

Divine Comfort

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Introduction

A. We usually think of "comfort" as someone cheering us up when we are sad, mourning, hurting or just down for any number of reasons.

1. So we may think of Barabbas as a great church "cheer leader" since the disciples gave him that name which means "son of comfort"

2. If that is your idea, it would be a little misguided. We tend to long for someone to soothe our worries or to calm a wounded conscience. The comfort that many seek is assurance that everything is alright when they have done something wrong and their conscience is screaming inside.

B. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter sent by Jesus Christ (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14)

1. "Paracletos" is the Greek word for someone called to one's side to help. Thus an Advocate, Helper, Lawyer, ... one who offers the help needed.

2. "Paregoria" denotes a soothing, solace as in Colossians 4:11. (Verbal form signifies medicines that allay irritation, English "paregoric.")

3. The comfort that God offers us is not primarily to soothe the irritation but rather to give us what we really need: the truth.

4. The result of "paracletos" is therefore comforting, encouraging, and exhorting or correcting. There can be no real help until the problems are solved and the sins are corrected.

-- When we are measured by God, corrected and forgiven, we become holy. And if we are holy, we are secure. The Lord shall be a wall of fire about us no matter what may be happening in the world.

--Encouragement especially points to the stirring up of courage to face the difficulties of life, its trials and temptations. Sins and failures destroy courage and discourage. There can be no encouragement without correcting the sins and failures that dishearten a human being and saint.

I. The Promise of Another Comforter.

A. John 14-16

1. 14:16-17 will be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth

2. 16:7-14 will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment

3. Hebrews 4:12 word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit ... discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

-- Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17

4. The comfort that the Holy Spirit brings began with PAIN, Acts 2:37 "pierced to the heart"

B. 1 John 2:1-2: Jesus was the First Comforter

1. and continues to be our Advocate, our Mediator or Lawyer before God.

2. called to our sides offering His own blood as the "propitiation" for our sins.

-- propitiation is the peace with God that the blood of Christ brings

-- propitiation is the satisfaction of the demands of God for justice and wrath because of sins.

II. Comfort for a weak and immature church, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

A. Church in Corinth had a lot to correct.

1. carnality over men, 1 Cor. 1-3; brethren suing each other before the unbelievers, ch 4;

tolerating incest in the church, ch 5; soft on the sins of fornication, ch 6; confusion on marriage, ch 7; confusion over eating meats offered to idols, ch 8-10; disorder over women, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, and doubts about the resurrection of the dead.

2. The first letter examined them with the eyes of Jesus through the Holy Spirit correcting and exhorting them to repent. Thus the comfort of the Holy Spirit was based on telling them what they needed to hear.

B. 2 Corinthians begins by Magnifying God as the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

1. v. 4 He comforts us in our affliction

-- as we see in Hebrews, 1 Peter, and Revelation, by first correcting the faults in our thinking and living

2. "So that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction,"

-- you cannot comfort others if you don't know how to offer the right remedy, the right ENCouragement, the courage to go forward and do what must be done.

3. "with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God"

-- When we have our own thinking and living straight, our understanding and our words can give comfort to others, the kind that God offers. It is not vague, empty cheer leading.

4. "For as we share abundantly in Christ's suffering, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." (on through v. 7)

--There is a direct relation between our experience in suffering for Christ and our ability to comfort in this Biblical way.

III. Hebrews 12:3-7 We must accept the suffering of persecution as the discipline of God as our Father,

-- and let these trials have their perfect work that we may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4.

A. 1 Peter 4:12-19

1. We must rejoice to suffer, that you may rejoice and be glad when the glory of Christ is revealed.

2. Because judgment begins at the household of God. "I know thy works!"

3. What will happen to those who do not obey the gospel of God?

4. Therefore, v. 19 entrust your souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

B. Revelation 2 - 3 The churches are examined, criticized, exhorted and threatened.

1. Context is the comforting of churches under the experience of persecution.

2. If they are judged so severely, what about us?

3. Ephesus, 2:2 "I know your works" ... "you have left your first love." repent or I will remove your candlestick

4. Pergamus, 2:13 "I know where you dwell ... you hold fast my name..." ... "but you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam" repent or I will war against you.

5. Thyatira, 2:19 "I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first." ... "but you tolerate that woman Jezebel" unless they repent I will strike her children dead.

6. Jesus who has eyes as a flame of fire sees and knows; He examines, measures with His line and plummet that His saints might be holy; and if holy they are secure. If their works are completed, Jesus can comfort them with the comfort that comes from God.