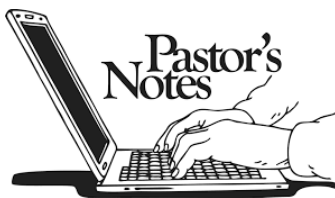


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Comfort of God

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2Corinthians 1:3-4

The song "Jesus Is Coming Soon" by R. E. Winsett begins with the words: "Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear, Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake". It would seem that troublesome times are here, not just in the governmental situation but in many personal situations. Many of us oldsters have never seen nor imagined some of the things we are seeing today.

Isaiah 5:20 says: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" There seems to be a big movement in the direction of that verse. We need to be careful that we are not calling things that are evil good and things that are good in God's eyes evil. Those who promote evil seem to have multiple excuses as to why promoting Bible defined evil is a good thing. We need to remember that God has the final say as to what is right and wrong. Mankind can make as many excuses as they want as to why they promote the things they do, but God has already established what He says is right.

3John 1:11 says: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." We are admonished by God to go about our business of doing what is good. We will need to study the scriptures to see what God thinks is right and wrong. 1Peter 3:12 says: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Our text verse (2Cor 1:3-4) tells us that God is the "God of all comfort". He then exclaims that He will "comfort us in all our tribulation". Tribulation is defined as: "distress or suffering resulting from oppression or persecution" (Merriam-Webster). Easton's Bible Dictionary states it as: "trouble or affliction of any kind". God is telling us that no matter what the cause He will give us comfort.

Many today feel they are having or are about to have trouble or affliction. Is God up to the task of giving us comfort? Are His promises of comfort true? The answer to these questions depends upon how much we trust God with our life. Faith in God is the beginning of enabling His comfort. When the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment was discovered by Him, He stated in, Luke 8:48 "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Without exercising her faith the woman would not have had the comfort and peace promised. Her faith was demonstrated by the action the woman took. She moved toward Christ.

The problem for us is that sometimes we do not move closer to Christ when difficulty comes. We try other self-help things first. In this we miss the comfort of God's Spirit at the beginning of the difficulty and that is getting off to a bad start. We must remember that God wants to comfort us.

If our house is on fire do we stand inside and watch to see what happens. Do we take 30 minutes and try to fight the fire ourselves. No, we call the fire department. We call the ones who are properly equipped and have the knowledge of how to fight the fire. God is the one who is equipped and has the knowledge to comfort us. We need to stop trying to fight the fires our self and turn to the one who can.

We miss the comfort God wants to give because we don't move in His direction. We don't pray about the problem. We don't get our Bible and prayerfully read God's word. We don't fellowship with other believers to draw upon their God given strength and experience (See 2Corinthians 1: 4). That woman realized after trying many different other ways to solve her problem, that the real answer was Jesus Christ all along. She reasoned, "If I can just get closer to Christ and just touch the hem of His garment". We need to do the same and have the faith to move closer to Christ, not further away.

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Romans 15:4 "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope".

Forgotten God

In his 1983 acceptance speech for the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn] recalled the words he heard as a child, when his elders sought to explain the ruinous upheavals in Russia: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened." He added, "If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire twentieth century, here too I would be unable to find anything more precise and pithy than to repeat once again: "men have forgotten God."?

John Wilson, reviewing 'solzhenitsyn and the Modern World, in Christianity Today, Feb. 7, 1994, p. 57

Impossible Without Faith In God

I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to have a moral community or nation without faith in God, because without it everything rapidly comes down to "me,? and "me? alone is meaningless. Today Americans have stopped acting in terms of their own moral, ethical and religious beliefs and principles. They've stopped acting on what they knew was right-and the "me? has become the measure of everything. However, moral societies are the only ones that work. If anyone thinks there is not a direct and invaluable relationship between personal integrity in a society and that society's prosperity, that person has simply not studied history. And this should not surprise us. Great moral societies, built upon faith in God, honor, trust, and the law blossoms because they are harmonious; because people love or at least respect their fellowman; because, finally, they have a common belief in something beyond themselves. It simplifies life immensely; you do not waste and spend your days fighting for turf, for privilege, for money and power over your fellowman. Alexis de Tocqueville said it best when he realized even at the very beginning of our national life, "America is great because America is good. If America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great." - Georgia Anne Geyer

Which Ever Way

One day C. H. Spurgeon was walking through the English countryside with a friend. As they strolled along, the evangelist noticed a barn with a weather vane on its roof. At the top of the vane were these words: GOD IS LOVE. Spurgeon remarked to his companion that he thought this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message. "Weather vanes are changeable," he said, "but God's love is constant."

"I don't agree with you about those words, Charles," replied his friend. "You misunderstood the meaning. That sign is indicating a truth: Regardless of which way the wind blows, God is love."