

Comfort in Times of Trouble

Mike Connell

 Sermon Audio Transcripts

Smashwords Edition

Copyright 2012 Mike Connell Ministries

<http://mikeconnellministries.com>

[Sermons](#) | [Collections](#) | [中国](#)

[YouTube](#) | [Vimeo](#) | [Podcast](#)

[eBooks](#) | [Paperbacks](#)

[Transcripts](#) | [成绩单](#)

[Facebook](#) | [Share](#)

[Donations](#)

Comfort in Times of Trouble

Everyone experiences times of pressure, difficult, distress. When we're in pain, our thinking is affected, we tend to lose perspective, then isolate, & turn to false comforts. The enemy of our soul likes to torment us, but God is a God of Comfort. We can position ourselves to experience great comfort in times of distress. Learn how to experience the comfort of God, & the reality of His presence.

[The Comfort of the Scriptures \(1 of 3\)](#) Everyone experiences, at some point in our life, times of pressure, difficult, distress. How can we find solutions that work for us in these times? How can we position ourselves to experience great comfort in times of distress. When we're in pain, our thinking is affected, and we tend to lose perspective. We then easily isolate, and turn to false comforts. The enemy of our soul likes to torment us, but God is a God of Comfort. Learn how to experience the comfort of God, the reality of His presence, and the comfort of Scriptures.

[Key Ingredients of Comfort \(2 of 3\)](#) Can you ever recall as a child being comforted during a time of emotional distress, when someone actually connected with you, and they listened for you, and they understood your pain, and they gave you reassurance afterwards, so you felt better? Sadly, many of us were not comforted, but developed ungodly reactions. Discover what comfort is NOT, and what really does help!

[Are You a Comforter \(3 of 3\)](#) Barnabus - The Son of Comfort - is a tremendous role model of a Comforter/Encourager. Study the key qualities in his life that gave him this ministry. All of us can be encourager's and builders of people. See what comfort looks like in the life of this great Apostle.

Audio

[Audio: The Comfort of the Scriptures \(1 of 3\).mp3](#)
[Audio: Key Ingredients of Comfort \(2 of 3\).mp3](#)
[Audio: Are You a Comforter \(3 of 3\).mp3](#)

Notes

[Notes: The Comfort of the Scriptures \(1 of 3\)](#)
[Notes: Key Ingredients of Comfort \(2 of 3\)](#)
[Notes: Are You a Comforter \(3 of 3\)](#)

YouTube

[YouTube Playlist »](#)

[YouTube: The Comfort of the Scriptures \(1 of 3\).mp4](#)
[YouTube: Key Ingredients of Comfort \(2 of 3\).mp4](#)
[YouTube: Are You a Comforter \(3 of 3\).mp4](#)

Vimeo

[Vimeo Channel »](#)

[Vimeo: The Comfort of the Scriptures \(1 of 3\).mp4](#)
[Vimeo: Key Ingredients of Comfort \(2 of 3\).mp4](#)
[Vimeo: Are You a Comforter \(3 of 3\).mp4](#)

Paperback

[Createspace](#)

The Comfort of the Scriptures (1 of 3)

Sun 21 Apr 2013 AM [« Back to Top](#)

[YouTube»](#) [Vimeo»](#) [Notes»](#) [Audio»](#) [Paperback»](#) [Art»](#) [Website»](#)

Everyone experiences, at some point in our life, times of pressure, difficult, distress. How can we find solutions that work for us in these times? How can we position ourselves to experience great comfort in times of distress. When we're in pain, our thinking is affected, and we tend to lose perspective. We then easily isolate, and turn to false comforts. The enemy of our soul likes to torment us, but God is a God of Comfort. Learn how to experience the comfort of God, the reality of His presence, and the comfort of Scriptures.



Key Verse: Romans 15:4 – “Whatever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.

“Whatever was written before” (speaking about the rest of the Bible) was written with a purpose in mind - for our learning “that we,

through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

One of the things that's inevitable is that, everyone experiences at some point in our life, times of pressure, difficulty, distress.

Even Jesus Himself had great distress. Jesus said: in the world you will experience tribulation, or pressures, or difficulties.

How many recognise that life is not all sweet? Lots of stuff happens that you don't like, or wish didn't happen. So what we're looking at is: how to find solutions that work for you in those times?

There are many sources of problems - you can probably add your own list to this, but let me throw out some I was thinking of...

Marriage can be a source of pressure and difficulty and pain. Family can be a source of pressure and difficulty and pain, especially when it comes to the beginning of the year - paying all the bills. Then in their teenage years... there's stresses and difficulty. So marriage, and broken friendships, can cause real pain and stress and difficulty.

Financial setbacks - how many have been through a financial pressure, difficulty, stress - and really felt something?

A criticism can be extremely distressful. Injustice can be extremely distressful; conflicts, disappointment. The list goes on.

The more you look around, the more you see that we face a whole range of things - betrayals, sickness, redundancy. Life is full of setbacks and difficulties.

The thing we also should expect: that as a believer - it's normal to have that; and as a believer - you'll have more, because you follow Jesus. How about that?

It says: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous". However, the good news: "The Lord delivers him out of them all" - and I'm interested how the Lord delivers. I want to know how to find, and experience, the comfort of God in the midst of stress.

The Bible tells us here: "that through the comfort of the scriptures". God has given you the Bible to produce specific things in your life: teaching, correction, reproof, and structure on how to live. But one thing it says here is: it's designed to bring comfort to you.

We need to learn how to get comfort from the Bible, and to understand a little about it. There's a reason we need comfort - we can learn how to position ourselves to experience great comfort in times of distress. In the next session, I want to share on how you can comfort others with scriptures, and we'll see that very clearly in just a moment.

So there are three reasons that I thought of, primary reasons, why we need comfort when we're in distress:

- 1) When your feelings are hurt - our thinking is affected, and we lose perspective. When you're in a lot of pain - it affects how you think about yourself, about God, about life, about people, about church, about government, all kinds of things.

Your thinking is affected when you're in pain, and the tendency is to lose perspective. Remember Elijah, when he got into tremendous fear and pain, he was fearful of losing his life. He totally lost his perspective. In the end he said: I'm the only one in the whole nation that's standing for God; and God had to tell him: actually there's 7000!

Notice his perspective is all screwed up - and it's messed up because of pain that he's feeling; so one of the things we have to recognise is: when you start to go through feelings of pain, it affects your perspective - how you think, and for a while you just don't think straight.

What you tend to do is to isolate. That's the problem, we tend to isolate.

Proverbs 18:1 – “He that separates (or isolates himself) seeks his own desire”.

When we're trying to escape from the pain, we have our own things we're trying to do, and we're isolating to survive. How many understand that?

I'm going to show you how biblical comfort addresses the core problem - not just how you feel, but the root issue that happens, when you go through pain; and this is what it is: becoming isolated.

Church is called to be a community. The Christian faith is worked out as a community. It's not just all about you; and God's answers, many of them are provided through the community - not just directly from heaven to you. This 'Lone Ranger' thing, where it's just 'God and me', is absolutely a fallacy - and people who get into that zone, end up isolating themselves.

It says: “their heart rages against wisdom” - they don't take into account the wisdom of God. When our feelings are hurt and we go through pain - we tend to lose perspective

2) Our sinful nature leads us to isolate. We tend to isolate, and then want to find comfort in all kinds of unhealthy ways: eat chocolate; watch TV; alcohol... the list is endless, of the ways people try to feel better. Have a smoke – I've just got to have a smoke; and the reason usually people have to have a smoke, apart from addiction, is because they're in pain, they need comfort, and they turn to the drug.

The temporary solution to the problem has now created a new problem. The person who turns to alcohol to comfort themselves - do you feel better? Of course you do - today you do, while you're drinking - tomorrow you don't! If you keep doing that, then later on you've got a huge problem with alcohol.

So one of the tendencies we have is: not to follow God's process of dealing with pain. We tend to have our own way of dealing with it, and it's quite sinful and harmful to us.

People seek out sexual relationships, pornography - all kinds of things to try and find a solution to pain.

The solution is: the comfort of God. God wants to comfort us, and the whole nature of God is to comfort us - why don't we just turn to Him?

3) When you're in pain and distress, there is a personal devil who seeks to torment you, and drive you into isolation.

The devil seeks to drive you into isolation, so he can then begin to work on your mind, and your emotions, and cause you to feel no value, to feel distress, to feel pain/tormented, and to lose all hope that the future could be better.

Anyone been in a deep depression? It's like the future looks so bleak, you can't find your way forward. The way forward is to have hope for the future - but before you have hope, you need comfort, because the pain is real.

In the next session, we talk about how you can use the scriptures to comfort someone - we'll learn to comfort one another - because part of the comfort God gives to us, comes through the body of Christ.

So there it is - 3 reasons why we need comfort: 1) when feelings are affected, we think crazy, we think wrongly, our perspective goes. 2) Our sinful nature means we tend to react, and do harmful things - we isolate, and then we try to solve it in different ways.

Esau comforted himself - as soon as dad's out of the way, I'm going to kill my brother - and he felt good about that feeling. I know lots of people, and they're just planning revenge: you wait, you just wait - I'll get them back! They're comforting themselves, in their pain, by harbouring revenge. These are very destructive ways, and demons torment people.

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

What's the one word that really stands out there? Comfort turns up five times!

It's God's nature to comfort. Notice it says: "the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort".

He's the Father (or the author) of mercy. He is deeply compassionate - all the time. He doesn't have: today I'm happy and compassionate; tomorrow I'm angry, and out to get you - it's not like that. He is full of compassion. He is very tender in His heart, and when we're in trouble - He loves us; feels tender feelings; and desire to engage and help us.

When the Bible's using the word mercy there, it's: the Lord is incredibly compassionate. Read how many times Jesus was 'moved with compassion'. Now He's also called "the God of all comforts" - so His nature is to comfort.

His nature is to comfort. We're going to have to look what that means, because when we think 'comfort' - we need someone to put their arm around you, and "there, there, there, feel better", and pat you on the back and have a good cry - here's a tissue, get on with it, you'll be alright. But it's not that! In fact, that actually can be incredibly harmful to people.

Biblical comfort has certain things to it that make it work, and that's why we want to see. God is the God of all comfort - so whatever situation that we find ourselves in, here's the one thing you can guarantee: God does not change, He's still a God of comfort, and He's a God of compassion. Because He's compassionate - He feels deeply for your distress, and because He's the comforter - He wants to do something to help you in your distress.

All comfort means: no matter what you're going through, you can rely on Him. You can't always rely on people, but you can always rely on Him. He never changes. It's God's nature to "come alongside".

The word "to comfort" means literally: to come alongside someone who is in pain and feeling isolated, and to stand with them in their distress. The primary meaning of the word: come alongside someone.

Remember how we said that when you're in distress - the tendency is to look to the wrong places, become tormented by spirits, and isolate. Think about that - how many times you have felt isolated, alone. You aren't alone - God has not shut you off, and people haven't - it's all an illusion you get in your mind, when you're in pain.

The main problem of humanity is: we're disconnected from God - and God's heart is always reconciliation, to reconnect us. So any time you're isolated, God is thinking: how can I reach through to you - to enter into the pain you're having, and assure you that I am with you, and I'll walk through it with you?

"Now the God of comfort" - so the nature of God is to show mercy and comfort. Mercy - we're not going to judge and blame you because you're in a mess - even if it's your own making. He just wants to help you.

"He comforts us in all our tribulations, so we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort we ourselves have been comforted by God".

1) God is willing to comfort you in every situation, even if it's a mess of your own making. Even if you totally messed up, and you're in the deep stuff because of it, He still wants to comfort you. That's a good thing to know, isn't it?

2) He wants you to experience something. He wants you to experience a reality of God in your life - in pain. He wants you to have an experience - not head knowledge; not just to have a verse. He wants you to experience Him, to know the reality. It's not just about the Bible. The Bible points us to a person; so when you look to be comforted by the scriptures, God wants to use the scriptures, to bring you to an experience of Him - so your experience in the problem is changed. Unfortunately most people withdraw.

3) God intends you to be able to minister to others, with the comfort you've received. You can't give easily something to someone else, if you haven't received it yourself; but if you have experienced God in the deep, dark place - come to you in your valley - and you encountered Him, and He reassured your heart, and you overcame your isolation, and strength came in; and you stood and you walked out of that valley, into a place where it all changed - then you have a testimony that someone else needs.

When God allows you to go through difficulties in your life...

1) He wants to deepen your faith in Him. He wants your roots to go down, to engage Him in that problem.

2) He's got people prepared for you, to be able to help when you get out of your problem.

3) They won't get that solution, if you don't break through. That's why we say: people are waiting for you to break through.

This is why your testimony is important. Your testimony is: how I experienced God in my difficulty.

Think of Dave and Janine, when they lost their daughter - how they experienced God upholding them in the midst of their difficulty. I can remember when I went over to my daughter, how as I came - I came there just to be with her, not to solve it - I couldn't solve the problem. When you've lost a child, you can't solve that problem for someone. You can't fix it up. You can't tell them to get over it; you can't tell them: it'll be over soon. You can't tell them: it'll be better.

The person is in deep pain and shock - they're in a place of pain. What they need is someone alongside them. You don't always have to say anything, but I encouraged and directed her heart to the Lord. In the midst of it - right at the most painful time of the funeral, actually at the point of cremation - she had an encounter and saw God, and saw her child with the Lord (amazing isn't it) - and felt comfort. The reality of God comforts us. This is a great thing - God of all comfort.

John 14:6, Jesus said: "I'm not going to leave you alone". Aloneness is the source of the problem. "I'm going to send you another comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who will never leave you".

Here's the thing you can absolutely be sure of: even if you've messed up big time, even if you've sinned and failed, and your awareness of God is quite restricted now, and you're aware of your problems, nevertheless He says: "I won't leave you". He's never going to leave you. He's never going to let you be isolated. You can let yourself be, but He will never isolate you. He will always seek to reconnect with you. Isn't that fantastic?

Romans 15:4 – "Now whatever things were written before, were written for our learning - that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope". That's fantastic! Notice: "what's written beforehand" - so the whole of the Bible is written for your benefit.

You read about David going through his mess with Bathsheba - that's written for your benefit. How did he get through it? How did God handle it? How did God treat him? What did God do in the midst of that? How did God help him out of the mess? That's what that's for.

When the people of Israel went through the wilderness, and they messed up and fell over, and did all kinds of crazy things - it's written for you to learn from.

When Abraham lied about his wife, then had a sexual relationship with her concubine, and made a huge mess - that's there for you to learn from.

God has recorded things about people, and their encounters with God. This is not just a book of stories - it's a book of people, and their relationship and engagement with God. It's about people engaging with Jesus in various points of history, and how He engaged with them. This is why the Bible's been given to you, one of the reasons.

1) That you can learn, from the experience of others, what God is like. You can read what God is like, when you read someone's story. You say: that's what God's like? I was thinking He was like something else.

2) You can look at your life differently, and see it from God's point of view. When your emotions get stirred up, your thinking gets messed up, and you are the centre of your world. But when you get into the word of God, God begins to shift the thinking, so you start to see: what is God doing in the midst of this.

When we're in pain, it's all about me; but when I get into the word, it begins to lift my thinking to: where is God in all this? What is God saying in all this? What is God's perspective on all of this? So God wants me to align with His way of thinking. That's what helps you. That's what gets you through these things.

3) To experience the presence and comfort of God. God wants you to experience His presence. "These things are written, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures". God wants to use this word for you to experience comfort in the midst of pain and difficulties, by learning from the lives of others.

4) Here's the outcome – "that you might have hope". When you have turned to God in the midst of pain, engaged the comfort of the scriptures, and positioned your thinking and acting right, the thing you end up with is - a positive view about the future.

Think of how many people walk around depressed - it's a major chronic problem, all over the world now. How many people walk around uptight - full of rage and anger? It just gets triggered off at the slightest little thing. They're messed up. They don't have a positive view of life.

Listen to even how many Christians walk around, and they complain, complain, complain... - lose, lose, lose... That's unbelief manifesting. God wants you to have hope.

Hope means: because it's grounded in God, I can have a positive view about the future.

“Now the hope fills you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope” - I have to believe though! There's something I've got to do, in order to get to that place where my attitude is completely different. I have to engage the pain, and engage with God, and shift my thinking, and respond to Him. That's what gets me out of it.

A lot of people say: I want ministry, come and pray for me, come and pray for me. If you want to be a baby, and suck on a bottle for the rest of your life - do that. That's okay when you're a baby, but if you've been 20 years a Christian, and that's still your answer to your problems, you're in trouble.

God wants us to learn how to use scriptures to obtain comfort in times of distress - that's what the scriptures are there for. God is a comforter, the Holy Spirit is a comforter, Jesus is a comforter, the Father is a comforter, and the Bible can comfort us - but we've got to learn how to engage with that, and end up with fresh hope and looking forward to the future.

Two keys that are given here: 1) I've got to receive comfort from the scriptures, and get my thinking right; 2) I have to exercise patience.

I need to engage with the word and person of God, and let my emotions and thinking be shifted - so now I'm thinking right, and starting to act right. Then I need to continue to do what God wants me to do - I know God is giving me a great outcome with this. I know this is going to work for good for me.

There are some things we have to do. 1) Receive comfort of the scriptures; and 2) I've got to be patient.

We're in an instant age - no one wants to be patient. People get impatient just trying to start your computer up. I just want to yell at it - it's so slow starting up, I can't stand it. No one likes to be patient. Everyone just wants it all, and wants it now; but actually patience is part of receiving the promises of God.

Through Patience, and Faith, we receive the promises. If I want to see my situation move and turn around, I have to: first of all - engage the scriptures; secondly, I need to make a decision - I will do what God wants me to do in the midst of this difficulty, and then it will pass. I'll have a great attitude, because I'm confident it'll pass, because I've got connected to God in it.

So what practically, would you do? Being comforted by the scriptures is not about just feeling good; it's actually about God putting something into you, to get you thinking and believing right. It actually requires you hold on to what God says - in spite of what you feel. That's the decision.

God wants you to learn to deepen your belief and trust in the time of difficulty; and He uses the word to enable you to do that. Get the idea?

Three practical ways that God does bring comfort from the scriptures. I kind of ask the question: I'm in pain right now, so how do I use the Bible to feel better? I feel in pain right now, so what do I do? Where do I even start? Here's my Bible - now where do I start? How do I use the Bible to obtain the comfort of God? That's the question to ask.

We've learnt that: everyone has pain; what people do when they're in pain; that God is willing to comfort you in scriptures, inspired by the Holy Ghost; and the way He does it. There's a part I have to play in it. How do I get the comfort from the scriptures in the first place?

1) Use scriptures and verses you already know. If you read the Bible regularly, you'll have verses, and they kind of stand out to you. They become great verses, so get those verses and read them.

Isaiah 40:27-31: "Those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint".

How many know that scripture? Why don't you get it in your mouth, and start to speak it out aloud. Why speak it out aloud? Because your emotions are going so strongly, you'll find that if you've got it in your mouth, and start to speak it, and start to in your heart embrace what you are saying:

"I thank You. I wait upon You Lord, I mount up with wings like eagles, I thank You, I run and not weary, I walk and will not faint. You are with me! I believe Your word! Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord God delivers him out of them all. Lord, I thank You in the midst of my affliction, Lord You deliver me out of it!"

Now you've got to actually make a decision, to get hold of the word of God, and do something.

Isaiah 43:2 – "Though you walk through the fire, it shall not consume you. Though you walk through the water, it shall not overwhelm you, because I will hold your hand. I am with you. Be strong!"

That's what the Bible says - you have to put it in your mouth and use it. What will happen is, your soul will start to shift, and your spirit starts to 'YEAH! YEAH!' and your emotions start to subside a bit. That's why you speak it out strongly.

It's not trying to make something happen. The core of it is not just speaking - a parrot can speak, but they don't get into faith. As I speak, I am choosing to hold that God's word is true.

"My words will not pass away, my word will not pass away, my word will not pass away. What you say to me, you will do."

You've got to actually engage the person of God through the word. This is not anyone's word. The Holy Ghost is a comforter, but He comforts us directly by touching us in meetings and so on. He touches us by: quickening the word; and by

comforting us through prophetic words, or encouragement from someone else. We'll get to prophesy - that's another part, but I want to get the word - the word is there to comfort you.

So number one: mark out scriptures that are great scriptures - and learn to pray them. Learn to speak them out, and repeat them over and over - and get them around and in your heart, so when adversity comes: "though he slay me, yet will I trust him, for at the scent of water, the tree shall rise again!"

There's a whole range of verses. You'll find of them in Psalms, in Proverbs, everywhere - and you mark them out. If you don't know how to find them, just get on the computer, and search for: words from the Bible to help me, comfort me - you will be amazed how many sites will come up. They'll give scriptures on Grief, Death, scriptures on this and that. They're all saying: the Bible, go back to the Bible, go back to the word of God.

Use the word to build and strengthen your inward man. You'll find, as you do that, you become conscious of the presence of God. Even if you don't become conscious of the presence of God, what will happen is: emotions subside somewhat, and your head clears. You start to think differently for a little while - faith can grow, and come, and arise in your heart.

Don't turn it into a works thing, where you're striving to make God's word work. It's His business to make the word work - our business is just to believe it, and respond to it. Don't get into the thing where you're trying to 'make it work', and your faith is in 'your confession', or in the word. Your faith is in God - trusting Him.

He says: "I exalt My word above My name. No word shall drop" - so that's one of the ways. There's a whole heap of scriptures like that, so you read it, read it aloud, personalise it, speak it out over your life, and embrace it in your heart as you feel it.

2) Expect the Holy Ghost to quicken a scripture to you. How many of you have found, as you're reading through the Bible, you just suddenly spot a verse, and it comes alive, and it just touched your heart? What did you feel? God is near! What were you feeling before that? God is far! I'm isolated! Now God is near. Oh man, that cheers me up. There's hope, because God and me can do this thing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to quicken a scripture. It's His job, He wrote the Bible. Start to just read with expectation. Don't try and make something happen, just read with expectation. It's His job to open your eyes up and see something you never noticed before, and He can do it.

How many have looked at scriptures, you read whole sections, and suddenly one day as you're reading: oh, that stood out. I didn't even know that thing was there? It was the Holy Ghost quickening a scripture - and now you've got that scripture, you do what I just shared - begin to personalise that, pray that, and declare it over your life. Why? Now you've got a quickened word to hold onto. Before you just had the scripture - and prayer, and meditation, and confession helped quicken it. Now you've got the quickening - now you begin to hold it, and choose to believe it, and then

stand. What does God want you to do in that? You've got to stand and continue to do that.

3) Look at stories of people who went through adversity. Read the story over a few times, just reflect on it, and ask the Holy Ghost to speak to you - and then enquire: what is this person facing? What would they have felt in that difficulty? What would they have gone through, as they went through that? What thoughts would they have had? What feelings would they have had? Then you think: how did God respond to them? Lord, I believe You'll respond to me the same way, because You're my God also.

For example, take Jonah - Jonah's running away. He's feeling a resistance - there's a rebellion, a resistance to God. He's really opposed to what God wanted him to do. He's now taking a hike, and a walk, and he's running away, and he's in a storm. In the middle of the storm, he's hiding in fear of being discovered - and they discover him and throw him out. What did he feel as he was out there, and then there he is in the sea? You might feel you've been thrown out of the boat, and you're in the sea, and you're just going to sink.

That happens sometimes! Anyone feel you've been thrown out of the boat - and there you are in the sea, you're swimming in the sea - and it's in a storm. What do you feel? You feel like he does. God had prepared something that would take him, and make him ready for the journey that he had, or the work that he had for him. God, what have You prepared for me, that I can find refuge in at this time?

You've got to engage with God. The scriptures are to bring us to God. Jesus said: "you search the scriptures, you think in them there's life - they speak of Me, come to Me to find life".

Next session I'll share with you how you can take scripture, and use it to comfort someone. First you've got to receive comfort.

The Bible says: "God comforts us that we may be able to comfort others, with the comfort we have received".

Closing Prayer

Open your heart to the Lord just one more time. There may be someone here who's never received Jesus Christ. This would be a great day to make a decision to become a believer, a follower of Christ. Become a follower of Christ requires a decision:

I will acknowledge that He died on the cross for my sins, He died on the cross to pay the penalty of those things separating me, that I could be reconnected to God.

You say: "but I've messed up so badly" - nevertheless He's for you. "You don't understand all the things that happened to me" - nevertheless He's for you.

He's a God of compassion, God of all comfort, wants to help you.

I wonder if there's anyone here today, and you're in a place of distress in your life, needing comfort. The first thing is to actually acknowledge it, say: God, I'm in distress.

Father, I just pray for each person here right now, that they would experience the comfort that you offer them.

I pray Lord, as a church, we'll learn how to get hold of your word, and experience the strength of Your presence coming near us. Help us to do that.

Summary Notes

[Formatted](#) » [Back to Top](#) »

1. Introduction

- Key Verse: Rom. 15:4 "For whatever things were written before, were written for our learning. That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope".

- Every one of us experience seasons of pressure, difficulty, pain – no one is exempt.

- Possible sources:

Marriage Financial setbacks Conflicts Severe sickness

Family Criticism Disappointments Redundancy

Broken friendships Injustice Betrayals Opposition

- Jn 16:33 "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world".

2. Why We Need Comfort

(i) Hurt feelings affect our thinking and cause us to lose perspective.

- When you are in pain you don't think straight and tend to isolate (Prov.18:1)

(ii) Our own sinful nature leads us to isolate and find comfort in unhealthy ways.

- Alcohol, drugs, entertainment, relationships, pornography, distractions e.g.

Gen.27:42 and 2 Sam. 4:1

(iii) Satan actively seeks to isolate us during painful seasons of our life.

- He wants to separate us from a loving God and loving people.

- He wants to torment us with loss of hope, depression, loss of value, loneliness.

- Math.4:4

- Prov. 18:1 "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire, he rages against all wise judgement."

3. God's Nature is to Comfort Us

- 2 Cor. 1:3-4 "...the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we might be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

(a) The Nature of God – what He is like!

- Father of Mercies – NT3268 to have a deep compassion for those suffering.

- God of all comfort – NT3874 to come alongside to bring comfort, consolation, understanding.

- Whatever painful or distressing situation we face God expresses His compassion

by coming alongside us to comfort and strengthen us.

- God's nature is to come alongside not to abandon (Heb.13:5 "I will never leave you").
- God has tender feelings towards us – He is attentive to our trouble and distress.

(b) The Actions of God – what He Does!

- God is willing to comfort us in all our painful situations.
- God wants us to experience the reality of His comfort personally.
- God intends us to be a source of His comfort to others in pain or trouble.
- Painful experiences are used by God to deepen our faith and prepare us to serve others.
- Jn.14:16 "I will pray to the Father and He will give you another (of the same kind) comforter that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth."

4. The Comfort of the Scriptures

- Rom. 15:4 "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
- Other people in history have experienced pressures, difficulties, pain and opposition. (1 Cor.10:13)

· God's Word has Recorded their Experiences with God for our Benefit

- (i) Learn from the experience of others what God is like.
- (ii) Look at life from God's perspective and change thinking.
 - May not be able to change our circumstances but we can change how we think and respond.
- (iii) Experience the presence and comfort of God through His Word.
- (iv) Overcome despair and look ahead with fresh hope – anticipate with pleasure or confidence.

- How Does This Happen?

- (i) Receiving comfort from the Scriptures.
- (ii) Exercising patience – your choice how you will behave.
 - Continue to walk with God
 - Persevere in doing what is right.
 - Exercise faith in God that He will keep His Word.

5. Practical Application

How to receive comfort from the Scriptures:

- (i) Use Scripture Verses you already know (i.e. Heb 4:12 "God's Word is living and powerful")
 - Read the verse aloud Examples
 - Personalise the verses Is.40:27-31
 - Speak it aloud - repeat (Eph..6:17) Is.41:10
 - Picture it as you speak it Is.43:1-4
 - Embrace its truth into your heart Ps.34:17-19 Ps 23
- (ii) Expect the Holy Spirit to 'quicken' a Scripture (Jer. 15:16 "Your Words were found and I ate them ...")
 - Ask Holy Spirit to speak to you.

- Read the Bible with expectation. E.g. Psalms, Proverbs
- Does any verse “stand out”, draw attention?
- Speak it aloud over your life (as above).
- Keep looking if nothing immediately apparent.

(iii) Look for God in the Bible Stories of adversity

Read the story over several times Example: Mark 4:35

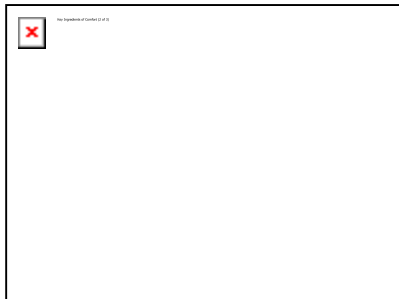
- Picture the story – enquire - What did the person face?
- What did they feel? - How did God respond?
- What can I learn about God? - Turn the story into prayer.

Key Ingredients of Comfort (2 of 3)

Sun 28 Apr 2013 AM [« Back to Top](#)

[YouTube»](#) [Vimeo»](#) [Notes»](#) [Audio»](#) [Paperback»](#) [Art»](#) [Website»](#)

Can you ever recall as a child being comforted during a time of emotional distress, when someone actually connected with you, and they listened for you, and they understood your pain, and they gave you reassurance afterwards, so you felt better? Sadly, many of us were not comforted, but developed ungodly reactions. Discover what comfort is NOT, and what really does help!



Review

Last week we were sharing a message called Comfort in Times of Trouble. I started off by sharing about God's nature, and we're going to look at that again, and we're going to look at another aspect of it today. I talked specifically about the comfort of the scriptures, how the word of God is designed to put strength in you, when you're in a time of difficulty.

Thessalonians – “It changed your lives, because you received it not as the word of man, but as the word of God - which works powerfully in you, when you believe”.

There's a part we have to play, for God's word to work. You can get hold of God's word in a time of trouble, and it strengthens you. I have been strengthened greatly by scripture over the years. Sometimes a vision, an impression, a prophetic word hasn't been enough, but a scripture has just given substance and strength.

2 Corinthians 1:3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort”.

God is a Father (or an author) of mercies - of tender compassion. The heart of God is never against us, He's always for us, full of compassion. When you're in trouble, His heart is soft and tender and affectionate. He wants to help - He's the Father of mercies, many mercies.

We're even called to come to the throne of grace to find mercies - that's what God is like. His heart is to be tender and merciful to us - He's the God of all comforts. One of the ways that God shows us His mercy is: He comes to us in difficult times, to comfort us.

In a difficult time - you don't feel that God is near you at all. He feels a long way off, but nevertheless, He is nearer than at any time in your life - in the difficult times.

Everyone experiences hard times, pressure, difficulties. Things you thought would happen, didn't happen; things happened you didn't think would happen - and the tendency, when we get into pain is: we lose perspective - and we tend to isolate.

We discussed why people isolate. The biggest difficulty people have in times of strain and pressure (marriage, family, etc) is the tendency to isolate and withdraw - and then problems become magnified and very big.

It says: "...who comforts us in ALL our tribulations." In ALL difficulties we face, in ALL pressures we face, God comforts us.

He has a purpose in comforting us – "...that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort we've received". So God has two purposes in comforting you: 1) to bring release and relief to you, in the time of stress - by bringing you into experiencing Him; and 2) having given you an experience with Him, that you would go and share that with someone to help them.

Main Message

God's purpose in your life is always redemptive. If you're in trouble, He gets you out - so you can help someone else get out. That's what 'redemptive' means. If you're in a mess, even if it's your own making, God still is tender. He still cares, He still wants to engage with you, get you out of it - and through the experience, give you something to share with someone else who is in trouble.

It's horrible having a person saying to you: "I know how you feel" - and they haven't a clue how you feel; but when someone has been through a difficult experience, and they come alongside saying: "I understand how you feel" - and they've been there before, they really do understand your feelings, to some degree, when you share them. An important purpose of God comforting you, is so you'll be equipped to help someone else. God wants every believer helping others.

Notice how easy it is. I was just in a book store just the other day, started to talk to the person there, and began to ask and enquire, and just talk into their heart. Next thing I know, the person's opening their heart - tears, this person's standing there in the middle of the place, where they're supposed to be selling. They're just blubbing and tears are all coming down, and they're starting to share. Why? Because they felt God come near them, because of what I said to them. We're called to bring comfort to others, and I was able to really help that person.

Here's a 'comfort' question (from a book I read): "Can you ever recall as a child, being comforted during a time of emotional distress - when someone actually

connected with you, listened to you, understood your pain, and gave you reassurance afterwards, so you felt better?"

I thought: ooh, I don't like that question. The answer I had was no - and I was quite shocked when I thought: well actually... no.

Next question: "what do you do when you get in pain?" I came to the horrible recognition: over years, when I'm in pain - I isolate, and the pain increases. I used to read books to try and feel better.

Isn't that what people do when they get in pain - isolate? Or they react - get really on an edge; or we can receive comfort from God.

God doesn't always comfort you directly. Sometimes, His way of comforting you is through another person. You might be sitting next to the person that God has called you to comfort - or the person that God has sent to you to comfort you.

The word 'comfort' in the Bible is not just putting your arms around, and just: there, there, there and make you feel better. Instead, the word comfort addresses the root of the problem - it means literally: to call near; or to: come alongside you, in your distress, and be there for you.

Jesus is a comforter. He said: I'm going to send you another comforter, just like Me. His name is: Emmanuel, God with us. The biggest aspect of comfort in the Bible is that God doesn't leave us alone. He comes and connects with us to help us, and walk with us through the difficulty - it doesn't always change the difficulty, but someone is there with us.

You can see what comfort looks like in 1 Samuel 23:16. David is now hunted down. He's gone from fame, to he's now number one on the wanted list. There's a poster out: shoot him on sight. So he came out into the wilderness.

"then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David in the woods, and strengthened his hand in God. And said to him: do not fear, the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, I shall be next to you. And even my father knows that. The two of them made a covenant before the Lord."

Here's a man who strengthened. If you comfort someone, after your ministry to them, they are strengthened in God. They feel stronger, more able to handle what they're facing.

There are some things you need to learn to do - I'm going to give you the not-to-do's first, because I know there's things that we've all done. I have observed over years in ministry, that when people are in trouble, the worst people that come to help them sometimes are Christians. I know this isn't you, but just in case you know someone who did some of these things, then you could just tick these ones off!

When someone has trouble, don't come to them and say: "I just know what you're feeling", and "I know what you're going through". You don't!

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

