Name: _____

REGULAR LESSON

Comfort, Then Repentance

BIG IDEA	God speaks comfort first, and repentance is the road his comfort builds.
READINGS	Isaiah 40:1–11; Mark 1:1–8

1 The setting

Isaiah 40:1–2 “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God. “Speak comfortably to Jerusalem; and call out to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”

1. **What is the first thing God says to a people who failed him?**

2 Three voices

Isaiah 40:3–5 The voice of one who calls out, “Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness! Make a level highway in the desert for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain. The LORD’s glory shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.”

Isaiah 40:6–8 The voice of one saying, “Cry!” One said, “What shall I cry?” “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the LORD’s breath blows on it. Surely the people are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God stands forever.”

1. **What are the three voices, and what does each announce?**

2. **Where do you see “grass” that looks permanent in our culture?**

3 John, the road-builder

Mark 1:4–5 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. All the country of Judea and all those of Jerusalem went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan river, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:7–8 He preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen. I baptized you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

1. **How does John “build the road” in people’s lives?**

2. **Calvin and Chrysostom disagreed about whether John’s baptism forgave sins. Why might it matter?**

4 Two parts of repentance

> “Repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven.”
>
> Augsburg Confession XII · Read it in the Reading Room

> “Of how many parts does the true conversion of man consist? Of two parts; of the mortification of the old, and the quickening of the new man.”
>
> Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 88 · Read it in the Reading Room

1. **How does putting faith inside repentance (Lutheran) or calling it its root (Reformed) protect against despair and against pride?**

5 Apply

1. **What “mountain” or “valley” in your life needs the Lord’s road this Advent?**

Scripture: World English Bible (public domain). Free to print and copy.