

Title: Good News and the Coming Kingdom // **Scripture:** Isaiah 40:1–11, 27–31

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

For 39 chapters, Isaiah has told the people that their sins would lead to judgement. Now we find that the exile of Israel has happened and in chapter 40 there is a turning point in the story of God relating to his people. God speaks comfort to his people in the form of good news about hope for the future.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

Spiritual formation is the process of the inside matching the outside. Your external world matches your internal reality. We like the promise, but we need the process.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): Why were the people of Israel in exile? What good news does Isaiah bring? Where can we see God's perfect justice in action? What about his perfect love?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): Describe a season of life when you didn't feel at home. Where did it feel like God was in that chapter of your life? What promise were you leaning on while waiting?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): What does it mean to wait well? Can you soar on wings like an eagle at work? Can you run and not grow weary at home? What good news would make it easier to show loving kindness to the people you see most frequently?

BE IT – Practice

Change UP // Promise

Read Isaiah 40 five times this week. After reading it the first time, ask God to speak to your heart about what these promises mean for you. Each subsequent time you read it, circle the promises starting with what sticks out the most. As you read it the last couple of times, ask God what He wants you to know about these promises. Finally, reflect on what you've heard God say by comparing it to what Jesus says in the Gospels about the kingdom of God. For example: Matthew 5 & 6, Luke 5–7 and Matthew 13.

Change IN // Practice

Take seven minutes to plan a time and place to retreat. Retreat is a great spiritual practice to create space outside of daily life to hear a fresh word from God. Look for a place that fits your budget and find the best spot in your year to block a day or two. Put a date on the calendar to retreat with your spouse, a close friend or a small group.

Change OUT // Process

God is at work in the places in your life that still feel like displacement or disconnection from home. Who can you tell about what you are learning? Who is a safe person that is also someone who is open to the good news of God's kingdom? Verbally processing our thoughts and feelings with safe people is a key part of being disciples ourselves and in discipling others. Part of acknowledging that we need a process in order to experience the reality of the promise is to invite others to share on the journey.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes*

Take a few minutes to gather any prayer requests and pray for each other to SEE IT and BE IT this week.