



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

March 2016

“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God.

“Speak kindly to the heart of Jerusalem...”

Isaiah 40:1-2a (NASB)

Dearly Beloved,

I received many notes of thanks from saints who are saying AMEN to last month's *Letters of Faith* about the need for comforters in the Church today, including some precious testimonies about how timely this Word is in their own lives. I hope you also are now more aware of the need for comfort that surrounds you in the church today and will be alert to the Holy Spirit saying to you, ***Comfort My people!***

Keep in mind that “comfort” means to console, to encourage, and to exhort. Last month we got as far as discussing consoling comfort. Now we'll examine encouraging comfort and exhorting comfort.

“Encouragement” implies that the comfort given or spoken about inspires with courage; it lifts up the spirit and quickens the heart to faith in God and to believe anew!

This kind of encouraging comfort was the main thrust of the apostles' ministry throughout the book of Acts! Acts 14:22 (AMPC) says Paul and Barnabas went about **“establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith, and [telling them] that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”** We all need to constantly be encouraged to press on through tribulations and hardships into the kingdom and faith in our loving God. It is the victories in this struggle that develop the character of Christ Jesus in us.

Encouraging comfort is also needed to help keep us from falling into the deceitfulness of sin! **“...encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”** (Heb. 3:13 NASB)

I opened a letter from a precious businessman friend and an anguished cry poured out: “I've been fired! After 25 years of service, no notice, no pension, no explanation. Help!” He desperately cried out for encouraging comfort!

Meeting with him later that day, I became very aware that I was NOT to say: “There's a lot of that going around these days!” like he was suffering from a head cold or the flu. Nor was I to give him a generic comfort Scripture like Romans 8:28: **“...God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God...”** Nor was I to bellow at Satan and demand that he give back my friend's job! (Though sometimes God will say to do all of those things.)

The Holy Spirit Comforter urged me into the second kind of comfort: encouragement, which includes releasing and stimulating in order to get up and get going again. I prayed with him to cut all roots of judgments and to strongly seek deep forgiveness. Then, I suggested he examine his God-given natural talents and desires, instead of just his present circumstances or his past employment, and dared him to take up the challenge and risk of looking for a job where his interest and giftings from God really lay.

I reminded him of the several completely different careers God had led me through, and how each time He had faithfully lifted me from apprehension to confidence, using each new experience

to develop more of the character of Jesus in me. Then I put my arm around his shoulders and asked God to deliver him from the fear of the future that had gripped him. He left for home with his shoulders squared and a grin on his face. He could barely wait to see God's plan unfold in his life, which I rejoice to say was relatively prompt and very rewarding.

Exhorting comfort is much stronger, often even militaristic in nature. The English used to have major fracas with the Scots that would leave the Scots bleeding and dying along the road to battle. But then, up over the moors would be heard the stirring echoes of the bagpipes' call to gallantry. The wounded and dying Scots would struggle back to their feet as though resurrected by the exhortative pipes' call as way down deep inside their soul something rose up and said, "We're going on!"

Learn to exhort like that now as you walk alongside a wounded saint. Be a Paraclete—a Holy Spirit Comforter—to them! Exhort them to rise up and take one more step. You're alongside and they're crippled, their knees have become wobbly and you say, "Come on! You can take one more step toward Jesus!" Point them toward Jesus. Escort them to Jesus. "Come on, take one more step. You can do it" While they're going along with your strengthening and exhortation, they will be so concentrated on Jesus that suddenly they will realize you are no longer there; they are with Jesus and operating in His strength.

But be careful, O comforter! O counselors listen to this: never allow them to become dependent on you for strength and guidance, but on Jesus. Always on Jesus! Like crutches, we may help bear the load for a while when necessary, but as soon as possible, we should be discarded.

Like the bagpipers were to the flagging, battle-worn Scotsman is what the Apostle Paul's words were meant to be when he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12: **"...we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."**

The primary steps of Holy Spirit comforting:

1. Call out to Jesus for help! Point them to Jesus as the answer and solution, then *bring them* to Jesus, *escort them* to Jesus like the disciples finally did with Blind Bartimaeus. Remind them that Isaiah 53:4 says, **"Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried..."** Griefs and sorrows and sickness and pains were carried for us by Jesus on the cross just as surely as were our sins. He is *the* burden bearer!

2. Minister Holy Spirit-quickened Scriptures like Proverbs 12:25: **"Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad."** And **"...through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."** (Rom. 15:4) Minister Scriptures that the Holy Spirit has used to minister comfort to you!

3. Release a word of prophecy. Remember 1 Corinthians 14:3: **"But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification (to build-up) and exhortation (to stir-up) and consolation (to cheer-up)."** That sounds a lot like comfort to me! Be alert to the Holy Spirit and *expect* Him to give you a prophetic word of comfort. Cry out for it! It is the testimony of Jesus in you!

4. Share a faith-building testimony that will comfort, encourage, and exhort! That's building each other up (Eph. 4:16) so that we can overcome with the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11). Be sure to share the "tests" you have overcome and passed! Always comfort—never commiserate!

5. Comfort with a sanctified loving-touch. A Holy embrace releases pent-up tears and hidden fears, and builds faith. Like Jesus laying His hand on the leper, He wants us to do the same. The Lord showed me that as I put my arm around the shoulders of a man to comfort him, it would go under the depression and oppression he was carrying and lift their weight off of him. We are to exhibit the 1 Cor. 13:7 kind of loving comfort that **"...bears all things..."** and Galatians 6:2, **"Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."**

6. Don't preach, teach, or sermonize! Avoid the temptation to tell the person how or what they should have done to have avoided the problem ever happening! Remember, the Good Samaritan did not spend time pointing out to the victim of a highway robbery and beating how he could have avoided this pain by having chosen to travel in the safety of a caravan, or at a better time of day. He helped him. He poured on him the healing comfort of oil and wine! Be sensitive, not corrective. The object is restoration, not retraining.

Job 6:14, **“For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; lest he forsake the [reverential] fear of the Almighty.”** Let the healing balm of Christ’s love and strength quietly flow into the starved and weakened places deep inside their hearts.

7. And finally, don't be an enabler! Let the Holy Spirit complete His work. Don't feed steak to one the Holy Spirit has put on peapods. Conviction *should* bring Godly sorrow, which leads to repentance . . . then forgiveness . . . then restoration!

So Beloved . . . Comfort My people, says the Lord! Speak tenderly into their hearts! Let this admonition of God’s Word be to each one of us!

Our prayer for you as a body is 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17: **“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”**

Huge comforting hugs,



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