

God's Comfort

Fred R. Coulter—September 6, 2014

We all have times of tragedy, difficulties, hard times, afflictions, loneliness, and of course, the one man who suffered perhaps more than any other man in the history of the world that way, outside of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, was Job. We all have things come upon us, just like Job. When the affliction came upon him, he said, 'That which I have greatly feared has come upon me.'

- we all have fears
- we all have weaknesses
- we all have things that come upon us

When afflictions and trials come, they can be very difficult indeed, life-threatening indeed. If you're not directly a part of it, then you are suffering with someone who is going through it at the same time.

But one of the most important things that Christ has given us is the Holy Spirit, which is called *the Comforter*. Let's talk about comfort. *We need comfort* in times of difficulty, times of loss, times of unexpected things. Job lost everything—tragedy, calamity—by the hand of Satan the devil. Yet, God restored it all to him.

We also know that the Apostle Paul suffered greatly. When called, Paul was told, 'You're going to suffer for Me, but you're going to go to the Gentiles and you're going to preach the Gospel.' We know all the things that he suffered. We have part of Scripture which answers:

- What do we learn from these things?
- How can we recover from it?

When you get to a point that you feel totally helpless and lost and every one of us will come to that point, or you get to a point that you are so down and depressed and you just cannot understand what's going on and how things are going to work out, ***then we need to have the comfort of God!***

Let's read how Paul was comforted, 2-Corinthians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the Church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in the entire region of Achaia: Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 1-2). Only God can give that grace and peace of mind and settling and comfort.

Verse 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and ***the God of all comfort.***" When you come to those times that you are at the end of your rope and have fallen off of it, ***God is there! God will help!*** God loves you in spite of the different disasters and things that happen.

Verse 4: "Who comforts us in all our tribulation in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial..." The things *will* work out in a way that one day you will be able to help someone because you have gone through it. We know that many brethren have suffered many, many things because of the difficulties within the Church, of all places to suffer all kinds of difficulties and problems. Some of them have never recovered out of it. So, part of the thing that we need to do for other brethren is to help them to have comfort so they can return to Christ. ***God is a God of all comfort!***

"...through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ" (vs 4-5)—yielding to God.

I know when I have gone through them, about the only thing you can say is, 'O God, help me. O God, heal my soul. O Lord, help me to understand what's going on.' ***He will answer! God will respond!***

Verse 6: "And if we are in distress, *it is* for your comfort and salvation..." What a way to look at it. All the problems and difficulties, like it says there in Rom. 8:28, that ***all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*** It will work out in the long run.

God is doing *a perfecting work*. Part of that perfecting work *in us* is so that when we have our trials and difficulties that come along. Remember what Jesus said, 'If you want to follow Me, you pick up your cross and come after Me.' He is there to help.

"...which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you)" (v 6).

That's quite a thing to understand. That's how much God is involved in our lives. God is there. So, when difficulties come we need to look to God to help us through it all.

Verse 7: "Knowing that as you are partners in the sufferings, *you are* also *partners* in the comfort. For we do not want you to be ignorant of our tribulations, brethren, *even the trials* that befell us in Asia; we were exceedingly burdened beyond *our own* strength... [here Paul came to the end of his rope and let go of the end of it] ...so much so that we even despaired of living" (vs 7-8).

You can't get any more mournful. You can't get any more depressed than that. Sometimes we go through trials just like that.

Verse 9: "For we had the sentence of death within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God, Who raises the dead." There is the whole purpose of it:

- to trust God
- have faith in God
- love God

Let it be something to help us draw closer to God that He will add His Spirit, His comfort, His Word, His Truth and His understanding to it.

Verse 10: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and continues to deliver; in Whom we have hope that He will even yet deliver." For whatever trial there may be down the road. We need to understand this very deeply, brethren, because living in the end of the age, what is coming upon the world? *Time and trouble and tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of creation!* So we need to ask God to strengthen us. *He will!*

- yes, *He is there to comfort us*
- yes, *He is there to lead us*
- yes, *He is there to guide us*

—in everything

Psa. 119 is quite a Psalm. It tells us some very important things concerning comfort. Remember what Jesus said, and here's a promise:

- if you are mourning
- if you are depressed
- if you are distressed
- if you are all, as we would say, having come unglued

remember the promise. Jesus said, ***'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!'***

The greatest comfort, I think, all the resurrected saints on the Sea of Glass, the greatest comfort is to see each other and to see Jesus Christ and God the Father. That will be the most fantastic moment in the history of our lives up to that point. Think about all those who have lost their lives: through persecution, through hatred, through whatever.

Psalm 119:49: "Remember the word to Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, that Your Word has given me life" (vs 49-50). ***Gives us life! Gives us hope!***

There are many things we can study in the Word of God to bring us comfort, to bring us relief,

to help us have understanding and to view things through the lens of God's Word and His Spirit.

Verse 76: "I beseech You, let Your **steadfast** love comfort me..." Steadfast means, just like Jesus said, "The Lord is our Helper and He promised, ***I will never, no, I will not ever leave you or forsake you.***" God's love is everlasting.

"...according to Your promise to Your servant.... [God will intervene and help] ...Let Your tender mercies come to me so that I may live, for Your Law is my delight" (vs 76-77).

Verse 81: "My soul faints for Your salvation... [That's the attitude we need to have. When trials and difficulties come, always look to what God wants as the end result.] ...I hope in Your Word." So there we have it again: God's Word.

Let's see something else that helps us in our times of trials and troubles. We all know Psa. 23. Let's go back and look at it, so we can understand how God helps us in these times.

- we all need *hope*
- we all need *comfort*
- we all need *God to intervene*
- we need to *comfort and encourage* each other

Psa. 23 could be the very words that Jesus said right after He was resurrected, Psalm 23:1: "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in **green pastures**... [a type of God's Word for nurturing us] ...He leads me beside the **still waters**" (vs 1-2)—a picture of God's Spirit.

Verse 3: "He restores my soul... [which then is a type of the resurrection] ...He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.... [even in spite of difficulties, *we go on*] ...Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.... [God is always with us, even in the most difficult times] ...Your **rod** and Your **staff**, they comfort me." (vs 3-4).

- What is the rod? *The rod is the power of God, the rulership of God! That's what will give us strength!*
- What is the staff? *The staff is the shepherd's hook:*
 - ✓ to shepherd us
 - ✓ to be loved
 - ✓ to be protected
 - ✓ to be cared for

God is going to do this, v 5: "You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies...." What does that mean? *God is going to work it out*

- in spite of what the circumstances are
- in spite of what the troubles are

- in spite of what the afflictions are
- in spite of what the enemies do

God will prepare a table!

“...You anoint my head with oil... [you belong to God; you have His Spirit] ...my cup runs over” (v 5). When He lifts the despair out, the cup runs over. He will fill it to overflowing. Whenever you look at the things that are going on in your life, look at it that way. As we go through life, we may have many of these things come along. Look at all the things that Paul went through (2-Cor. 11).

Verse 6: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life... [that will be into the ages of eternity] ...and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” These are the things that we need to look to. This is how God is going to help us.

- we have God's Word
- we have God's love
- we have God's rod
- we have God's staff
- we have God's hope

Psalms 146:1: “O praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.... [regardless of the circumstances] ...Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no salvation. His breath goes forth; he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (vs 1-4). But God has the spirit of all of those who are His. *Not one will be lost!*

Verse 5: “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God.” Now we have

- the hope of God
- the love of God
- the Word of God
- the rod of God
- the staff of God

we have it all together

Verse 6: “Who made the heavens and earth, the seam and all that is in them; Who keeps Truth forever.” Not going to fail. God's plan is going to work. There will be the resurrection.

Verse 7: “Who carries out justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD lets the prisoners loose; The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD raises up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous; the LORD preserves the strangers; He sustains the fatherless and widow, but the way of the wicked He turns upside down. The LORD shall reign forever, even your God, O Zion, to all generations. O praise the LORD!” (vs 7-10).

Let's look at some other things that we need to understand concerning *hope*. Think of this for a minute. Could Paul have written the things that he has written in a way that he wrote them if he had not suffered? If he had not been forsaken? If he had not been left for dead? Remember he was stoned and everyone thought he was dead. He understood *the glory* that was going to follow. He understood *the inspiration* that God gave him to help us. Can you imagine that.

When we are resurrected and see the Apostle Paul, I wonder how many people are going to say to him, ‘Paul, when I was reading your word it gave me hope in my lowest time, the most difficult time in my life, because I saw what you went through. You wrote of it and you told me that *God would comfort me* and He did and here I am. Now I can talk to you.’

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace...” (vs 1-2). ***The direct connection to God the Father!***

Listen, brethren, understand this: ***the most important people on earth are the people of God!*** They are the most important. You look out there and Satan says, ‘I'll give you fame in this. I'll give you this benefit.’ And you think of all the things out in the world that come to try and distract us. *Satan is there to offer it!* But that *grace of God, directly in heaven above, is the most important thing* that there is. We stand in it and God loves us.

“...we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the hope of the glory of God*” (v 2). Think about what that's going to be like. We aren't going to have our physical bodies, they are all going to be gone—dust. But God is going to transform us to have the bodies and mind *spiritually* like Jesus Christ. That's why in Rev. 1 it shows the resurrected Jesus and in His full glory it's like the sun in its full power; *glory of God*. When we have this in mind, as Paul wrote, which he did, because he went through many, many things.

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we boast in tribulations...” I don't think many of us have come to that point, yet. ‘Oh, hooray, I've got another trial!’ Get on the phone and say, ‘Hello. Guess what? I just got another trial.’ *What was it?* ‘I'm fired from my job.’ Or whatever it may be.

“...we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance” (v 3). What is the promise? ‘The one who endures to the end, the same shall be saved.’

Verse 4: "And endurance *brings forth* character..." That's what God wants more than anything else, *the character of God, the fruits of the Holy Spirit*.

"...and character *brings forth* hope" (v 4). This is what we need, and this is what we pray for. For everyone who has had difficulties and problems and trials and the loss of a loved one. When it comes very suddenly, it's very difficult, but God still sees us through it all.

Verse 5: "And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit..."—and *God comforts us* with that.

If you want an interesting study, with the *Faithful Version* online [afaithfulversion.org], put in there comfort and see how many times it brings it up.

Sometimes we say this, Psalm 31:22: "For I said in my haste, 'I am cut off from before Your eyes'..." 'Oh, God, what's going on? I have no understanding. Don't you look down here and see?' Of course, *God does!*

"...nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You. O love the LORD, all you His saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, and fully repays the proud doer. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD" (vs 22-24).

What was the message that God told Joshua? He had a really powerful task to do, to go in to the land of Canaan, lead the children of Israel there, conquer it and divide it for the children of Israel.

God is talking to Joshua and He says, Joshua 1:2: "My servant Moses is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people to the land which I give to them to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given that unto you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even to the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. **No man...**" (vs 2-5). Figure it this way:

- no man
- no woman
- no trial
- no difficulty
- no challenge:

"...shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you" (v 5).

Think about this. We have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling with us. That is both the Father *and* the Son have made Their abode in us, **right in the spirit of our minds!** He is with us through everything:

- He is with us through *every trial*
- He is with us through *every difficulty*
- He is with us through *every joy*
- He is with us through *His love*

Here's what we need to do, v 6: "Be strong and of good courage... [be of good courage, be encouraged] ...for you shall divide for an inheritance to this people the land which I swore to their fathers to give it to them. Only be strong and very courageous..." (vs 6-7). In the very last verse of John 16 Jesus said, 'In the world you shall have tribulation. But be of good courage, I have overcome the world.' We can overcome and He is in us.

"Only be strong and very courageous so that you may observe to do according to all the law which My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go" (v 7).

In Eph. 1—here's what Paul wants us to keep our minds on. God's Spirit *will help us!* God's Spirit *will deliver us!* Talking about our purpose and talking about our inheritance:

Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory. For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints" (vs 13-15).

Every time someone comes here to visit, they are struck by the love that is here in this fellowship group. They are struck by something that seems to be missing in other congregations. They say, 'You talk about the Bible with each other. You encourage each other.' That's a wonderful thing, brethren, because we are doing what we are told here.

Verse 16: "[I] do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Here is Paul's prayer. Here's what he wants us to focus on:

- this will give us *the vision*
- this will give us *the goal*
- this will give us *the stability and strength*

regardless of what happens.

Verse 17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in

order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power" (vs 17-19).

He's going to resurrect us. Every weakness and thing of the flesh will be history—gone, vanished—because He is working in us something greater and better.

Rom. 8—let's claim this promise. Look at how Paul looked at the problems and difficulties that he faced:

Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things..." Not some things, not part of the things, not important things—***all things!*** So, whatever we go through, there is a purpose in it for our character to grow and develop.

"...work together for good... [though in the moment it happens we can't see the good, yet] ...to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose, because those whom He did foreknow, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His own Son, that He might be *the* firstborn among many brethren" (vs 28-29).

This is the promise, v 30: "Now whom He predestinated... [which we are, we have God's Spirit] ...**these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified these He also glorified.**"

You've heard Michael Heiss bring up about the prophetic perfect. The prophetic perfect is this: Here we are in the flesh, but God looks at us as if we are glorified. How can that be? That is a prophetic perfect statement. The promise is sure. If God says so, ***it will happen!***

Verse 31: "What then shall we say to these things?..." Can we have anything greater? Can we have anything more inspiring? ***No!***

"...If God *is* for us... [which He is; that's why He's called us] ...who *can be* against us?... [What can be against us?] ...He Who did not spare even His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also grant us all things together with Him?" (vs 31-32). ***All things***, brethren! The next time you see a picture of some fantastic stars in the universe, that's what we're going to inherit, ***all things!***

Notice how God looks at it. Satan may be there bringing accusations, but we overcome him *with our testimony and with the blood of Christ and we don't love our lives unto death!*

Verse 33: "Who shall bring an accusation against *the* elect of God? God *is the one* Who justifies. Who *is* the one that condemns? *It is* Christ Who died, but rather, Who is raised again, Who is even *now* at *the* right hand of God, *and* Who is also making intercession for us" (vs 33-34). As our High Priest, as our Savior.

Verse 35: "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?... [here are all the things we're going to face in life] ...*Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Accordingly, it is written, 'For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are reckoned as sheep for *the* slaughter.' But in all things... [all these troubles, all these difficulties] ...we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us" (vs 35-37).

- think of everything that Paul went through
- think of all the things you have gone through in your life
- think of everything that you went through when the Church became unglued and fell apart and looked like everything was lost and all destroyed

The enemies were taking it over. Those you thought were some of the ones you loved, turned their back on you, and every difficult thing that could happen:

- there were *divorces*
- there were *deaths*
- there were *sickness*
- there was *disease*

But for those who are faithful, ***God sees us through all of it!*** Notice Paul's persuasion and this needs to be ours:

Verse 38: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers... [the greatest forces of Satan the devil in the world] ...nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which *is* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vs 38-39). This is what we need to hold to. This is how we

- *love* one another
- *comfort* one another
- *pray* for one another

If we have difficulties and problems we need to overcome, God will help us. There is

- not one thing
- not one problem
- not one difficulty

that comes our way ***that God will not see us through it.*** Even if we lose our lives, ***we gain eternal life!*** We can't have any greater promises than these.

So, like Paul said, ***'With these words comfort one another!'***

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 1:1-10
- 2) Psalm 119:49-50, 76-77, 81
- 3) Psalm 23:1-6
- 4) Psalm 146:1-10
- 5) Romans 5:1-5
- 6) Psalm 31:22-24
- 7) Joshua 1:2-7
- 8) Ephesians 1:13-19
- 9) Romans 8:28-39

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 11
- Revelation 1
- John 16

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