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COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER



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THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT!

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COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

By Nelson Thomas Mumbai

No born-again child of God can act independent of other believers, neglecting their mutual responsibilities. God in His grace and mercy saves us individually, but immediately He places us in the body of Christ, the Church, 1 Cor. 12:13, 27. Thus, we are vitally linked to each member of the Church. Because of this interdependent state of the Body, it is detrimental for a member to isolate oneself from the company of God's people, 1Cori. 12:15, 16.

Any failure in fulfilling this mutual responsibility affects the health of the Body, the Church. Moreover, such a selfish attitude is a rebellion against the Lord of the Church!

MUTUAL OBLIGATION

In the area of mutual obligation, encouraging and comforting one another is one of the most important instructions found in the scripture.

Emphasizing its value, Paul wrote this to the Thessalonians,

- *“As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children”, 1Thess. 2:11.*
- *“Therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith”, 1Thess. 3:7.*
- *“Therefore comfort one another with these words”, 1Thess 4:18.*
- *“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” 1Thess. 5:11.*
- *“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” 1Thess. 5:14 ESV.*

Notice the number of times Apostle Paul refers to the reciprocal responsibility of believers regarding encouraging one another. Not only that, he finds comfort in them, he also in turn comforted them and exhorted them to do the same with one another. Similar appeals can be found in other letters too.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews mentioned that the entire epistle was a ‘word of exhortation’ and asked them to encourage and exhort one another considering their feeble, demoralized state (Heb. 13:22; 3:13; 10:24; 12:12; etc.).

Do we really take these instructions seriously? Are our words and actions uplifting our fellow believers or do they put them down further?

THE MEANING OF EXHORT, ENCOURAGE, AND COMFORT

In the New Testament, we can notice that the terms ‘exhortation’, ‘encouragement’, and ‘comfort’ used interchangeably. The basic idea these words convey is someone coming alongside to counsel, console, encourage, etc. with a view to empower and equip the other, so that they may live a fruitful life.

It means to strengthen the feeble-minded, enlighten and counsel the confused, inspire and challenge the slothful, and present hope and purpose of life to the disheartened, etc. This is how God wants His people to stand with one another and be their help and support.

THE IMPORTANCE

We may wonder if this is really an important matter. We can notice at least four reasons why encouraging or comforting one another is essential today.

FOUR REASONS WHY ENCOURAGING OR COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER

1

It’s God’s own concern
(Deu. 1:38; 3:28;
Isa 40:1,2)

2

The example of Christ,
Matt. 9:22;
Luke 7:13

3

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit,
John 14:16, 26

4

The need and the experience of believers

“*The really great man is the man who makes every man feel great.*”

- G. K. Chesterton



1 It's God's own concern (Deu. 1:38; 3:28; Isa 40:1,2)

The Bible refers to plenty of occasions where God encouraged His people. We will consider only three such instances here.

3

INSTANCES

- a) Encouraging Joshua, Deut. 1:38; 3:28
- b) Encouraging Elijah, 1Kings 19:3–8
- c) Encouraging Judah, Isa 4:1, 2

a. Encouraging Joshua, Deut. 1:38; 3:28

Twice the Lord told Moses to encourage Joshua as the future leader of Israel.

“Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.” (Deut. 1:38)

“But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.” (Deut. 3:28)

The Lord knew that before Joshua could lead the people of Israel after Moses, he needed to be encouraged by Moses himself. In obedience to God's

commandment, Moses not only spoke inspiring words to strengthen him but also gave him practical training and even commissioned him publically. (Deut. 31:7, 8, 14, 23 cf. Num. 27:18–23).

After the death of Moses, the Lord Himself encouraged Joshua with the promise of His unfailing presence and sure success (Josh. 1:1, 6-9). Incidentally, these words still remain a source of comfort and inspiration to believers in their various challenging situations. Notice, how much God is concerned about equipping young believers for future ministries!

b. Encouraging Elijah, 1Kings 19:3–8

Elijah, who did mighty things for the Lord on Mount Carmel, got frightened at the threat of Jezebel and fled for his life. Depressed, Elijah even wished to die! Yet, we don't see the Lord rebuking His servant for such a melancholic response, but provided the needed

provision and encouraged him to go forward.

It's natural for anyone to fall into such a gloomy state. In such situations, it is the responsibility of the Lord's people to reach out and help them recover.

c. Encouraging Judah, Isa 4:1, 2

“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says your God. “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her; That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins.” (Isaiah 40: 1, 2)

Notice, how forcefully and passionately the Lord is calling upon everyone to comfort His people. He is aware of the pain and agony they had to face as part of the disciplinary actions. Under the Babylonian captivity, they

were discouraged and distressed. They lost their joy and confidence and even refused to sing the Lord’s song in that foreign land (Psalm 137). They were in need of reinforcement and reassurance.

Our Lord not only chastens, but comforts and strengthens too. What a heartening truth it is to know that our God is thoughtful about our consolation. He does not find any pleasure in our grief-stricken, depressed situations. (Ezek. 18:23, 32; Lama. 3:33)

Sad to notice, today many find a sadistic joy in the pain and agony of others. Is it not the reason why we refuse to comfort and counsel the exhausted and the disturbed ones around us?

Praise be to our God, He is concerned and opens the ways to uplift His people.

2 The example of Christ, Matt. 9:22; Luke 7:13

See the ministry of the Lord Jesus, He preached rest and hope for the wearied and burdened (Matt. 11:28). Christ’s response to the frightened woman, “Daughter, be of good comfort” and to the grieving widow of Nain, “Weep not” reveal His compassionate heart (Matthew 9:22; Luke 7:13 cf. Isaiah 42:3; 50:4).

Remember, the widow of Nain did not seek the help of Christ, but the Lord knowing her grief went to her and comforted her.

There was a time when godly men used to go the extra mile to support the weak and vulnerable to find solutions to their troubles. Alas, today as the Levite we prefer to look the other way, may be

to avoid any personal inconvenience by resolving other’s worries! (Luke 10: 32). Yes, we don’t have to interfere in the personal affairs of others; but when the need is evident, should we not help the downtrodden to find some solace?

Our Lord’s ministry of encouragement reached the peak at the upper room when He is with His own knowing well of His soon departure. The Lord began to comfort the troubled minds of the disciples saying, “Let not your heart be troubled”. He gave a number of reasons that could take away all their worries (John 14:1ff). Of course, even after His resurrection, He spent enough time with them to reassure and strengthen them for future work (Acts 1:3–8).

3 The Ministry of the Holy Spirit, John 14:16, 26

One of the assurances the Lord Jesus made during the upper room discourse was the soon coming of the Holy Spirit after His departure to abide with His followers forever. In fact, in this context the Holy Spirit is even called ‘another Comforter’, denoting the nature and work of the Spirit, John 14:16, 26 (KJV).

Just as promised, Christ did not leave His people ‘comfortless’, John 14:18 (KJV). The indwelling Holy Spirit, teaches, guides, equips, and empowers the believers (cf. John 14:16–18, 26; 15:26; 16:7–15).

Notice that the triune God is concerned and engaged in the ministry of encouragement. While the Holy Spirit works as a Comforter (parakletos) dwelling within us, the Lord Jesus works as a ‘Comforter’ (parakletos)

from up above, 1 John 2:1.

What a wonderful divine provision for the well-being of God’s people! No wonder Apostle Paul writes with a grateful heart, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation...” (2Cori. 1:3, 4a).

As the ‘God of all comfort’, our Lord comforts and encourages us in all our situations, using all means (2Thess. 2:16).

So beloved, even if there is no one to stand with you as you face manifold hardships, take heart, the Lord takes note of it.

4 The need and the experience of believers

Consider the condition of people around us. Everyone is facing disturbing and painful experiences in one way or another. There is so much pressure, temptation, and disappointment. Even though most people prefer to stay silent, there are many who long for a word or even a gesture from their fellow brethren that can give them strength and relief.

If Apostle Paul who comforted others, even as a father and mother (1Thess.

2:7, 11 cf. 2Cor 1:6), cherished the encouragement he received from others, how much more a common man would long for the same! (2Cori. 7:6; Philem. v7, 20).

In his last epistle, Paul writes about those who refreshed his heart as well as those who harmed. Yet, there also he testifies, “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me” (cf. 2Timo. 1:15–18; 4:10–17).

THE METHOD

How does the Lord comfort His people today? What are the different ways God uses to encourage His people? Let us consider a few without much explanation.

a. By His presence (Isa. 30:21)

As Paul had experienced, even so in our darkest circumstances, the Lord graciously comes close to us to reassure us (2Tim. 4:17 cf. Acts 18:9; 23:11; 27:23, 24).

b. By His Word (1Thess. 4:18; 1Cor 14:3, 31)

As we read, hear, and meditate upon the scripture, the Spirit of God applies those divine truths to our current needs.

c. By His people (2Cor 7:6; 2Tim 1: 15–18)

Never underestimate the value of fellowship. It is in association with God's people that we get edified and encouraged toward leading a fruitful life (Heb. 10:24; Colo. 3:16). Even the very presence of a child of God can strengthen a brother in his weakness (2Cor. 7:6).

The story of Job's friends teaches us that more than our words even our silent support eases the pain of a distressed individual (Job 2:11–13; 13:13–15).

THE CHALLENGE

Often we don't care much about the ministry of encouragement. Think of the role of Barnabas in shaping the ministry of Apostle Paul. Most of the achievers thankfully remember that someone influenced them for the better. It may be just a word or a simple deed, but it ignited a spark in them that did wonders, of course with the enabling grace of God.

Dr. Warren W. Wiesrbe says it was because of the encouragement of the then head of the Victor Books that he began to write the well-known expository commentary, "Be" series.

Our words are powerful! It can build up or pull down a life; it can give life and energy to others or weaken and destroy them (cf. Prov. 10: 11, 19–21). Let us take every effort to comfort, encourage, and edify one another, using our words and deeds, however simple they may be.

Make sure no one is destabilized or devastated because of our own actions or even inaction! Let's comfort and encourage each other.

GOD OF ALL COMFORT

Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad

In the Old Testament God was not ashamed to be called with attaching names of patriarchs such as God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Elijah, etc., but in the New Testament God revealed Himself by attaching His nature.

There are **7 wonderful attributes** such as **God of glory** (Acts 7:2), **God of Patience** (Rom 15:5), **God of Peace** (Rom. 15:33), **God of Hope** (Rom. 15:13), **God of Love** (2 Cor. 13:11), **God of all Grace** (1 Peter 5:10) and also **God of All Comfort** (2 Cor. 1:3).

There are seven ways by which a believer can be comforted.

1. The Source of all comfort, God the Father – 2 Cor 1:3
2. Christ, the Son of God, now the Man in Glory at the side of the Father is our Comforter – 2 Cor. 1:5
3. Spirit of God, dwelling in us as Comforter - John 16:7; Acts 9:31
4. Comfort through Scriptures & Sermons – Acts 15:31; Romans 15:4
5. Comfort through different Situations – 2 Cor. 1:6-11
6. Promises of His Second coming (rapture) comfort believers – 1 Thess. 4:13-18
7. Comfort by Saints & Servants – Col. 4:11; Philemon v.7; 2 Cor. 7:6,7

Yes, God is the source of all comfort, through His saints and servants' comfort believers.

“*Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.*”

- William Arthur Ward

BE A BARNABAS!!

Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad

There are many such persons who comforted and encouraged other believers in the Scriptures. But we will look at a person whose name means ‘son of consolation’. He is Barnabas. In the early church, we read “Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the Apostles (which translated means Son of encouragement) and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostle’s feet (Acts 4:36-37).

“Son of encouragement” which is also translated as “Son of consolation” is an apt description for this brother in the Lord. In Acts, we are told about this man in seven chapters, in all of them he is either comforting or encouraging.

1. Acts 4:36-37 – As a **Believer of Lord Jesus** He is comforting the poor and needy by giving generously.
2. Acts 9:26-29 - As a **Disciple**, he encouraged a new disciple Saul, and connected him to the Apostles.
3. Acts 11:22-26 – As a **Servant of the Lord**, he ministered in a newly established assembly at Antioch (Because of his unique character, Apostles sent him to a just-born assembly to encourage/console)
4. Acts 12:25 – As a **Faithful steward**, he along with Paul faithfully handed over collected funds to the cause of poor and needy saints in Jerusalem. What a ministry!
5. Acts 13:46-52 - As a **Missionary**, he consoled new souls in new places
6. Acts 14:20 – As a **Co-labourer**, when Paul was stoned in Lystra, Barnabas did not leave his fellow worker, he stayed and journeyed with him despite challenges
7. Acts 15:27-39 – As a **Mentor**, he consoled and molded the backslider John Mark (2 Timothy 4:11).

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. 2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

By Lloyd Newell

One of the best-loved hymns of the faith, “It Is Well with My Soul,” was written by Horatio Spafford. He was a successful attorney and real estate investor who lost a fortune in the great Chicago fire of 1871. Around the same time, his beloved four-year-old son died of scarlet fever.

Thinking a vacation would do his family some good, he sent his wife and four daughters on a ship to England, planning to join them after he finished some pressing business at home.

However, while crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship was involved in a terrible collision and sunk. More than 200 people lost their lives, including all four of Horatio Spafford’s precious daughters. His wife, Anna, survived the tragedy. Upon arriving in England, she sent a telegram to her husband that began: “Saved alone. What shall I do?”



Horatio immediately set sail for England. At one point during his voyage, the captain of the ship, aware of the tragedy that had struck the Spafford family, summoned Horatio to tell him that they were now passing over the spot where the shipwreck had occurred.

As Horatio thought about his daughters, words of comfort and hope filled his heart and mind. He wrote them down, and they have since become a well-loved hymn:

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot,
Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul!*

CRYING WITH THOSE WHO CRY

Source: The Story of Jesus

A little girl came home from a neighbour's house where her little friend had died. "Why did you go?" questioned her father. "To comfort her mother," said the child. "What could you do to comfort her?" asked the father again. She said, "I climbed into her lap and cried with her."

STUDY

Notes on Tabernacle – 23: THE GOLDEN ALTAR



By Charles E. Wigg, TASMANIA

This stood in the very centre of the Holy Place, immediately before the veil. It was on this altar that incense was burned as a sweet savour to God, each morning when Aaron dressed the lamps, and each evening, at 3 PM, "the hour of incense".

The Measurement

The first thing that we notice about the golden altar is, that compared with the brazen altar, it is quite small, it is only one cubit square, (i.e., a half metre), and two cubits tall. The emphasis then is different with the golden altar; it is not the scope, or magnitude of Christ's sacrifice that is emphasised, but the intrinsic worth of His person.

The Material

Like the Ark, it was made of acacia wood, reminding us once more of the incorruptible manhood of Him who is our intercessor.

Hebrews makes much comment on this, the preparation for His intercessory service, through the things that He suffered here. He learned obedience, He suffered being tempted, and He was tempted in all things like as we are, but yet was without sin. He was, and still is, man as God intended man to be.

But it was overlaid with pure gold, reminding us once more that though He was truly man, yet He was just as truly God. It was pure gold; there was no mixture, no alloy of other metals. Pure gold is not available today; each biscuit or ingot is stamped “99% pure”, but not so with our Altar.

The Message

Paul tells us that “All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Him, and that it pleased the Father that all the “fullness” should dwell in Him, Col. 2:9 and 1:19.

Not only is He our intercessor, but it is through Him that we can draw near to God, and it is by Him, that we can offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, Heb. 7:25 and 13:15.

Gospel:

COMFORT IN HOPELESSNESS

By Aby Kuruvilla Mumbai

There are situations in our lives where our hope of a recovery is tested, such as situations of sickness, financial and job loss, rebellious children, and many more such. However, nothing challenges our hope as death does.

Death is inevitable. If we can somehow find hope amidst death, then we can be comforted even amidst death. And if this hope is truly one that carries us beyond death, then we ourselves can face death without fear.

There are four instances we can consider from the Bible, where amidst the gloom of death, those sorrowing found comfort.

- The death of Sarah – comfort in God’s providence
- The death of Joseph – comfort in God’s promises
- The death of Lazarus – comfort in God’s power
- The death of Christ – comfort in God’s presence



1. The death of Sarah (Gen. 23; 24:67)

Isaac lost his mother Sarah. Being the beloved of his parents, he felt a loss that couldn't be replaced. However, in the series of events that would follow after her death, we see God at work in bringing a wife in Rebekah for Isaac. In this was Isaac comforted after his mother's death.

It seems that this 40-year-old man, Isaac, was in a state of grief after his mother's death. With the coming of Rebekah, her

love filled up the void of his mother's love.

When God was at work, Isaac was in prayer. His hope was in God, knowing that He would provide for him. He was, therefore, comforted in seeing God's hand of providence. As the One who created us, the Lord knows exactly what we need.

2. The death of Joseph (Gen. 50:24-26; Ex. 13:19; Josh 24:32)

Joseph, the second in command in Egypt, had a respectable arrangement made at his death. He was embalmed and put in an Egyptian coffin. What to an Egyptian was his eternal abode was to Joseph a temporal one. He believed the word which the LORD had spoken concerning his people, the Israelites, that they would dwell in the land of Canaan, and not Egypt. He, therefore, gave a command concerning his bones that they must be carried along to the land of promise.

This eventually happened 400 years later. As the Israelites left Egypt, they took his bones (and probably left the coffin behind). The death of Joseph teaches us that God's word is faithful; His promises sure. If ever the Israelites needed comfort in their 400 years of rigor and toil in the land of Egypt, they needed to hope in the word of the Lord in the bones of Joseph.

3. The death of Lazarus (John 11)

During the times of Jesus Christ, Lazarus, a young man, fell sick and died. A young life came abruptly to an end. However, Jesus said that this was for the glory of God. Four days later, when the body would've started corrupting, Lord Jesus came, and with a loud voice raised him from the dead. The people expected the Miracle Worker to have come earlier and healed him when he was sick; but, they

never thought that he would raise him from the dead!

From a hopeless situation and insurmountable grief, came a comfort beyond what words can express. This we can experience only when we know the power of God.

4. The death of Christ (John 20.1-18)

It may be absurd to think that He, who gave life to the dead, died Himself; however, Christ's coming into the world was to die for the sins of mankind. But this, his disciples did not understand.

One such was a woman, Mary Magdalene, whose life came to a standstill with the death of Christ. On the third day, she came to the tomb to embalm his body. But to her shock, the body was missing from the tomb. She was perplexed and distressed, not knowing what to do.

As she wept, she heard a voice so familiar, so reassuring, and so comforting. Behind her stood Jesus – not as a spirit, or in

a vision, but in His body. He had risen from the dead! In a moment, her grief was all forgotten. Joy unbounded filled her heart. It was the dear presence of the Lord that comforted her heart.

The tomb points to the inevitability of death. For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin - and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, (Rom. 5:12).

However, Christ is apart from us in that he is sinless; His life was not taken away, but having the power to lay it down and take it up again, he did so, (John 10.18).

The comfort at the tomb of Christ is for the entire world to enjoy:

- ◀ Christ is the provision of God for the problem of sin - for His death satisfies God's demand for the punishment of sin, (Rom 3: 25–5:9).
- ◀ He is the promise of God for the redemption of mankind - for He is the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, (1 Pet 1:10 - 12).
- ◀ He is the power of God unto salvation - for on the cross He met the lofty standards of God, and accomplished that which no one else could do, (1 Cor. 1:18).
- ◀ The risen presence of Christ tells us that death no longer needs be feared - for He, having gained victory over death, will also raise up those who believe in Him unto eternal life to be with him in his presence eternally, (1 Thess. 4:13 -18).

In Christ alone, there is comfort in the gloom of death, for He gives us hope beyond death.

Exhortation: HOLY SPIRIT: ANOTHER COMFORTER

By Bro. James Raghu, Surat

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth...” (John 14:16,17 KJV)

In our Lord’s Upper Room discourse, it is well evident that all the future hopes of the disciples were crashed combined with their uncertainty of the Master as they sensed His last moments. From the opening words of this chapter through the next two chapters, the monologue runs through a single theme – comfort and hope for the distressed disciples.

It is well befitting here then, that the Lord assures His comfort to them through none less than His equivalent personality – the Holy Spirit, from the God of all comfort, Who will come and abide with them forever. Let us look into some of the unique characteristics of this Comforter from different passages:

1. He Abides Forever

This Comforter and His comfort is here to stay; to dwell with us and be in us (Jn. 14:16). The Greek word used here is ‘parakletos’, which literally means, one who is called to our side. The Holy Spirit is sent immediately by God to the believer when they are saved, to be with them, to console, comfort, reassure, guide, and help in times of their distress and need.

David strongly felt the importance of this Spirit and His presence (Ps. 51:11; 139:7). Unlike all other comforters of this world, He will never leave us, especially in our times of difficulty or sorrow. It is important to note here that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a New Testament believer is a permanent one (Eph. 1:13), unlike the filling of Him which is required frequently (Acts 4:31; Eph. 5:18).

Since He is also the Spirit of truth, there are no false hopes or interim comforts, as He comforts us in the truth of the infallible Word of God.



Another fact to note is that the context of this promise is on the ‘future’ of the disciples, once the Lord has been crucified, or once He would not be with them. Here lies the very essence of this Comforter, in that since He is Eternal God, and since He abides in us forever, His indwelling in us is itself an assurance of our salvation eternally.

2. A Divine Teacher

The Comforter will teach all things and bring to our remembrance all things said by the Lord (Jn. 14:26). It is human nature to forget, and more to err. Often, we have experienced this power of the Spirit in recollection of His comforting words in times of need, sometimes for our own selves and sometimes to comfort others too.

The Holy Spirit is in us also to teach us. To have the knowledge regarding God and His Son crucified is all that Paul desired from Corinthians; and he claims that this is possible only through the demonstration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:2-4).

The revelation of God in the Old Testament was partially through the prophets and then in the New Testament fully through the Son, who is the express image of God's glory. Furthermore, now in the believers, the Holy Spirit performs a continuous mission of teaching and guiding us - even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

He also guides us into all the truth (Jn. 16:13), as He is the Spirit of truth Himself. So, here we have a Divine Teacher and a Truthful Guide at the disposal of a believer, to warn and to exhort and even to remind compassionately of his forgetfulness!

3. His Strengthening Power

We have in the Holy Spirit not just a Comforter, but a powerful Comforter. There is strength in His comfort, (1 Sam. 30:6).

This power is seen in different ways, like overcoming the flesh, convicting a sinner to truth, strengthening the church in trials (Acts 4:31), witnessing for the Lord, and strengthening the apostles during missionary journeys (Acts 13:9; 18:9-10).

However, an extraordinary performance of this power is manifested in comforting a believer in threefold ways in Romans 8:

(a) Power of resurrection

Apart from the undoubted truth that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13; 4:30) and that He has been given to us as an earnest deposit (2 Cor. 1:22), it is so comforting to know that it is the same Spirit dwelling in us who raised Jesus from the dead and that God will give life to our mortal bodies through this powerful Spirit (v. 11; Eph 1:20; 2:5)!

(b) Grants us boldness to call God, Abba

The Spirit of adoption continuously witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God, despite all our infirmities and weaknesses. He thus gives us the confidence to call God, Abba, which in its original sense has a deeper personal connection than daddy or papa. (v.15)

(c) Helps in our weaknesses

He makes intercessions for us, with unutterable groanings, so that our weak prayers are reinforced with full power to reach the ears of the Father because He makes intercession according to the will of God (v. 26-28).

How blessed we are to have such a Comforter to stay with us forever, teach us, guide us, and lead us into truth!

He will never lie, but empower us in times of need, constantly assuring us that we are His dear children, while bearing and groaning with our weaknesses, yet reaffirming that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!

“God does not comfort us to make comfortable, but to make us comforters.”

- J.H. Jowel

MEDITATION

THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT!

By Tom Johns, Dallas, USA

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

There is a perennial question with most people – why do bad things happen to good people? A more poignant question would be ‘why do bad things happen to God’s people?’

If we evaluate the scriptures, we see that God in His sovereign will allows bad things to happen to His people. All of us have experienced such things to some level or other at different times. Why does He permit such disastrous things to happen in a believer’s life?

If God allows anything in His children's lives, it must be good for us; yet, often they are very painful and sometimes confusing and very stressful. After all, shouldn't God's children experience relatively worry-free lives even on this earth?



These are some of the nagging questions we routinely face. We may never get fully satisfactory answers to settle our curious minds, but we do have valuable pointers for these in the scriptures.

God allows anything in His children's lives for the following reasons:

1. To test the validity of our faith (to see if our faith is indeed genuine) like in the case of Job.
2. To wean us from our dependence on worldly possessions and earthly pleasures.
3. To help us to have a longing for heaven and what we have in store for us in the heavenlies.
4. To identify what we truly love and to check where our priorities are – do they lead to our progressive sanctification as God desires?
5. To teach us obedience and to enable us undergo chastening for conforming us to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ and ultimately share in His holiness and righteousness – Heb. 12:10.
6. To allow us to taste and see that the Lord is good.
7. To all us to help others in trouble.

Let us consider the last two points more closely as they deal with the quoted scriptures and the following passage.

They allow us to taste and see that the Lord is good.

God allows trials in our lives so that He can reveal His compassion and mercy to us. God wants us to know His nature in a more intimate way. He is a God of compassion, mercy, grace, and pity. How else could He reveal these attributes to us at an individual level if we never lacked those?

The passage tells us that He is the 'Father

of mercies.' And He seeks the opportunity to demonstrate that very same quality to His children. Allowing trials in our lives is the way to accomplish this.

If there is no calamity, there is no need for comfort; if there is no loss, no need of loving kindness; if there is no sickness, no healing to be experienced.

The greatest amount of earthly troubles has always proved to bring out the purest form of intimacy with God. Such intimacy can only be experienced through greater trials.

Only if we fell and then were held miraculously by the unseen hands of God, we can truly testify and say, “The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

They allow us to help others in trouble.

Unless we had been to the shadow of death, how else can we empathize with others who are undergoing the same sort of trials?

The Lord Jesus Christ experienced all such trials while he was on this earth and ultimately suffered the death on the cross. No one who reads this had gone to that extent of suffering.

But each of us may have gone through extreme trials so that we can minister to others who are going through the fire of testing. There is nothing more reassuring than that we can tell others that ‘I had been there, and I have experienced God’s deliverance.’

In verse 4 we read, “who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

What the Lord is doing is that He is allowing

Why does God allow bad things happen to God’s children?

So that, we can truly experience His promise of Him being the God of all mercies and comfort. May God grant us yet another opportunity to experience that as we finish our race on this earth.

trials in our life and pouring comfort on top of those trials to ‘strengthen’ us to do the very same for others.

Jesus said to Peter in Luke 22:31-32 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

Here we see the explicit purpose of Peter’s trials, “to strengthen your brothers.”

Later Peter wrote to the suffering saints, “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the]proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:6-7.

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