The God of All Comfort
II CORINTHIANS 1: 3, 4

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

INTRODUCTION

Who among us doesn’t need to be COMFORTED at times?

-When the cradle has been emptied.
  -When death has taken away our mate, or a parent, or a brother or sister or dear friend.
  -When sickness, disease or an accident has stricken us down.
  -When our mate or a close friend has betrayed us.
  -When our fortunes have been reversed.
  -When failure has overcome us.
  -When endless troubles have overwhelmed us.

We need COMFORT.......We need THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT.

In this message, we are going to consider FIVE SOURCES OF COMFORT you and I have in times of suffering in this life.

First, we have..............

I. The Comfort of God  verses 3 and 4a
3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4 a who comforts us in all our troubles……..

1. Isn’t there something comforting and soothing in those precious words? Paul is painting for us a true picture of our heavenly Father.

2. After he became a Christian and began preaching the gospel, Paul’s life was filled with one painful trial after another.

   Through BEATINGS........STONINGS.........IMPRISONMENTS.......HUNGER.......NAKEDNESS.......SHIPWRECK.......SNAKE BITE.....
   and ABANDONMENT BY FRIENDS...........Paul found the courage and strength to go on by the COMFORTING HAND of GOD.

3. GOD knows us and understands us better than anyone!
   - He created us!
   - He loves us!
   - He has compassion for us!
   - He knows the number of hairs on our head.
   - He has our name written on his hand.
   - He knows our every need before we even ask.
   - He knows every tear we shed.
   - He knows every time we’re “blue” “down in the dumps” or discouraged.

4. So I ask you, WHO COULD POSSIBLY GIVE YOU AND ME MORE COMFORT in times of GRIEF or LOSS or PAIN.......in times of DISCOURAGEMENT or DEFEAT or DISCOURAGEMENT than the GOD OF ALL COMFORT?

   ILLUSTRATION: One of the most fascinating characters of two generations ago was a man named BILLY BRAY, who suffered terrible persecution for his Christian faith.

   When he was imprisoned, BILLY BRAY named his feet........
   He named his RIGHT FOOT “Glory” and his left foot, “Hallelujah.” And every step he took, he would say, “Glory” ......”Hallelujah”............”Glory”......”Hallelujah” to remind him that no matter how difficult the path became, GOD would
COMFORT him every step of the way.

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But not only do we have THE COMFORT OF GOD, we have ......

II. The Comfort of God’s Son  HEBREWS 4: 15, 16

15  For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.

16  Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

1. Being ONE with GOD, THE FATHER.......Jesus shares this wonderful attribute of COMFORT.

II Thessalonians 2: 16, 17  May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2. The Gospels are filled with one account after another of how JESUS sought to comfort people while he was here with us.

-When he saw tears, He dried them.
-When he saw injustice, He brought justice.
-When he saw sickness and pain, He brought healing.
-When he saw fear, He gave courage
-When he saw hopelessness, He gave hope.
-When he saw hunger, He gave food.
-When he saw misery, He gave relief.
-When he saw death, He gave life.
-When he saw failure, He offered forgiveness.

3. I am reminded of that beautiful little chorus we sing from time to time, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.” “Turn your eyes upon JESUS, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of HIS GLORY and GRACE.”

Yes, in our times of TROUBLE, we have ......

“The Comfort of God”
"The Comfort of Christ"

And thirdly, we have.........

III. The Comfort of God’s Spirit  JOHN 14: 15-17

15  "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

16  And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever---

17  the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you.”

1. While JESUS was here, he gave GREAT COMFORT to countless numbers of people He met as He went about preaching, teaching and healing.

2. When he left here, he made a PROMISE that someone would come in his ABSENCE and continue the MINISTRY OF COMFORT to us. That someone is GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT.


4. The Holy Spirit is God’s Invisible presence living within the Christian. This means, no matter what my circumstance may be, God’s Comforter, God’s Counselor, God’s Helper is with me at all times!

-If I’m LYING ON THE OPERATING TABLE, God’s Comforting Spirit is there with me.

-If I’m GOING THROUGH CHEMOTHERAPY and RADIATION treatments, God’s Comforting Spirit is with me.

-If I’m STANDING BESIDE THE CASKET of my dear loved one, God’s Comforting Spirit is with me.

-If I’m STRUGGLING THROUGH ENDLESS DAYS OF LONELINESS and GRIEF, God’s Comforting Spirit is with me.

-If I am LYING ON MY BED AT NIGHT CRYING MYSELF TO SLEEP
God’s Comforting Spirit is with me.

As Christians, we are never alone! No matter what our circumstances may be, we are never alone!

We have the COMFORT OF GOD
We have the COMFORT OF GOD’S SON
We have the COMFORT OF GOD’S SPIRIT

Fourthly, we have............

IV. The Comfort of God’s Scriptures  ROMANS 15:4

ROMANS 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

ILLUSTRATION: The story is told about a WEALTHY WOMAN who went to see her doctor......complaining of chronic poor health. Well, her doctor couldn’t find anything wrong with her except she was extremely nervous and irritable. She became incensed when the only treatment her doctor prescribed was that she go home and start reading the Bible every day and report back to him in one month.

Well she went home and reluctantly began to do as the doctor prescribed, and sure enough, when she went back for her follow up visit a month later, all her health ailments had cleared up.

The comforting word of God had brought healing to the woman’s mind and spirit.

2. Without a doubt, one of the most difficult task any preacher has to do is to prepare a funeral message.

I learned a long time ago, that the most COMFORTING WORDS that can be spoken in the time of loss, are not my words, but God’s Words. That is why I always include lots of scripture in my funeral messages.

3. Do you know GOD’S WORD has a “word of comfort and consolation” for every situation you and I might go through in life.

4. So one of the best things you and I can do when we are going through a difficult situation in life is to OPEN OUR BIBLES AND START READING and let GOD speak WORDS of
COMFORT to US.

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We Have the Comfort of God
We Have the Comfort of God’s Son
We Have the Comfort of God’s Spirit
We Have the Comfort of God’s Scriptures

And finally,

V. We Have the Comfort of God’s Saints  II Corinthians 1:3,4

3  Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4  Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

1. Paul is reminding us in these verses that the ministry of comfort is a two-way street.

   -We receive comfort from God.
   -And in turn we are to give comfort to God’s people.

2. I want you to think back to a difficult time in your life. Perhaps you had lost a loved one. Or perhaps you had been in an accident. Or maybe you were sick and spent some time in the hospital.

   Think of how God used His saints to comfort you during that time.

   Perhaps some came to visit. Maybe others made telephone calls. Perhaps some brought food or sent cards or stuck a little money in your pocket.

   The point is, God used our fellow brothers and sisters-in-Christ to comfort us during our time of difficulty.
3. Now I want you to think of somebody who is presently going through a difficult time and ask yourself, “What can I do to comfort them?”

   If you’re not comfortable dropping by to visit, could you make a phone call?

   If you aren’t very good with words and don’t know what to write in a card, could you at least take a few moments to pray for that individual?

   Everyone doesn’t show comfort in the same way, and yet God uses every expression of comfort like these to lift the spirits of those who are hurting.

ILLUSTRATION

As you know, Gilbert Ange has been through a very difficult stretch of health problems in the last six weeks that nearly cost him his life. Thank God Gilbert is doing much better now.

But Gilbert told me the other day. He said, “Reggie, I never realized how many friends I’ve got until all this happened. People have dropped by to visit. People have called on the telephone and sent cards and brought food by the house. That really means a lot!

5. You see, Gilbert has just experienced what Paul is talking about in our scripture text. The God of all comfort has comforted Gilbert in his time of trouble. And God has used many of His people to help bring that comfort to Gilbert.

CONCLUSION

Douglas Maurer, 15, of Creve Coeur, Missouri, had been feeling bad for several days. His temperature was ranging between 103 and 105 degrees, and he was suffering from severe flu-like symptoms. Finally, his mother took him to the hospital in St. Louis. Douglas Maurer was diagnosed as having leukemia.
The doctors told him in **frank terms about his disease**. They said that for the **next three years, he would have to undergo chemotherapy**. They didn't **sugarcoat the side effects**. They told Douglas **he would go bald** and that his **body would most likely bloat**. Upon learning this, **he went into a deep depression**.

His aunt called a **floral shop** to send Douglas an **arrangement of flowers**. She told the clerk that it was for her **teenage nephew who has leukemia**.

When the flowers arrived at the hospital, they were beautiful. Douglas **read the card from his aunt**. Then he saw a second card. It said: "**Douglas--I took your order. I work at Brix florist. I had leukemia when I was 7 years old. I'm 22 years old now. Good luck. My heart goes out to you. Sincerely, Laura Bradley.**" Douglas’ face lit up as though someone had just breathed new life into him.

It’s funny: Douglas Maurer was in a **hospital filled with millions of dollars of the most sophisticated medical equipment**. He was being treated by expert doctors and nurses with medical training totaling in the hundreds of years.

But it was a **salesclerk in a flower shop, a woman making $170 a week**,-by taking the time to care, and by being willing to go with what her heart told her to do--gave Douglas hope and the will to carry on.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*