

The God of All Comfort

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** You have probably heard the troubles of this life referred to as this “vale of tears.”
 - A. The phrase “vale of tears” appears in several old hymns.
 - B. The word is “vale” and not “veil.”
 - C. The word “vale” means “valley”; so, in this life we go through the “valley of tears.”
2. We’ve all experienced our difficult times in life, so more than others, but if you’ve been around for a few years you can identify with the “vale of tears.” For example:
 - A. Financial setbacks.
 - B. Unfair treatment (e.g., by teachers at school, boss at work, govt. officials).
 - C. Injury, disease, sickness (e.g., cancer, diabetes, car accident).
 - D. Death of a loved one.
3. Sometimes the troubles and tears come so hard it is difficult to imagine having to face another day of life, yea, “how can I make it through the night!”
4. **3** It is especially at such times when we need comfort, and fortunately as Christians we serve “*the Father of mercies and God of all comfort*”
 - A. ****** Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*”
 - B. ****** The Greek word for “comfort” (*parklesis*) is a compound word: *kaleo* “to call” and *para* “beside”; so when put together, “comfort” means “to call someone to your side for the purpose of rendering aid during times of distress.”
 - C. “Comfort” does not mean deliverance from pain and misery.
 - D. Rather, it refers to the strength and courage one can bring us by coming beside us and lending the aid we need to endure and overcome trials and tribulations.
 - E. Comfort is a welcomed friend and companion to those who are suffering.
5. **4** Let’s consider some lessons we need to learn about **The God of All Comfort**.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **5** God is the source of comfort:
 - A. Strength and comfort can come through different channels (God’s Word, prayer, godly fellow Christians, godly spouse/relatives), but all channels ultimately flow from Him; because...
 - (I) Our God is a merciful God:

Psa. 86:5: “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.”

Dan. 9:9: “To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.”

Mic. 7:18-19: “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

- (2) God cares about His creation (we are at the pinnacle!) and is moved with pity for us.

Psa. 86:15: “But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”

Psa. 145:8-9: “The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. 9 The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

Matt. 9:36: “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”

- B. ****** As such, He is ready, willing and able to impart His strength to those who call upon Him; He provides various channels of comfort:

- (1) Prayer: We can find strength and peace through prayer (**Phil. 4:6-7:** “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”).

- (2) God’s Word: Comfort in God’s promises are found in His Word:

Heb. 13:5-6: “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ 6 So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”

Rom. 8:37-39: “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 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.”

- (3) Worship: Assembling for worship gives comfort and encouragement:

Psa. 84:10-12: “For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!”

- (4) Fellow Christians: We are encouraged by the love and care shown to us by others:

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

Heb. 10:23-25: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

2. **6** Godly people will need comfort:

- A. There are two misconception many have:

- (1) That some of us never experience problems.
(2) That if we serve God faithfully, and if our faith is strong enough, then we will never have any problems. Neither is true!

Job 14:1: “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.”

Psa. 34:19: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

B. ** Many faithful people suffered a great deal:

(1) Job: 7 dead sons, 3 dead daughters; total loss of wealth/sources of income, and:

Job 2:7-9: “So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. 9 Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!’

Job 13:23-24: “How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin. 24 Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy?”

Jas. 5:11: “Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”

(2) Daniel and his three friends:

(a) Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-Nego were punished for not worshiping the golden image (i.e., fiery furnace; **Dan. 3:16-18:** “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.’”).

(b) Daniel was punished for praying to Jehovah: Dan. 6

(3) Paul: was a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, serving in the capacity of an apostle, yet he suffered terribly for the cause of Christ (**2 Cor. 1:8-9:** “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”; 4:8-10, 11:23-28).

(a) Paul didn’t blame God for his tribulations, nor abandon God because of them.

(b) Instead, he saw that God was the source of comfort during these tribulations:

2 Cor. 1:3-4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation...”

(4) Jesus:

Isa. 53:3-4: “He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.”

C. ** What did these heroes of faith have in common regarding their need for comfort?

Psa. 37:39-40: “But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble. 40 And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.”

1 Pet. 2:23: “...when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously...”

D. Trouble is inevitable for all of us! So, like all of them, when trouble knocks at our door we must move toward God, not away from Him! **Psa. 34:19:** “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”

3. **7** God comforts us in all our tribulation:

A. Most of us adults have known Christians who have left the Lord and His church during times of trouble.

B. When questioned about their absence, they replied, “I am just going through a tough time right now. When things get better I will be back at church.”

(1) How sad. Why do some Christians believe they must look to someone other than God for their help?

(2) Some believe God is punishing them or deserted them (No! I Cor. 10:13; Jas. 1:13).

(3) Some look to alcohol/drugs to help them through tough times (impossible! only makes things worse!).

(4) Some look to illicit relationships when loneliness overtakes them (only makes things worse!).

C. There is no problem too big for God.

(1) Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

(2) If one is serving God faithfully, there will never come a time in his life when God will abandon him (Heb. 13:5)

(3) God’s comfort is available and sufficient for any problem we will face:

Eph. 3:20: “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” **What power works in us?**

(a) The power that spoke the universe into existence from nothing! Heb. 11:3

(b) The power that raised Jesus from the dead and sent Him to heaven:

Eph. 1:19-21: “and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,”

(c) What are my problems by comparison? **Psa. 18:1-6:**

“I will love You, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;

My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;

My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised;

So shall I be saved from my enemies.

4 The pangs of death surrounded me,

And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;

The snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,

And cried out to my God;

He heard my voice from His temple,

And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.”

4. **8** *Comfort is to be shared:*

A. God allows suffering in the lives of His children:

(1) *It strengthens our faith:*

1 Pet. 1:6-7: “*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*”

(2) *It strengthens our hope:*

Rom. 5:3-5: “...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts...”

(3) *It equips us to comfort others:*

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

B. As recipients of God’s mercy and comfort, we are obligated to extend the same blessings to others, and thus make ourselves a channel through which God’s comfort can flow to others.

(1) Let us look for such opportunities!

1 Thess. 5:11: “*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*”

(2) For one to receive God’s strength and comfort in their hour of need, but not share it with others, is a sign of unkindness and ingratitude.

(3) Such a person should no longer expect to receive God’s comfort (Parable of the unforgiving servant: ~615 year’s wages vs. ~4 ½ month’s wages: **Matt. 18:32-34:** “*Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.*”).

III. CONCLUSION: **9**

1. Do you desire comfort from the burden of the guilt of sin?
2. Only God can provide comfort from sin, because only God can provide forgiveness.
3. When one repents of his sin (Acts 2:38), confesses his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and is baptized, his sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).
4. His cleansing provides true peace and comfort (Phil. 4:7).
5. Don’t you want that comfort?
6. If you’ve experienced this comfort, be sure to share it with others!

Adapted from an article (*Comfort*) by Heath Rogers.