

# Comfort in the Lord

By David Phillips

## Introduction

1. Living in the world is a very challenging and difficult prospect at times.
  - a. As we noted in this morning's sermon, there can be many trials and tribulations that we have to go through.
  - b. God does not hide the fact that many bad things will happen to us simply because we are Christians (John 15:18-19; 2 Tim. 3:12).
2. But He does give us the comfort and encouragement we need to endure this life and make it to the next where He will be with Him in eternal peace (Rom. 15:4-5).
3. He does not remove the challenges, but He gives us what we need to overcome them.
4. But many Christians are hard-pressed to seek such comfort from God.
  - a. We know that He is our heavenly Father, but we do not know how to approach Him as a Father.
  - b. We know that He is our comfort, we but do not know how to seek comfort from Him.
5. In this lesson we are going to consider how we can find comfort in a God which we can neither see nor touch.

## Discussion

### I. Drawing Near to God.

- A. We do not find comfort in just any person.
  1. A child who is scared will not feel secure in the arms of just any adult.
  2. In fact, if they do not know the person, it will actually increase their fear.
  3. But they can be comforted and given a sense of peace with their parents draw them in close because they are familiar with their parents; they have developed a sense of closeness with them from the time they were born.
- B. Likewise, we cannot find comfort in God if we do not draw near to Him.
  1. "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you*" (James 4:8).
  2. From the time a person is baptized he is like a child growing up under the care of his heavenly Father.
  3. But if we do not draw near to Him as His children, if we do not make Him familiar to us through continual study, reflection and prayer, then He will be nothing more to us than a stranger, a figure in the distance.
  4. If we do not draw near to Him then He will be a person that we speak of, but do not truly know.
- C. How do we draw near to a God that we can neither feel nor hear?
  1. Obviously we cannot wrap our arms around Him, but we do not have to.
  2. As Paul wrote, "*For we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Cor. 5:7).
  3. Where children draw near to their parents in the physical security of their arms, we draw near to God in spiritual security.
  4. We draw near to Him by putting our sins away from us.

- a. Sin separates us from God.
  - b. The more we give it up and add to our lives thing of the spirit the closer we are able to grow toward God.
  5. We become more familiar with Him as our Father by learning all about Him, His nature, His character, and His desires through reading His word (John 6:45).
  6. As every strong relation has two-way communication, so does our relationship with God. Therefore we also draw near to Him in prayer.
    - a. Through prayer we make known to Him the deepest things of our hearts.
    - b. We lay upon Him our fears, our desires, our hopes, and struggles and out thanks and praise of Him.
  7. Through such intimate exchange between Father and child we are able to draw closer to God than any other person on this earth.
- D. When we have this relationship with our heavenly father, we are able to find great comfort in Him.
1. Remembering that this relationship takes work.
  2. It may not be so right away, but the more we work at it and draw ourselves closer to Him, the closer He will draw to us.
  3. Such was the relationship between the Psalmist and God (Ps. 23).
  4. Ps. 119:49-56: See the interaction between the man and his God.

## II. How God Comforts Us.

- A. Comfort in knowledge and enlightenment.
1. Knowledge to overcome sin (1 Cor. 10:13).
    - a. It is refreshing to know that whatever sins we are dealing with are common to man. Just as other have overcome, so can we.
    - b. We can take great comfort in knowing that God's shows us the way of escape, we have but to look for it and take it.
  2. Enlightenment concerning the true nature of sin and the reality of the spiritual realm (1 John 5:20).
  3. Knowing the superiority of spiritual things and the temporal nature of physical things, we are able to put away from us the works of the flesh which will be destroyed and instead walk in the spirit.
- B. Comfort in forgiveness:
1. Along with showing us that we can overcome, God provides the means to help us overcome.
  2. Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-3).
  3. The Gospel is God's power unto salvation, and it endures forever (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:25).
  4. Therefore we can rest assured that if we do sin, we can have forgiveness through Christ if we repent (1 John 1:9).
- C. Comfort in Hope: There is comfort in knowing of the good things to come.
1. When temptation seems strong and trials hard, there is comfort in knowing that they will not last long.
  2. We willingly endure pain and suffering for physical benefits (strait teeth, earrings, a paycheck, a clean home, etc.), but Paul gives us comfort by showing us the superiority of spiritual things.

3. Rom. 8:18: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
  - a. Some Christians might be tempted to say, “Well, I hope heaven is worth everything we have to go through.”
  - b. Paul here shows us that it is worth it and that it is worth so much more that it cannot even be compared.
4. 2 Cor. 4:16-18: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”
  - a. In light of eternity, suffering is such a small fraction of our existence that even if we were made to suffer our whole physical lives, it would not even fill up a dot in our life’s span.
  - b. Eternity and the good pleasures that come with it will make our suffering look like nothing.
  - c. The joy and happiness of heaven will make our most painful memories seem non-existent (Rev. 21:4).
  - d. Instead of regretting that we became Christians, our reward in heaven will make us realize that we made the best decision that we ever could have made in life.
5. 1 Thess. 4:13-18: “Comfort one another with these words.”

D. Comfort in our brethren.

1. Sometimes Christians have to face hardship alone.
2. Nevertheless, God has provided a “support team” if you will, within His church.
3. When we are struggling our brethren are able to give us strength and encouragement to go on
  - a. Rom. 12:9-16: For encouragement and physical needs.
  - b. 1 Cor. 12:20-25: For spiritual strength.

**Conclusion**

1. The truth is God comforts us in every way possible.
2. The only thing that can hinder us from receiving comfort from the Lord is us:
  - a. If we choose to continue in sin and therefore be separate from our God.
  - b. If we choose to keep ourselves at a distance from our brethren.
3. If you are in need of comfort and encouragement you must take the first step to draw near to God and His people. Will you come?

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