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Outline

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A. Comfort for God's people (1-2)

¹ *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.*

1. Why “comfort, comfort” instead of just the single “comfort”?

2. What is the comfort in the words “my people”, and how does this relate to the comfort of baptism?

3. Does verse 2 seem to suggest that we ourselves have to pay for our sins?

4. Is it not disconcerting that Israel has actually received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins? (cf. Isaiah 61:7; Jeremiah 16:18; Zechariah 9:12)

5. What does it mean to "speak *tenderly*"? How can this be done in a sermon, a home visitation, in the family, or in the communion of saints?

B. Preparing the way (3-5)

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. What would the words "desert" and "wilderness" have reminded the first readers of?
