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# The Source of All Comfort

## Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

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**HAVE** you ever wondered as to the reason for so many being unable to face the difficulties of life independent of crutches, such as pills, drink and drugs? The reason is their lack of answers to life's questions, perplexities and frustrations. By only a casual glimpse, we conclude that few people possess genuine comfort. Few assume their God-given responsibility to communicate the same to others.

The disciples demonstrated their frustration at the death, burial and resurrection of their Savior. One denied Him three times; one betrayed Him; the others hid for fear of the Jews. Why? They did not hear and believe Christ's own predictions of these events. They did not know Truth, nor did they believe it! The solution? They were taken back to the Scriptures by the One who arose: "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).

"He is not here, but is risen! Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words" (Luke 24:6-8). When the disciples heard from the lips of Mary Magdalene the words of a living Christ, their reaction is declared to us in the Scriptures: "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke 24:11).

Hear Christ's rebuke to the men he was walking with on the way to Emmaus: "Then he said unto them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

The lack of comprehension of Truth is the cause of all our fear, frustration and worry. The Scriptures reveal God's glorious provision, generating comfort and confidence. We must get back to the Bible for Divine assistance. This was Christ's course of action. "And they said one to another, Did not our heart bum within us, while he talked with us along the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:32, 45).

### Definition

The word "COMFORT" is used 100 times in the Bible. It comes from an old English word with the root meaning "to strengthen." Comfort is far more than mere sympathetic understanding. Pity is not a synonym of comfort. We do not get down alongside of the person in distress and assure them of our knowledge of what they are going through. Comfort is uplifting and strengthening. It involves the communication of invigoration. Consolation, exhortation, invitation, and entreaty are involved. "But Jesus turned about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee well. And the woman was made well from that hour" (Matthew 9:22).

Consolation indicates more tenderness and is usually connected with sorrow. "And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother" (John 11:19).

"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship" (Acts 27:22).

Since all comfort comes from Him, we must depend entirely upon God to strengthen others to whom we minister. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:3,4). The next verse indicates that consolation is communicated to us through the merit and work of Christ. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (II Corinthians 1:5). "Nevertheless God, who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (II Corinthians 7:6).

God is the Author of comfort and consolation. He is the One who has arranged for its being placed within our heart and mind. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who 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" (II Thessalonians 1: 16, 17).

"I, even I, am he who comforteth you. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made like grass" (Isaiah 51:12). The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound: To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn" (Isaiah 6 1:1, 2). God provided and sent the Great Comforter, the Holy Spirit. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever; I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you" (John 14:16, 18).

### Jesus Christ

Christ communicates genuine comfort. His strength is placed within us to accomplish His Father's plan and purpose. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29).

### The Scriptures

"For whatever things were written in earlier times were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4). The Bible reveals God's promises. They mean little unless we comprehend the revelation of the greatness of God. Where do I find faith to believe the revelation of God's unlimited power? It is in the BOOK. "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The Strength of comfort will never be our portion as long as we allow our Bible to sit on the shelf unread and unstudied. If we are not under the ministry of a teaching pastor, we will not be a recipient of the Strength of comfort.

The experiences of biblical characters demonstrate the path of success and failure. No reason exists for us to make the same mistakes. We will forfeit the same provisions of God through unbelief and disobedience (inseparable). "I remembered thine ordinances of old, O Lord, and have comforted myself. My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy word. Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?" (Psalm 119:52, 81, 82)

### Other Saints

The responsibility to strengthen one another as Christians is a wonderful opportunity of service for the Lord Who desires all of His children to possess such. We are interested in the welfare of one another. We joyfully assume the God-given responsibility of "bearing one another's burdens." "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy

shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state” (Philippians 2:19). We can only communicate the strength and encouragement we know in personal experiential reality.

Paul recognized strength that came to him from his brethren. “Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts” (Ephesians 6:22). And Jesus, who is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, who have been a comfort unto me” (Colossians 4:11). “Nevertheless God, who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus. And not by his coming only, but by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us your eamest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me, so that I rejoiced the more” (II Corinthians 7:6, 7). When is the last time you communicated such to your pastor or the person declaring God’s riches to you? Self-centeredness robs us of the ministry of comfort to others.

The Bible informs us of Truth that produces comfort. Do you remember what it is? Read it carefully and note the last verse. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we who are alive and remain shall caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS” (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Our message of comfort is not sympathy and pity for people in distress. We have hope to communicate. Let’s share the promises of God (in the Bible) for a bright and brilliant future as sons of God. Our responsibility for each other is taught in the Bible. “Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (I Thessalonians 5:11, 14).

“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (I Corinthians 14:3). “If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:1-4). “Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith” (I Thessalonians 3:7).

### **Death**

How can death be classified as a source of comfort? It is simply a means of departure from this earth to a more glorious position and fellowship. “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore, we labor that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him” (II Corinthians 5:1, 8, 9).

The Apostle Paul, under the pen of Divine inspiration, classified death as gain and far better than living. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For lam in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better”

(Philippians 1:21, 23). His reason for remaining on this earth was for the benefit of others. I wonder, have we caught such a vision from God? “Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith” (Philippians 1:24,25).

Our greatest motivation for the possession of comfort should not be for personal benefit. We have a ministry, given to us by God, to strengthen others in the Lord. Let’s get busy doing it and God will care for our own needs as a means to that end. “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God” (II Corinthians 1:4).

### **Family Possession**

Comfort is available only to those who are in God’s family. Such relationship has been provided for us by God in and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to be received into our heart and life. This is the consequence of believing God’s promises. Here is one of them: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). One more – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

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**The Hour of Grace & Power**  
**PO Box 5900**  
**Titusville, FL 32783-5900**  
[www.thehourofgraceandpower.org](http://www.thehourofgraceandpower.org)