

BE A COMFORTER – READING

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4.

The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin. Jesus says, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” John 12:32. And as one is drawn to behold Jesus uplifted on the cross, he discerns the sinfulness of humanity. He sees that it is sin which scourged and crucified the Lord of glory. He sees that, while he has been loved with unspeakable tenderness, his life has been a continual scene of ingratitude and rebellion. He has forsaken his best Friend and abused heaven's most precious [Page 10] gift. He has crucified to himself the Son of God afresh and pierced anew that bleeding and stricken heart. He is separated from God by a gulf of sin that is broad and black and deep, and he mourns in brokenness of heart.

Such mourning “shall be comforted.” God reveals to us our guilt that we may flee to Christ, and through Him be set free from the bondage of sin, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God. In true contrition we may come to the foot of the cross, and there leave our burdens.

The Saviour's words have a message of comfort to those also who are suffering affliction or bereavement. Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is “for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace. [Page 11]

The Lord will work for all who put their trust in Him. Precious victories will be gained by the faithful. Precious lessons will be learned. Precious experiences will be realized.

Our heavenly Father is never unmindful of those whom sorrow has touched. When David went up the Mount Olivet, “and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot” (2 Samuel 15:30), the Lord was looking pityingly upon him. David was clothed in sackcloth, and his conscience was scourging him. The outward signs of humiliation testified of his contrition. In tearful, heartbroken utterances he presented his case to God, and the Lord did not forsake His servant. Never was David dearer to the heart of Infinite Love than when, conscience-smitten, he fled for his life from his enemies, who had been stirred to rebellion by his own son. The Lord says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be

zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19. Christ lifts up the contrite heart and refines the mourning soul until it becomes His abode.

But when tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending--the Angel of the covenant; and, weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him. [Page 12]

“Happy is the man whom God correcteth: . . . He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” Job 5:17-19. To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealings of His presence.

God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace.

Think of this, children of suffering and sorrow, and rejoice in hope. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4.

Blessed are they also who weep with Jesus in sympathy with the world's sorrow and in sorrow for its sin. In such mourning there is intermingled no thought of self. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows, enduring heart anguish such as no language can portray. His spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men. He toiled with self-consuming zeal to relieve the wants and woes of humanity, and His heart was heavy [Page 13] with sorrow as He saw multitudes refuse to come to Him that they might have life. All who are followers of Christ will share in this experience. As they partake of His love they will enter into His travail for the saving of the lost. They share in the sufferings of Christ, and they will share also in the glory that shall be revealed. One with Him in His work, drinking with Him the cup of sorrow, they are partakers also of His joy.

It was through suffering that Jesus obtained the ministry of consolation. In all the affliction of humanity He is afflicted; and “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 2:18. In this ministry every soul that has entered into the fellowship of His sufferings is privileged to share. “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5. The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow. “The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort . . . 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.” 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.¹

¹ Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 9-13.

BE A COMFORTER – STUDY GUIDE

1. Have you ever had to go through the experience of someone close to you (or you yourself) losing a loved one to death? What things helped to comfort the person?
 - 1a. If you haven't gone through the experience in question 1, what are some things that you think would comfort someone who was?
2. Should we tell someone who is going through trial “God means this for your good?” Why or why not? Revisit your answer after you've completed the rest of the study and the reading.
3. Have you ever felt really, really badly because of a sin you committed? Was that feeling different from how you felt about other sins? Should you have the same feeling for all sins?
4. What are the two types of mourners the author says Matthew 5:4 addresses? {MB 9.2, 10.2}
5. Why does the author say people mourn for sin? {MB 9.2}
6. What comfort does Jesus provide for the mourners in question #5? {MB 10.1}
7. If received in _____, the _____ that seems so bitter and _____ to _____ will prove a _____. The _____ blow that blights the _____ of earth will be the means of _____ our eyes to _____. {MB 10.2} Is it necessary to explain this to someone while they are going through a trial, or after? Explain.
8. How does God comfort the mourners who are suffering bereavement and affliction? {MB 12.2}

9. Have you entered into “[Christ’s] travail for the saving of the lost”? {MB 12.4} Why or why not? How can you “toil with zeal to relieve the wants and woes of humanity...” as Jesus did?

Thought Question: Are there currently, or have there been, trials in your life? If not, should you be worried, given that the author says in {MB 10.3} – “The trials of life are God’s workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character.”

