to whom NO ONE COUNSELS.... return to the God who knows everything about you and all of your future.... our GREAT counselor with UNFATHOMABLE KNOWLEDGE!!

Q. IL: Let me put this again in perspective. Most of us have “smart phones” – whether it be an iPhone or Android and we all can admit that they are powerful tools. The information that they possess and control and dispense is amazing. As a matter of fact, I am convinced that there are things in my phone that I don’t even know are there and have YET to use. I can honestly say that each month I find something NEW in my iPhone. But don’t miss this. On a regular basis, Apple sends me notice that in the PHONE they created they have found a problem and they must send an UPDATE. Watch this...they created the phone, they put in all the information and they still have something go amiss and they have to UPDATE their creation.

R. Beloved, God HAS NEVER and WILL NEVER ever need an UPDATE on anything He has created, knows or touches. His knowledge is not only untouchable it is NEVER WRONG! His knowledge is not EVOLVING.... it is COMPLETE and ALWAYS TRUE!

S. With a God who holds that kind of knowledge and power.... why would you not want to humble yourself and say – GOD, I DO NOT KNOW ANYTHING CLOSE TO WHAT YOU KNOW....I need you, I want you and I am coming BACK to you!

T. How foolish for us to live a life without the God who knows EVERYTHING! Or worse, THINK WE KNOW BETTER!

U. God is worthy to return to because of His uncontainable power, unfathomable knowledge and thirdly....

III. CONQUERING GOD – UNRELENTING JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A.** Part of our struggle in coming to grips with the fact that we need to return to God and repent and ask for Him to be the Lord of our lives, is considering all of the enemies and threats and potential opponents we will have to contend with.
- B.** You see we have been fooled to think that the people, powers and forces we encounter have power over us and even worse, that the Creator and All-knowing God of the universe cannot deal with them.
- C.** So, God through Isaiah, reminds the people of Judah that he is a CONQUERING GOD.... that he pours our UNRELENTING JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS throughout the world.
- D.** HE is the JUDGE over the living and dead. His judgments reign. He is the chief LAW GIVER and he will apply those laws.
- E.** Also, He has established a unique relationship with Israel and really all of God's people, us included, to PROTECT US AND DEFEND US AGAINST ALL ENEMIES.
- F.** Listen to these encouraging words about our CONQUERING GOD.....
- G.** Look at vv. 15-17.... The nations that poise threat are nothing to God!

[15] Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. [16] Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. [17] All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

- H.** Then again, vv. 23-24...God will bring ever enemy to their knees.

[23] who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. [24] Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

- I.** Isaiah is giving them a pep talk. He tells them there is NO NATION and NO ENEMY that can defeat them as long as they allow GOD TO BE THE CONQUERER.
- J.** As long as they trust Him. As long as they rely on HIS UNRELENTING JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS to do its work on their behalf.
- K.** The other option is that they would try to fight their own battles. Use their own strength. Rely on their own strategies and plans.

L. Problem is Babylon and Assyria have overtaken them, the temple has been destroyed, their homes are being plundered and overridden.

M. HOW'S YOUR PLAN WORKING OUT???

N. God is very practical here through Isaiah. If you will not return to Me because you have not admitted my power or knowledge is superior than you....maybe you will be convinced on a practical basis....I CAN KEEP YOU SAFE...I can keep you from becoming HOMELESS AND DESTITUDE....I can keep YOUR CHILDREN AND WIVES from being kidnapped and abused....I can keep you ALIVE???

O. Beloved, God has proven over the years to be the MIGHTY CONQUERER and no one can stop Him from advancing in battle and attaining all victories.

P. His conquering ability is UNRELENTING.... It cannot be thwarted!

Q. Biblical stories that remind us of this truth....

Jehoshaphat was facing the Moabites, Ammonites and others and he was outnumbered and outgunned.... he acknowledged he needed God....

2 Chronicles 20:12

[12] O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

God instructs them...worship Me, sing and stand there honoring Me...GOD CONQUERED all the horde of enemies.

Exodus 14:13–14 – MOSES faced with the Red Sea and armies of Egypt – trusted God to be the Conqueror and He delivered....

[13] And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. [14] The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." (ESV)

R. Maybe Judah did not heed Isaiah's admonishment but later on Esther realized this truth and trusted God to be Her Conqueror....

Esther 4:15–16

[15] Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, [16] "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." (ESV)

S. Friend, there is story after story in the Bible of God coming to our aid, rescuing us, fighting on our behalf and defeating the enemy. TWO REQUIREMENTS...

T. First, we must be right with Him. Our relationship and fellowship are intact. We must RETURN TO HIM.

- U.** Second, trust Him and do what He tells us in the midst of a battle and most times it is to do NOTHING and let Him do His work!
- V.** With a God willing to be YOUR CONQUEROR and pour out his RELENTING JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS on our behalf, why would you not return to Him?
- W.** Why be held captive by the FEAR OF MAN? The FEAR of an ENEMY? And believe in some way that you can defeat the powers threatening you BETTER than our God can!
- X.** John writes: "Greater is He who is in YOU than he who is in the world" -- NAMELY THE DEVIL!
- Y.** God will be your VICTORIOUS CONQUEROR! We must return to Him and submit to our Warrior God!
- Z.** Creator...counselor.... conqueror...one last quality of God...

IV. COMFORTING GOD – UNENDING MERCY AND STRENGTH

- A.** His power should convince us to return.... His knowledge should wake us up....his justice and righteousness should get our attention....but if that fails what about GOD BEING THE COMFORTER in our lives.
- B.** We all need comfort. We all suffer. Experience pain and disappointment. We are all accustomed to loss and grief and sadness.
- C.** Isaiah tells Judah, who at this point is HURTING.... return to Him and He will COMFORT YOU!
- D.** Consider Isaiah 40....
- E.** Look at v. 11.... He is our Shepherd, who cares and protects His flock!

[11] 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.

- F.** Look at the end of the chapter 29-31... When we need encouragement, strength, comfort, He is there to pour into our lives and revive us!

[29] He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. [30] Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; [31] but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

- G.** God has always been powerful, all-knowing and just, but wrapped around all that awesome strength is His kindness, love, comfort and care. When we are WEAK.... He pours out HIS STRENGTH TO US!!!

H. He might be the Creator God, All-Knowing God and Victorious God.... but he is also OUR SHEPHERD, OUR COMFORT in times of distress.

I. When does he comfort us...

- Times of sickness
- Times of injustice
- Times of failure
- Times of catastrophe
- Times of disappointment

J. Listen to what the Bible says about our God....

Psalm 34:18–19

[18] The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. [19] Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Psalm 147:3

[3] He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Isaiah 61:1–2

[1] The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; [2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

K. That last passage was a prophetic word about God coming in the person of Jesus the Messiah and that one of his main ministries would be to bring COMFORT.

L. And even after Jesus died and went to heaven, he promised his disciples that the THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY – The Holy Spirit would come and He would be called – THE COMFORTER...

John 14:16–17

[16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, (COMFORTER – paracletos) to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

M. Paraclete will come along side of us and strengthen us and care for us and restore us!

N. Why would we not want to humble ourselves and repent and come back to a God like this?

O. Even more sobering – why would we ever walk away from a God like this? We are all looking for that perfect person to share our lives with. A SOUL MATE!!

P. Yet our God is the perfect SOULMATE...he is the perfect comforting, kind, caring and generous God who wants NOTHING BUT FOR OUR GOOD!!!

Q. Why would we walk away? While wouldn't we return to him? What more would you need? Whom will ever be this?

R. The same can be said about His power.... His knowledge.... His protection and defeating of our enemies.... why would we ever walk away?

S. Yet some do and today this GOD.... this AMAZING GOD....is calling to all of us to RETURN TO HIM and to stay close to Him.... never depart!

CONCLUSION:

Chapter 40 is Isaiah's opening shot across the bow for Judah. They had been wallowing in sin and disobedience. The enemy was crouching all around them. They were feeling the effects of being out of fellowship with the God who loved them and could deal with all of their issues. PLUS, God was now announcing that HIS SON – The Messiah was coming and he would deliver them for all eternity!

Sadly, they did not take the warning. But isn't that like mankind – they have the facts yet they still ignore the warning. I pray that today has not been an exercise in futility. I pray that by God's Spirit working and illuminating and applying the Word of God --- you are seeing the reality, which is....

GOD IS WORTHY TO REPENT TO.... HE is WORTHY to submit to.... He is WORTHY to RETURN TO....and HE is WORTHY to REDEDICATE YOURSELF TO!!

Why?

- Creator God with **UNCONTAINABLE POWER**
- Counselor God with **UNFATHOMABLE KNOWLEDGE**
- Conqueror God with **UNRELENTING JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS**
- Comforter God with **UNENDING MERCY AND STRENGTH**

With a God like that.... what are you waiting for!!!