

Comfort for Christians

by James Smith

The sermon emphasizes the comfort Christians can find in God's unwavering love and presence during times of affliction and suffering.

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Psalm 68:5, Romans 5:3, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 John 4:16

Topics: "God's Love", "Christian Assurance"

Description

James Smith preaches about the love God has for us, emphasizing that God's love is constantly present and reliable, even when we doubt, forget, or fail to realize it. He highlights how belief in God's love leads to consecration, peace, and happiness in our lives. Smith also discusses how God's love is demonstrated through His provision, chastisement, and atonement for our sins, urging believers to trust in Jesus' compassion and care.

Transcript

The Love God Has for Us!

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love." 1 John 4:16

The sweeter the truth -- the more backward we often are to receive and believe it. Therefore it must be presented to us again and again. What is more pleasant than the fact that "God is love!"

Yet so quickly we doubt it, or forget it, or fail to realize it. Therefore the Gospel presents it to us again and again, and in almost every possible form. Twice within the scope of a few verses, John tells us that "God is love!" 1 John 4:8, 16.

Belief in this portrayal of God lies at the root of our holiness, happiness, and peace. To the extent that we believe that "God is love" -- we will . . .

consecrate ourselves to His service,

enjoy peace in our consciences,

and be happy in His ways.

God loves us, and therefore He planned our salvation, sending His one and only Son to take away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. He also sent His Holy Spirit to teach us our need of Christ and lead us to

Him. And, finally, He has put His blessed Word in our hands so that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

God loves us -- and therefore He . . .

chastens us,

strips us, and

empties us!

He will not let us live satisfied without Himself.

God is love -- therefore He has provided an atonement for all our sins. His justice is satisfied, and Heaven is prepared for us!

Yes, though we were sinners by nature, and deeply feel it -- though we are not all that we wish to be, and deeply deplore it -- yet God loves us!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, who in His love and in His pity, has redeemed me!

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins!" 1 John 4:10

Jesus is Always Present

Suffering Christian! Jesus is at your side, witnessing your sufferings. He sympathizes with you in your sorrows, and will do you good by every pain. He is always present with His people -- for He has promised that He will never leave them nor forsake them. He is especially present with them when they are suffering trials. It is our responsibility to accept by faith that He is with us, and to commune with Him for the good of our souls. But when we are in great pain or extreme weakness, we are apt to forget, or at least we may not realize -- that Jesus is present, and so we need to be reminded of it.

Remember too that Jesus, who is now with you -- also suffered when He was on earth as a man. The Bible tells us that "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way -- just as we are." Hebrews 4:15. He is therefore able to sympathize with, and support, those who are tried, "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted -- he is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:18.

His head has been racked with pain. His heart has been torn with sorrow. His mind has been overwhelmed with darkness and distress, occasioned by the hiding of His Father's countenance. He understands what you are going through. He will treat you tenderly and lovingly.

Yes, He sees the effect your trial has on your nerves and on your soul. He will fulfill His precious promises in your experience. By looking to Him, trusting Him, and pleading with Him -- you can obtain strength, comfort, and victory!

Sweet thought! Jesus is with me! That Jesus who suffered and died for me; that Jesus who is my advocate with the Father and who ever lives to make intercession for me; that Jesus who is preparing a place for me in His Father's house, and who will soon come and receive me to Himself!

Heavenly Father, help me to realize that Jesus is with me; unfold to me His glories and allow me to enjoy His sweet and soul-satisfying presence!

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you!" John 14:18

Afflictions are Appointed

"He will certainly accomplish what He has decreed for me -- and He has many more things like these in mind!" Job 23:14

The trials of time were appointed in eternity. He who chose us unto eternal life -- also planned the path by which we are to reach it! Nothing ever happens to us by 'chance'.

Our little trials,

our great troubles,

our heavy crosses,

our painful losses --

are all a part of God's plan!

Nor did He plan afflictions for us merely haphazardly -- He planned them because He saw that we needed them. He intended to make them rich blessings to us.

Every cross is a mercy,

every loss is a gain,

every trouble is a blessing,

and every trial is a seed of joy!

We shall be better in the future -- for what we suffer now. If we sow in tears -- we shall reap in joy. A wet spring will introduce a glorious harvest . Many of our present tears will crystallize into pearls -- and will be an ornament to us in glory!

And not only so, but the same love that planned our trials -- also provides strength to bear them. Our choicest comforts will flow from them. Time reveals what God planned in eternity -- and eternity will reveal what God had in view in all the trials of time!

Let us, then, bear our afflictions with patience and seek grace to honor God in all that we suffer, as well as by all that we do. If we keep our eye fixed on glorifying God -- He will order and arrange everything that happens to us so that it shall work for our good. Nothing shall by any means hurt us. The darkest clouds shall bring showers of blessings; and our sharpest pains shall only introduce us to the sweetest joys!

Gracious Lord, help me not only to submit to Your appointments, but to be pleased with them -- so pleased that if the turning of a straw would alter them -- I would not turn it! Oh, give me grace -- to rejoice in my afflictions!

"So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them!" 1 Thessalonians 3:3

Suffering is Mitigated

"He stays his rough wind -- in the day of the east wind." Isaiah 27:8

Our afflictions are like the winds that sweep the world. They are powerful, penetrating, and even alarming. But our Heavenly Father holds the winds in His hand, and only allows them to blow as He pleases. He has a purpose to answer by every blast, and He always watches its working and its effect.

So it is with the afflictions which He brings upon us. He will not lay more on us than we are able to bear. If He increases the affliction -- then He will increase the strength.

We may be tossed about -- but we shall never be torn from the Rock! Our anchor will hold us fast -- our cable will never snap. Our place of refuge is sure, for it is founded on a Rock, or rather, it is the Rock itself!

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging!" Psalm 46:1-3

Our great Refiner sits by while we are in the furnace. He regulates the heat and superintends the whole process of purification. He "will not allow you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it!" 1 Corinthians 10:13

My afflicted friend, cheer up! There is a limit set to the degree and duration of your afflictions. If the biting east wind blows -- the harsh, rough wind shall be stayed!

The grace of Jesus is sufficient for you -- and His strength will be made perfect in your weakness.

Fear not, faint not! As your days -- so shall your strength be. Your afflictions of today -- will be seen to be blessings by and by. Your present sufferings -- are for your future good!

All those now in glory have passed through the same; and others now on the narrow road are experiencing the same pains, the same troubles, and the same sorrows that you are suffering. Cheer me up, then!

O my Father, and help me to remember that my present afflictions will sweeten the joys of Heaven, and heighten the brightness of glory!

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while -- will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast!" 1 Peter 5:10

Affliction is Beneficial

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psalm 119:71

Adversity often proves to be a painful blessing -- and prosperity a pleasant evil. Few people have derived any spiritual benefit from prosperity -- but many have borne testimony that adversity has done them immense good.

Affliction has brought many people to Christ, who never thought of seeking Him before; and it has restored many, who in prosperity had wandered from Him. Many, very many, can say, "It was good for me to be afflicted! -- for it stopped me in my mad career of sin and folly; it instructed me and taught me to know more of myself and of my God than I ever knew before! Affliction . . .

softened me and brought me to lie low before God;

weaned me from the world;

corrected me of my foolish notions; and

made Heaven appear ten times more precious and glorious!"

The affliction . . .

that brings us to the feet of Jesus,

that gives us sober views of all earthly things, and

that stirs us up to make our calling and election sure

-- always does us good!

God's sweetest smiles and His kindest visits -- are granted to us in seasons of affliction . Let us, therefore, seek grace to sanctify our affliction and to make every pain, privation, and sorrow -- a blessing. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and acknowledge His justice, grace, and faithfulness in afflicting us.

Then when we come out of the furnace -- we also shall be able to bear this testimony: "It was good for me to be afflicted!"

Merciful Lord, with every affliction give me special grace so that I may thereby . . .

learn Your truth,

prefer Your will,

observe Your precepts,

and seek Your glory!

May all my afflictions prove real blessings to my soul. Sanctify me in trouble -- and sanctify me by trouble, to Your praise.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray -- but now I obey Your Word!" Psalm 119:67

"I know, O Lord, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me!" Psalm 119:75

Jesus Bearing Our Sins

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed!" 1 Peter 2:24

God hates sin! He is so holy that He cannot look on sin. You and I are by nature the children of wrath, vile creatures, and dead in sin. How, then, can we be accepted of God? How can we have boldness before the Lord?

God in His mercy saw our need . He made provision for us by sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, to give His life for sinners on the cross of Calvary. He offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin -- so that sinful men could find salvation and be delivered.

As the Lamb of God, He bore our sins in His own body, and made atonement for us so that we can live unto righteousness and be cleansed of our sinfulness.

Today He is our High Priest, sitting at the right hand of God the Father interceding for us in all the holiness of His nature and character, as our representative and advocate. Through Him, an infinitely holy God can receive our imperfect prayers, accept our imperfect praises, and approve of our imperfect services -- because they pass through the hands of His Son and are perfumed with His precious merits.

Afflicted believer, Satan may try to harass and trouble your mind on account of the temptation to sin that mixes with your holiest duties. If he does, draw comfort from this: Jesus, your great High Priest, is before the throne interceding for you, that you might be strengthened for your trial.

If you fall, Jesus intercedes with the Father -- to accept your sorrow and repentance, and forgive your sin.

Precious Lord Jesus, I bless You, and I praise Your glorious Name for such love!

"Therefore He is able to save completely, those who come to God through Him -- because He always lives to intercede for them!" Hebrews 7:25

Return! Return!

"Come, let us return unto the Lord. He has torn us to pieces -- but He will heal us; He has injured us -- but He will bind up our wounds!" Hosea 6:1

When in health and prosperity -- we often wander from God. We forget our obligation to Him and fail to realize our dependence upon Him.

Then comes God's rod -- at first, perhaps, a gentle stroke. If that is not heeded -- then comes a heavier stroke. At length, if we still fail to pay attention to His discipline -- we are not only smitten -- but torn!

Then we reflect, are convinced of our folly, and begin to seek after a way of escape -- but all is dark, dreary, and dead. We begin to sigh and groan, doubt and despond; and the more we look at our conduct, or into our hearts -- the lower we sink, and the more miserable we become!

We try every human means available for deliverance; but to us, they have no life, power, or savor -- and we are driven to self-despair.

Then a friendly voice says to us, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord!" He invites us; He is willing to receive us, and He is ready to forgive us.

He will bind up our festering wounds,

He will heal our wounded hearts,

He will apply the cleansing blood and the healing oil

-- and so He will cure and bring us health!

Carry, then -- your wounded heart to Jesus. Go to Him -- as torn as you are; confess your sins frankly and fully, without excuse; plead His precious promises, His loving invitations, and His atoning blood. He will speak peace to your soul and enable you to rejoice in the freeness and fullness of His forgiving love.

Remember, whatever change may have taken place in you -- that Jesus is the same -- He has not changed!

His love is as great,

His mercy is as tender,

His grace is as free, and

His Word is as faithful, as ever!

He still says. "Come unto Me -- and I will give you rest!"

Help me, O Heavenly Father, to come to You when I fail. Help me to remember who You are. Heal, restore, and bless me, I pray!

"Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God -- for your sins have brought you down!" Hosea 14:1

Mercy Is Certain

"Is not Israel still my son, my darling child? says the Lord. I often have to punish him -- but I still love him. That is why I long for him and surely will have mercy on him!" Jeremiah 31:20

This is God's response to a repentant backslider . His past conduct has been base, and he has often greatly provoked the Lord. But he saw his folly, he felt his sin, and he bemoaned his state.

The Lord looked upon him, listened to him, and felt His heart drawn toward him. And now, though Satan may accuse him, his own heart condemn him, and his past iniquities testify against him -- the Lord's mind is made up, and He speaks in the strongest, tenderest language: "I still love him! That is why I long for him and surely will have mercy on him!"

Oh, what encouragement is here held out to us! What an inclination there is in the Most High God to have mercy! What vile sins He will pardon! What monstrous sinners He will receive!

If, therefore, we are cast down on account of our past sinfulness -- let us take encouragement and cry to the Lord for mercy. Let us confess all to the Lord, let us plead with the Lord in sincere repentance; and when we do so, He will surely have mercy upon us.

However shameful our conduct may have been, however corrupt and depraved our hearts may be -- there is hope for us! For if we were the vilest of mankind -- He speaks to us when He says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon!" Isaiah 55:7

O precious assurance -- let us not doubt it! O sweet invitation -- let us avail ourselves of it! This is what God wishes us to do. He desires to manifest His love afresh -- to enfold us in the arms of His mercy, and feast us with the provisions of His grace. Let us, then, approach Him and plead His gracious invitation.

O merciful Father! I am eternally grateful to You for Your great mercy to me in pardoning my great transgressions. Help me to remain in Your forgiving arms and in Your loving care as long as I live.

"Where is another God like you -- who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of His special people? You will not stay angry with Your people forever, because You delight in showing unfailing love!" Micah 7:18

Chastisement -- a Fruit of Love

"Whom the Lord loves -- He chastens ; and scourges every son whom He receives!" Hebrews 12:6

It is a wonder of wonders that God should love sinners -- and yet it is a glorious fact . Nothing is more clearly revealed in His Word -- yet nothing is more difficult to believe sometimes.

When our souls are in darkness, when our temporal affairs are in confusion, and when our bodies are in pain -- then it is not easy to believe that God loves us. Yet our very trials flow from His love, and are a proof of it!

Yes, God loves His people -- not because He sees any beauty or excellency in them -- but simply because He chooses to love them. And because He loves them -- He chastens them for their follies, and scourges them for their sins! All His children need chastisement, and they all have it -- some more, some less; some in one way -- and some in another.

If the Lord did not love us -- He would allow us to go on in sin, and to fill up the measure of our iniquities. If He loved us less than He does -- He might correct us less; but because His love to us is infinite, tender, and eternal -- He seems to deal harshly with us.

Let us beware lest we mistake the nature of our afflictions, or misinterpret the design of God in our troubles. Rather, let us endeavor to believe His love, rest upon His promises, tell out all our thoughts, feelings, and fears at His throne, and say, "Though He slays me -- yet will I trust in Him!" Job 13:15

Troubled believer. God loves you! He loves you even though your faith is small, and your fears are strong. He loves you even though your infirmities are many. He will show His love for you -- in whatever way He deems best!

O Father, shed abroad Your love in my heart -- and so fill my heart with love for You! Help me to bless You for Your love and to praise You for every stroke of Your rod!

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent." Revelation 3:19

Brethren of Christ

"Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers!" Hebrews 2:11

Too often, afflicted believers are neglected. This is especially true if they are poor , as well as afflicted . Many people even act as if they were ashamed of them. They never visit them, write to them, or show love

for them in any other way.

But Jesus is not ashamed to call such people, His brethren -- however poor or despised they may be by their fellow men. Why? Because they are a part of the same family as Himself. His Father is their Father, His God is their God, His Heaven is their home! He acknowledges them now before His Father and the holy angels; and He will acknowledge them by and by before the whole world.

Suffering believer, Jesus is your brother! He feels for you with all of a brother's love! He takes a brother's interest in you. He will perform a brother's part toward you. He is the Friend who loves at all times. He is the brother born for adversity! Proverbs 17:17.

Jesus acted a brother's part toward you by paying your ransom with His blood, and redeeming your soul from sin. He acts a brother's part toward you by interceding for you with His Father, by giving His angels charge over you, and by sending to you all that He sees is necessary for your good.

Oh, how sweet it is to realize that Jesus is our brother, and to know that as our brother -- He ever loves and cares for us! This thought will cheer and comfort us in our lonely hours -- when no Christian friend comes to visit us; and in our secret sufferings -- when we have no one near to sympathize with us.

Lord Jesus, I thank You for being a brother who is ever present at my side -- present to soothe and comfort me with a brother's love.

"For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven -- is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:50

The Common Lot

"Your brethren throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings!" 1 Peter 5:9

Every child in the Lord's family has his own bitter cup -- and he must drink the exact mixture which it contains. But we often think that our portion is more bitter, or that our cup contains more sorrow -- than that of our brother. At times, looking at some of the Lord's people, we imagine that they escape the cross, and are spared the trials -- that we are called to endure.

It is common for Satan to tempt us to think that our case is unusual, and our trials uncommonly severe. We must not believe him. We dare not listen to him. His design is to make us rebel against God, envy His people, and to fill us with self-pity and complaining. Our case is not unusual! "Your brethren throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings!"

Are we harassed and tempted by Satan? So are all the brethren.

Are we tried in our home life? So are they.

Do we have sharp and bitter conflicts of soul? So do they.

Are we tempted to complain of bereavements, or bitter trials in the world? So are they.

Are we tempted to doubt and fear? So are they.

Tried as you are, timid as you are, tempted to doubt as you are -- while in faith and submission you still cling to Jesus, you are in the footsteps of the flock. The thousands who are now in glory -- have felt just as you do, when they were on earth.

You may find it hard to believe this -- but it is nevertheless true. You will be surprised by and by to find how much the experience of the Lord's people is alike. Not only so -- but Jesus Himself suffered before us and was tried in all points like as we are. He is therefore able to help and support us, and He will do so.

Beloved Father, I thank You that You will not allow me to be tempted above what I am able to bear with Your help, and that You will help me through every trial.

"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you!" 1 Peter 4:12

I will uphold you with My righteous right hand!

"So do not fear -- for I am with you; do not be dismayed -- for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand!" Isaiah 41:10

What a precious promise this is for all God's feeble children, who are daily fearing that they shall fall or be crushed under the weight of their troubles and trials!

This promise was first made to Israel, who had so provoked the Lord by their sins, that He determined to drive them out of their own land and send them into captivity in Babylon for seventy years. In the prospect of this heavy trial -- a trial rendered more heavy because it was brought on them by their sins -- that the Lord says, "So do not fear -- for I am with you; do not be dismayed -- for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand!"

O believer, what comfort is here! This promise is confirmed to you in Jesus, by His death. Yes, it is yours -- as much so as if it was spoken to you directly by the mouth of God!

Oh, what a mercy! God says that He will uphold you. He will put strength into you; He will enable you to bear your afflictions and will bring you safely through all your troubles!

Satan may say, "I will trip you up."

God says, "I will uphold you!"

Unbelief may say, "You will one day fall and perish."

God says, "I will uphold you!"

Your flesh may cry out, "I can never bear up under this cross."

God says, "I will uphold you!"

Your feeble heart may say, "How can I endure such privations, such bereavements, such buffetings of Satan, such temptations, such losses, such fiery trials?"

God says, "I will uphold you!"

The Bible testifies that all believers "go from strength to strength -- until each appears before God in Zion" Psalm 84:7.

In weakness -- the Lord strengthens them;

in poverty -- the Lord supplies their needs;

in sickness -- the Lord sustains them; and

in death -- the Lord gives them the final victory!

O Father, I am weak -- but You are strong. Give me of Your strength so that I may serve You and walk with You all the days of my life on this earth.

"If the Lord delights in a man's way -- He makes his steps firm; though he stumbles, he will not fall -- for the Lord upholds him with His hand!" Psalm 37:23-24

Give up the Burden

"Cast your burden upon the Lord -- and He shall sustain you!" Psalm 55:22

The Lord's people are often burdened , and from their conduct one would think that they prefer carrying their own burden: for though directed to cast it on the Lord, they seldom do so until compelled!

Some people have visible burdens: from the state of their affairs, or from what is seen in their families, or from disease of body -- it is well-known that they groan, being burdened.

But others have secret burdens of temptations and struggles, unseen by their brethren, of which they never speak. They sigh, groan, and stagger -- and yet keep it all to themselves because they are afraid, or ashamed, to speak to anyone of the crushing weight that lies on their heart!

It can do much good to share these things with a judicious and experienced Christian -- though the best remedy is to cast our burden on the Lord. Spread out the whole matter before Him and pray for grace to resist Satan, to relieve your mind, and to have confidence in God.

Burdened Christian! Remember that there is One who is willing to carry your burden for you. Are you willing to commit it to Him, leave it with Him, and expect that it will be well-managed by Him?

Put yourself and all your affairs into His hands -- and He will work in you "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" Philippians 2:13.

As each care comes -- cast it on the Lord.

As predicaments arise -- carry them to the Lord.

As anxieties arise in your soul -- go with them to the Lord.

Ask for wisdom and grace -- that you may cast your troubles upon the Lord.

There is nothing, however great or however small, that troubles you -- but it also affects your Savior, and He wants you to cast it on Him.

I thank You, Lord Jesus, for being willing to carry my burdens for me. Make me willing to open my heart to You -- and give me the peace that my burdened heart desires.

"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens -- and I will give you rest!" Matthew 11:28

Rest in Jesus

"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens -- and I will give you rest!" Matthew 11:28

Is your poor body restless from disease and suffering, and your mind disturbed by trouble and sorrow? Poor restless sufferer, Jesus speaks to you!

Perhaps your physician cannot give you rest, and your family has tried in vain. Perhaps Christian friends have tried to soothe your troubled spirit -- but all have failed. Listen as Jesus speaks to you. He says, "I will give your rest."

Jesus alone can give rest to your anguished spirit; and He will do so freely -- if you come to Him. He will give such sweet rest to your spirit -- that you will be able to bear the sufferings of your body with patience and comparative ease. For when the soul is comforted, refreshed, and fed by Jesus -- the pains of the body become lighter and are much more easily borne.

Come to Jesus, then. Come to Him as to a faithful friend. Come to Him as to a kind, loving Savior who sympathizes with you and promises to give you rest. Come, and lay your whole case before Him. Come, and plead with Him. Come, and believe His precious promises. Ask Him -- and expect Him to make it good.

Thousands on the bed of sickness and thousands in deep trouble and sorrow, have found rest in Jesus -- such rest that they are willing to continue to suffer, if only they can still enjoy the same.

It is the precious promise of a most precious Savior: "I will give you rest!" Oh, for faith to believe it and to carry it to Jesus -- so that He may honor it and make it good in our experience!

Lord, work faith in my poor, burdened heart -- so that I may come to Jesus and enjoy His rest in my soul.

"Only we who believe, can enter His rest!" Hebrews 4:3

Always Trust

"O my people, trust in Him at all times! Pour out your heart to Him -- for God is our refuge!" Psalm 62:8

In times of trouble and in seasons of affliction -- we often see much of the sins and imperfections of our own hearts, and find deep and unexpected defects in our natures! Because of this, we may be so severely buffeted by Satan -- that we are almost ready to conclude it would be horrid presumption to hold fast our confidence in our salvation.

We are violently tempted to distrust God and to doubt His love -- and we may even rashly conclude that we have deceived ourselves, and everybody else!

To trust in God at such a time is exceedingly difficult, for we cannot help but be tempted to think that He is dealing with us in wrath, rather than in mercy -- because of our sins and blemishes. All this is from the flesh, or from Satan.

We may not judge God's actions -- by our feelings. We must judge them from the testimony of His Word. His work in us is not yet finished -- but His Word is perfect. We do not know what end He has in view immediately in our present trial -- but by His Word, He assures us that all will end well.

God's heart is to be trusted -- even when His hand cannot be traced!

He is to be trusted by us in the dark -- as well as in the light!

He is to be trusted when He smites us -- as much as when He comforts and cheers us!

We should trust . . .

in God's Word -- for it is true;

in His faithfulness -- for it is unchangeable;

and in His love -- for it is unending!

We can trust Him to reveal any sin in our hearts. We should give Him credit for His wisdom, mercy, and truth -- and trust Him to . . .

manifest His wisdom,

display His mercy, and

make plain His truth.

Trusting in God . . .

honors Him,

confounds Satan, and

brings peace and comfort to our hearts!

Therefore trust in Him at all times!

Gracious Lord, enable me to trust in You, to believe in the love which You have for me -- and so glorify Your free and sovereign grace! Oh, crush my unbelief, scatter my fears, and give me a strong and steady confidence in Your blessed self!

"Though He slays me -- yet will I hope in Him!" Job 13:15

The Right View

"My eyes are always on the Lord!" Psalm 25:15

The Lord directs us to look to Him for all that we need -- and look away from all that we fear and all that troubles us. Looking to man dishonors the Lord -- and ends in disappointment. Looking to ourselves fills us with gloom, sadness, doubts, and fears. It was wise, therefore, of the Psalmist to keep his eyes fixed steadily and habitually on the Lord.

Beloved! In all your sufferings, let your eyes be ever on the Lord. Look to Him . . .

for ease in pain,

for strength in weakness,

for comfort in sorrow,
and for relief in distress.

Keep your eye fixed on Him as your Father and your God -- who has pledged to you in His Word to do you good.

Looking to the Lord will relieve you, as it is written of some of old: "They looked unto Him -- and were lightened." Psalm 34:5. They expected relief and deliverance from the Lord, and they looked to Him for it. He was as good as His word, and they were filled with joy and peace.

Friends may fail you, relatives may neglect or be unkind to you, and those you love most may be unable to help you -- but look to the Lord! He will never fail you or neglect you. He will prove Himself both able and willing to help you.

Let nothing divert your attention, then, from the Lord -- but carry everything to Him, and exercise implicit confidence in Him.

Cast on Him every care ,
commit to Him every work , and
lay before Him every difficulty .

You will prove that He is not only able -- but is also willing to do for you "infinitely more than we might ask or think!" Ephesians 3:20.

Whenever Satan tempts you, or guilty fears torment you -- turn your eyes to Calvary and see Jesus, your Savior -- suffering, bleeding, and dying for you -- and so you will enjoy peace.

Lord, help me to look to You for all my direction in life, so that I might not be led astray by my deceitful heart. Let me praise You and bring glory to Your Name every moment of my life.

"My eyes are fixed on You , O Sovereign Lord!" Psalm 141:8

The Lord Will Provide

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh (which means 'the Lord will provide')." Genesis 22:14

The more faith a person has -- the heavier the trial required to test it. Heavy trials do not prove that we have no faith. Rather, they indicate that our faith is strong. Genesis 22 gives the account of Abraham's greatest trial -- and in it his faith and love shone forth conspicuously. God commanded Abraham to take Isaac, his only son -- and offer him as a burnt offering. He gave no reason -- and Abraham did not ask for one. He was silent and did what God bade him -- ready to suffer what God would lay upon him.

The lesson Abraham learned, also speaks to us and says, "Do not be afraid to obey God; do not distrust God; He sees where you are, what you are, and what you need -- and He will provide, even during the trial of your faith."

The ram that took Isaac's place on the altar, was ready before Isaac was unbound. Even so we see God's hand in our greatest difficulties, and read God's love in our sorest trials. He would tell us, "Only believe Me when I speak, only trust Me when I work -- and all will be well."

"Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" asked Isaac.

"God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son," replied Abraham.

"Where is it to come from? How can we be supplied?" questions little-faith.

"God will provide!" answers the Scripture.

If we sincerely believe this -- then all our fears will depart and our souls will be comforted. God has never found any difficulty in providing for His family yet! Nor was anyone ever disappointed those who trusted in, and waited upon, Him.

No, nor will there be any difficulty in your case. You will not be disappointed if you wait upon Him. He will honor His own Name in supplying all your needs.

Beloved! God loves to be trusted. He wants you to trust Him, He gives you opportunities to trust Him, and He will honor the trust you give Him.

Your duty is to do what God bids -- and believe what God says. When you do -- God will satisfy you and supply all your needs!

Help me, dear Lord, to lay what is nearest and dearest to my heart on Your altar, so that You might be glorified in my life.

"Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You rescued them!" Psalm 22:4

Strength as the Day

"As your days -- so shall your strength be!" Deuteronomy 33:25

Here is a precious promise for a trying day! It belongs to every Christian who is traveling to the Celestial City. It provides for every part of life's journey; for every day -- as each day may require.

It is especially suited to the dark days, the wintry days, and the trying days -- when all our earthly props fail us; the days when our fellow man cannot help us.

Fellow pilgrim! Are you dispirited, depressed, and cast down? Are you looking back upon the past with sorrow -- and forward into the future with fear? Cheer up! The Lord will not lay on you more than He will enable you to bear -- nor will He allow any other to do so.

However weak you may feel in yourself,

however rough the road you may need to travel,

however heavy the burden you may have to carry --

God will supply you with sufficient strength for the day.

He has never allowed you to be crushed yet, though you may have staggered under some heavy burdens. He who has helped you in the past -- is still your helper today . He will also help you in all the future . "As your days" -- be they as troublous as they may -- "so shall your strength be."

Whether your day brings life or death, joy or trial -- it does not matter. God will send you exactly what you need to pass through it. Do not look at your trials, do not dwell on your inability -- but lay hold on the promises of God and seek His grace to exercise faith in Him.

Then let Satan suggest what he pleases, or the flesh object as it may -- you will be able to say, "I will not fear; for as my day -- so shall my strength be. He who has promised -- will also fulfill His promise."

Blessed Lord, I praise You for this precious promise! Help, oh, help me to trust in it; and day by day as duty or trials may require -- enable me to look to You and expect sufficient strength from You!

"On the day I called -- You answered me; You increased strength within me!" Psalm 138:3

Trials and Sorrows

"In the world, you will have many trials and sorrows!" John 16:33

To be forewarned -- is to be forearmed! Our divine Lord here assures His disciples that they will be tried , and teaches them that they must not expect a very smooth path.

For the New Testament believers, trials generally took the form of persecution, and was so common that the apostle said, "Yes, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution" 2 Timothy 3:12.

The fires of persecution have mostly burned out, for now at least, in our country. But though persecution decreases -- trials and sorrows will remain. The road to the kingdom will always be more or less a rough road . Almost every day something or other will happen to . . .

try our tempers,

exercise our graces,

or distress our minds.

At times, we shall have many trials and sorrows:

Within -- a violent conflict between the flesh and the spirit.

Without -- vexations, disappointments, heavy losses, or rugged crosses.

In the body -- weakness and pain.

In the soul -- temptation and a thousand fears.

In the church -- much to depress, discourage, and cast us down.

In the world -- enough to make us weep day and night.

If it were not for . . .

the comforts of the Holy Spirit,
the fullness of the Lord Jesus,
the throne of grace, and
the prospect of perfect peace and rest in our Father's house
-- we would be of all men, the most miserable!

But as it is, we make some progress on the rough road. Though we may often sigh -- we also raise a song and rejoice in the persuasion that all will end well. When we reach the kingdom -- all trials and sorrows will cease -- and all will be holy and peaceful forever!

Heavenly Father, take me to Your house -- where there are no more foes, no more fears, no more privations; and, best of all, where there is no more sin or temptation!

"They strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God!" Acts 14:22

Be Still

"Be still -- and know that I am God!" Psalm 46:10

This is God's message to His people, even during the most terrible convulsions of nature, the most cruel wars, and the most painful trials! The Lord reigns and works -- even in the most dreadful circumstances!

The Lord is constantly doing His will, and accomplishing His purposes -- and He never forgets His promises .

Be childlike. Run to your Father's arms and nestle in His bosom! Realize safety in your Father's love and power. He will tenderly . . .

hold you in the hollow of His hand,
hide you under His wings, and
carry you in His bosom as the shepherd does the lamb.

"Be still," for though painful at present -- your trial will soon be over. Know that God is supreme and works all things after the counsel of His own will. Know that God never loses sight of you or forgets your frame and your weakness. Exercise patience, relieve your burdened heart by prayer -- and wait in full expectation of a blessing.

As the darkest cloud, often bears the most fruitful shower -- so the darkest circumstances, often usher in the choicest mercies! Only . . .

yield yourself to God,
keep close to the loving heart of God,
and submit to the sovereign will of God.

Then you will be able to . . .

carry any cross,

bear any trial, and

endure any affliction!

Be silent, be calm, be still -- the Lord rules as King forever!

Do not complain -- for it will displease the Lord.

Do not murmur -- for it will grieve Him.

Do not fear -- for it will dishonor Him.

Instead, be still -- for your safety is provided for.

Be still -- for your needs shall be supplied.

Be still -- for all things shall work together for your good.

Be still -- for God bids you, and all will end well.

Take me into Your nearness, dear Lord, and help me to be still. Calm my foolish fears and my fearful imaginations. In all of life, help me, O Lord, to be still.

Sufficient Grace

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:9

The grace of God provides all that the believer needs, and is sufficient for every circumstance that we will ever face in life. Human strength will fail -- but divine grace cannot. Grace has made us what we are in the Christian life; and grace will continue to make us what God wants us to be, as He works in our lives.

The grace of God is sufficient . . .

to subdue every temptation,

to banish every doubt,

to fortify us against every fear,

to enable us . . .

to conquer every foe,

to perform every duty, and

to endure with patience every affliction.

The grace of God is . . .

an antidote for all our fears,

a solace for all our sorrows, and

a source of joy for all our times of grief!

Let us, then, come to God for grace in every time of need . . .

grace to sanctify our afflictions,

grace to fortify our minds, and

grace to fill us with joy and peace!

Never let us ever give way to doubt, or fear, or despondency -- since the Lord has assured us that His grace is sufficient for us. Do not allow the tempter to persuade you that God's grace is not for you -- for grace is for the unworthy , and the deeper our sense of unworthiness -- the more ready He is to share it with us!

Cheer up, then, my dear tried friend; for there is grace for you, and grace so powerful that it will make you more than a match for all your trials, troubles, and distresses! Lay fast hold of this promise. Believe it, and plead it -- and it will be honored in your experience. Thousands of others have proved it true. Martyrs at the stake, prisoners in their dungeons, and believers in the greatest sufferings -- have found the grace of Jesus to be sufficient. What it was then -- it is now; and what it is now -- it ever will be.

In all the past you have had sufficient grace -- and you shall in all the future! Jesus will never fail you nor forsake you; therefore trust in Him.

My Lord, I know that I am not worthy of Your grace. But I thank You that You have freely given it to me and that it is sufficient for all my needs.

"But by the grace of God I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

Prayer Heard and Answered

"Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble -- and He saved them from their distress!" Psalm 107:79

This idea is repeated four times in this Psalm; and the truth contained in it is repeated many times in other Scriptures. Trouble drives true believers to the Lord in genuine, fervent prayer.

When all is smooth and pleasant , we tend to recite our prayers -- rather than truly pray to the Lord. Then there is no earnestness or power in our prayers. But when we are laden down with trouble; when we feel that we are in imminent peril; when we see that no one can deliver us but God -- then we cry unto the Lord!

We then feel more than we can say . Our prayers well up from the very depths of our hearts. Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, while our hearts plead with the Lord; and when prayers come from our hearts like this -- they always touch the heart of God. We cry -- and the Lord saves us out of our distresses!

Deliverance is certain when faith is exercised and prayer is presented. But how the Lord will deliver us, and when -- must be left to Him. It is enough for us to know that He will deliver, and that both His wisdom and His mercy will guide Him in our deliverance.

In death -- our last trouble, when the heart and flesh are failing -- we will cry unto the Lord. Then will come our last, our complete deliverance. And what a glorious deliverance it will be! Oh, anticipate it often with confidence and satisfaction!

Beloved! Sincere prayer prevails now; prayer will prevail in all our future trials and troubles; and prayer will prevail in the hour of death. Let us not yield to doubt or fear; let us not despond or complain; but let us cry unto the Lord in our troubles, and continue to cry, until the day He delivers us out of our distresses and sets us before His face forever!

"Hear my cry , O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto You, when my heart is overwhelmed! Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I! For You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe!" Psalm 61:1-3

"Call on Me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor Me!" Psalm 50:15

The Cleansing Blood

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins!" 1 John 1:7

In times of affliction and trouble, the Lord often sets our iniquities before us, revealing our secret sins in the light of His holiness. Then it is, that sin appears exceeding sinful, and we are apt to fix our eye so intently upon our carnal nature and sinful inclinations -- that we begin to doubt our acceptance with God, and question if our standing before Him is good.

This is wrong. The sight of secret sin is intended to lay us in the dust in genuine remorse and sincere repentance. Our forgiveness will exalt the free grace of God -- and endear the atoning blood of Christ to us more than ever.

When, therefore, the sins of our past lives come up before us; or the carnal inclinations of our hearts are revealed to us anew -- then we must look at once to the blood of Jesus! That blood, shed for us -- has put away the guilt of our sins forever, and has obtained our eternal redemption. And that blood, applied to us when we confessed our sins to God in true repentance -- still removes all sense of condemnation, giving us sweet peace and holy confidence in God and strength to walk in victory.

The blood of the Lamb is for daily use . It cleanses us from all sin: not only once -- but every time we exercise faith in it.

Precious blood of Jesus! Let us fix the eyes of our mind on it, believing that there is infinite merit in it and that, depending upon it -- we are delivered at once from all the penal consequences of sin.

The person who trusts continually in the blood of Christ can never be condemned -- but will have everlasting life. He who keeps his eye fixed on the blood of Jesus -- will enjoy peace with God and be delivered from all his sins and his slavish fears.

O Lord, apply the blood to my conscience, and fill me with all joy and peace in believing in its infinite virtue and everlasting effectiveness!

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace!" Ephesians 1:7

The Blessed Man

"Blessed is the man you chasten , O Lord -- the man you teach from your law!" Psalm 94:12

The chastenings of the Lord often appear severe -- but they are merciful. They . . .

correct our follies,

subdue our proud wills, and

soften and humble our hard hearts before Him.

When God chastens -- He teaches . The lessons are found in His Word -- but we never learn many of them -- until we go through the furnace! We often learn more truth from one short, sharp affliction -- than we do from many books and sermons!

In affliction, God teaches us . . .

our own emptiness and vanity,

our dependence on Himself, and

the insufficiency of all earthly things!

In affliction, God . . .

endears the Lord Jesus and His great salvation to us;

shows us the value of the provision of grace;

makes our consciences tender and honest;

qualifies us for usefulness on earth; and

fits us for the enjoyment of Himself in Heaven.

We need chastening. If we do not receive it -- we become

carnal and worldly,

light and trifling,

unsavory and useless,

in both the world and the church. It is a blessed thing to be chastened of the Lord, especially when the rod teaches us such important and invaluable lessons. Chastened Christians are generally useful and attractive Christians.

But you must not suppose that a Christian is not being chastened, just because you do not witness his correction. The rod is sometimes laid on the body -- but more frequently on the soul . The heart knows its own bitterness -- when others little suspect what painful chastening it is enduring.

"Heed the rod -- and the One who appointed it!" Micah 6:9. Chastened Christian! Seek grace . . .

to bear the rod,

to bless the rod, and

to kiss the hand that holds the rod!

Heavenly Father, correct us tenderly and lovingly; and whenever You correct us -- let us see Your gracious face!

"Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the chastening of the Almighty!" Job 5:17

All for the Best

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God -- to those who are the called according to His purpose!" Romans 8:28

All things? Yes! Everything that happens to the Christian is directed and overruled by God's special Providence, for his good. The experience may be very bitter -- it may lay him very low and try him to the core; it may keep him in the dust for a long time. But it will do him good -- not only in the end, but also while it lasts.

Believer, your present trial is for your good. Nothing could be better for you! You may not see it now; you may even feel as if you never could think so -- but the time is coming when you will bless God for it!

You love God -- and God loves you with an infinite and eternal love. You came to the cross as a poor sinner -- and you looked to the Lord Jesus to be your perfect Savior. This proves that you have been called according to God's purpose. You are one of God's beloved ones, and as such -- you may have the assurance that all things . . .

light and darkness,

health and sickness,

hatred and love,

prosperity and adversity,

life and death --

will work together for your good!

God asserts the fact -- and therefore you should believe it. The history of all God's people proves and illustrates it -- and therefore you should rejoice in it.

Dark clouds bring rich blessings -- and sharp winters introduce fruitful springs. Even so, sore troubles often precede the sweetest consolations. Your present affliction -- whether it is . . .

sickness of body,

trouble of mind,

bereavements,

losses,

crosses, or

whatever else

-- is working for your good. It will work for good in the future -- and it is working for good now . While your heart is bleeding, and you are tempted to think that all is against you -- all is working together for your good!

Dear Lord, I do not see how my affliction can be good for me. But help me, Lord, to accept it as such by faith -- so that I may receive what You have for me through it.

"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope!" Romans 5:3-4

Comfort for the WIDOW

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows , is God in His holy dwelling." Psalm 68:5

The widow often feels destitute and desolate; and when she most needs sympathy from others -- she often experiences it least. The God of Israel is the widow's God . He offers to be her husband -- to fill the husband's place, and perform the father's part. He says, "Let your widows trust in Me." It is as if He had said, "I am able . . .

to supply all the widow's needs ,

to crush all the widow's foes ,

to sanctify all the widow's sorrows , and

to fill the widow's heart with comfort and peace!

Let her ask Me to do so; let her trust Me to do so; let her expect Me to do so!"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-smith/comfort-for-christians/>

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