

**Pericope Study for Sunday, December 10, 2017 – Advent 2B**

Presented by Pastor Richard Burgess

**Collect / POD (ELW)**

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Thought Questions for Advent 2B**

How is your heart stirred up this week?

How does Christ's coming strengthen and/or purify you? Which do you need more? To what end?

**Possible Sermon Titles for Advent 2B**

As usual, use at your own risk.

	<b>Is</b>	<b>2Pet</b>	<b>Mk</b>
Eschatological Reversal in the Axial Age	X		
God as Comfort Food	X		
Here Is Your God	X		
People Are Grass. Preach to Them Anyway.	X		
The Glory of the Lord	X		
The Word of the Lord Stands Forever	X		
Valleys Up & Mountains Down	X		
God Has a Funny Sense of Time		X	
God' Isn't Slow. God is Patient. That Is Salvation.		X	
Not Perishing = Coming to Repentance		X	
Not Wanting Any to Perish		X	
Where Righteousness Feels at Home		X	
Camel's Hair, Leather Belts, Locusts, and Wild Honey			X
Only the Beginning			X
Stoop Down and Untie the Thong of His Sandals – If You Are Worthy			X
The Beginning of the Good News			X
Water Baptism or Holy Spirit Baptism?			X

## Isaiah 40:1–11

<sup>40.1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our  
God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,

lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

## One Possible Outline:

Is 40.1–2	Introduction
Is 40.3–4	Prepare the Way
Is 40.5	Then: Glory of Lord revealed
Is 40.6	What shall I cry / preach?
Is 40.7–9a	What lasts? – Word of God
Is 40.9b	"Here is your God"
Is 40.10–11	Attributes of that God

## Notes, Observations, & Thought Questions:

40.1–2 Context: God's people have been in exile in Babylon, punished for their sins. "Her penalty is paid", and it is time to go home to Jerusalem.

This passage is a call narrative. The prophet is called to "prepare the way of the Lord" (40.3), but the prophet protests he/she doesn't know what to say. The answer is simple: "Here is your God" (40.9b), followed by a list of attributes of that God.

40.3–5 The purpose of the proclamation is "Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed". Is it this simple? How is the glory of the Lord revealed in our parishes, families, & communities?

40.4 Valley's up, mountains down, unevenness (= inequalities?) leveled out. How is this kind of reversal a preparation for the way of the Lord versus a consequence of it?

40.6b – 40.8 Who is speaking here?

How does this call narrative inform your own call to serve God? Your congregation's?

## 2 Peter 3:8–15a

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

## Notes, Observations, & Thought Questions:

3.9 *the Lord is not slow . . . but is patient.* What are some practical applications of God's apparent slowness actually being patience? How is this "salvation"? (40.15) Any good stories?

3.9b *not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance* How does this imply universal salvation? Qualify or deny universal salvation?

3.10, 12–13 Compare the various *heavens* and *elements* in these verses.

3.10 *the elements will be dissolved with fire* Do *the elements* include humanity? What is the "it" in *everything that is done on it*? What will be disclosed and how?

3.11–12 How do these verses motivate *holiness and godliness*?

3.13 What does it mean for the new heaven & earth to have a home for righteousness? How is this different from the current / old heaven & earth?

3.14–15 *while you are waiting . . . regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.* Is this a simple matter of getting an extension on a deadline? What else might be involved here?

## Mark 1:1–8

<sup>1,1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,  
“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of  
you,

who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the  
wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness,  
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the  
forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole  
Judean countryside and all the people of  
Jerusalem were going out to him, and were  
baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing  
their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel’s  
hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he  
ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The  
one who is more powerful than I is coming after  
me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the  
thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with  
water; but he will baptize you with the Holy  
Spirit.”

## Notes, Observations, & Thought Questions:

1.1 *good news* = *euaggeliou* = good message,  
Gospel, ≈ good angel

1.2–3 quoted from Isaiah 40 (see Lesson 1  
above)

1.5 Why would *all the people* going out to be  
baptized? Why did they need to confess their  
sins? Why aren’t our people (both in and not in  
the pews) demanding confession and  
forgiveness in such dramatic fashion?

1.6 John’s costume is quite striking. What would  
be the value of you leading worship or visiting in  
the hospital dressed like this? Who would or  
wouldn’t respond well to this?

1.8 What is the difference between baptism with  
water and with the Holy Spirit? I was always  
taught that our baptism included both. John’s  
baptism includes “repentance for the forgiveness  
of sins”. Does Jesus’?