

PROGRAM 39 PAGE 1

WHEN YOU CRY FOR COMFORT (PART 2)

Page 1 When The Load Gets Too Heavy

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

I love this scripture and its context. The Lord Jesus had just thanked His Father for hiding heaven's gems of truth from the world's wise men and revealing them to the babes of simplicity (v25). He then put out His divine "love call" to all the tired, distressed, burdened and broken to "Come unto me...I will give you rest." Where better for a frightened, fearful, fatigued sheep to find safety and warmth than in the arms of the Great Shepherd?!

Now His invitation is to you. He invites you to come often - always- with your heavy burdens. He promises to yoke up with you, a yoke that, unlike the world's yoke that will tear and scar, will be gentle and light. I heard the story of a dad and his son who went camping together. Before pitching their tent, there were some heavy rocks that had to be removed. The young son went to work, but soon became discouraged when faced with a large rock too heavy to carry or roll. He was about to give up, when his father asked if he had tried every possibility. When the lad said he had, his daddy answered kindly, "No, you haven't. You haven't asked me to help."

And so it is with you and me. What burden are you carrying that is threatening to break and bury you? A life-long negative habit? A loved one that has broken your heart? Circumstances that look as bleak as the surface of the moon? Physical, spiritual or emotional overload that forecasts "burnout?" Come to Jesus - right now - and ask Him to move those heavy rocks that you can't even budge. Then quietly trust Him - love Him - and thrill at how He does it!

My prayer: "I struggle so often with loads, You never intended me to carry alone, Lord Jesus. I come to You now for relief from my heavy burdens and rest for my hurting soul."

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Page 2 His Prayers Are Always Answered

“But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” Luke 22:32

Poor, precious Peter! He gives us such hope because of God's great love for him in spite of Peter's greatest failures before the Lord. Having the Lord rebuke him with "Get behind me Satan." Denying Jesus and even cursing in order to convince others that he was no friend of Jesus. Cocky enough to put down all the disciples while elevating himself with "If they all deny you, I won't!" But behind all of his problems was a pure and simple love for God that Jesus both saw and appreciated. Now He is telling Simon what I believe He would tell you and me; how Satan would sift Peter - and us - like wheat and blow our faith to the wind without the Messiah's direct intercessory intervention. (see v 31)

Just think of it: the Creator of the whole universe and the Savior of the world praying specifically that Peter's faith would not fail! No wonder when Pentecost converted him from his own frail faith to a man super-charged by the Holy Spirit he was well able to carry out Jesus' call to "strengthen thy brethren." Now it is you being prayed for by name - by Christ Himself: "Neither pray I for these alone (those disciples with Him) but for them also which shall believe on Me...(those who would love Him down through the ages)." (John 17:20)

With a God who keeps count of every hair on your head; with a Holy Spirit who sees every tear that falls; with a Redeemer who prays for you as His personal responsibility, is it any wonder God calls you more than a conqueror?! So take heart - the One whose prayers are always answered is praying for you! My prayer: "I stand in awe of You, Lord Jesus. To even contemplate You praying for me makes me cry out to be able to comprehend such a wonder. Let this truth transform me from a little-faith to a great-faith who can strengthen my brethren."

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Page 3 What It Means To Be Adopted

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:15

How many people grow old still wishing they had been born someone else. Maybe a movie star or a rich man or a great intellect. They would have even been proud just to have been adopted into one of those supposedly "important" families. But while those fantasies are worthless (for don't forget, many miserable movie stars, rich men and super-intelleccts wish they had been born someone else!), the Creator of heaven and earth seeks to adopt every human being into His "forever family."

The wonder of it all! When you turned from your sins and asked Jesus to save you, you moved from being a child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) to being called a "son of God. " (Romans 8:14) You were transferred from Satan's kingdom of darkness to Christ's Kingdom of light. Adopted by God as His very own, you are no longer a slave to Satan, sin or self. Now you are free to obey the Holy Spirit who lives within you and will teach you what to think, say and do. And as we please Him through simple obedience, the Spirit will bring a blissful cry from deep within us that says "Abba" - the Hebrew word for "Father" - as we cuddle in God's arms.

I read the following story about some first graders discussing a picture of a family. "One little boy in the picture had a different color hair than the other members. One child suggested that he was adopted and a little girl said, 'I know all about adoption because I was adopted.' 'What does it mean to be adopted?' asked another child. 'It means,' said the little one, 'that you grew in your mommy's heart instead of her tummy.'" See why being adopted by God is so awesome? It all came about by the love in His heart!

My prayer: "Oh my Abba - my Father - thank You for carrying me in Your heart long before I was carried in my mother's womb. Thank You for adopting me into the most important family of all - Your own! By Your grace, I want to show my appreciation by walking worthy of such an honor"

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Page 4 God Has A Job For You

"Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." 2 Corinthians 1:4

Ever stop to think that you could be busy every day for the rest of your life just offering a word and a hand of comfort to those around you? Fact is, that is exactly what God intends for you to do. The Holy Spirit is called the "Comforter" - because He rushes to console you in every trouble, calamity and affliction that you pass through. God will never allow you to experience inner or outer pain without His soothing presence and peace.

The Lord also knows that this is the best way we learn compassion for others. I remember how easy - and foolish - it was for me as a young minister in my twenties to tell hurting people "I understand." No I didn't - I couldn't in my robust health of youth. But then I returned from a missionary journey to Mexico in great pain and was rushed to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. The next day I was forced to walk, when all I wanted to do was lie quietly and groan loudly. I was finally beginning to "understand" the pain of others by first going through some myself.

The Great Comforter - the Holy Spirit - wants to make you a mini- comforter in a world of pain. How? When someone tells you of their problem or pain, take their hand and pray right then. Don't ask them - just pray - and don't be surprised if when you say "Amen" he/she is in tears. Opportunities like this are endless. Use the phone, letters, personal conversations, e-mail and any other avenue God gives you to take the comfort He brings you when you need it most and give it to others when they're down.

My prayer: "How wonderful it is, my Father, to find You so close and caring during my times of suffering. Just as You come to comfort me, so I will go to comfort others. Please open my eyes to those opportunities."

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Page 5 Tears Of Regret? Or Tears Of Love?

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:4

Though this verse contains five of life's most dreaded words, it has brought comfort and strength to millions. Many times I have quoted this scripture at funerals and watched despair give way to hope. The five words none of us welcome are tears, death, sorrow, crying and pain.

They only last for a brief time compared to eternity. Then they will vanish forever. Death will die its own death and lose its sting. The grave will surrender its temporary sovereignty over mere mortals and be swallowed forever in Christ's victory.

However, there is something else in today's truth that stuns me into silence. It is the tenderness of the Father who, while glorifying His Son in all things, reserves one special act for Himself. While the Son of God is the preparer of mansions, the One to whom every knee will bow and the One who will judge His saints, God the Father chooses to be the One who wipes every tear from the eyes of the redeemed.

That should fill us with gratitude but also make us careful in our walk. Why should there be tears in heaven? None of us dare give our opinions as final when the Lord has left that question mostly a mystery. Perhaps tears when we see how good He was and all He brought us through. Perhaps tears from a sense of all the accumulated sorrow, crying, pain, and death that we once witnessed and experienced, and a final wiping of our eyes by our tender Father who pronounces us free forever. Perhaps tears when we see how wonderful He is and how little we really loved Him; how important the souls of others are to Him and how many we failed to reach; what a terrible price Jesus paid for us and how little a price we were willing to pay in serving Him. Our verse can be both a comfort and a caution to you and me. May most of our tears not be because of regrets but because whatever we went through we did in love and loyalty to Jesus.

My prayer: "I thank You Father, that though man's attempt at a new order will always fail and pass away, You will bring Your children through to a new and glorious eternal day. I long to live that my tears will not be because of causing

You pain but because they came from the unavoidable afflictions that are the lot of the godly."

