

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Where do you go for comfort?

(Jerry Fite)

There are times when the Christian is tested to the depths of his or her faith. Periodically, Christians are forced by the death of their loved ones to continue living with loneliness. Regrettably, brethren fail in their resolve to serve the Lord, and are overtaken in sin. Such times find the heart of the Christian dark, filled with doubt and sorrow. In such times, we need comfort. But where do we go; to whom or what do we turn in order to experience needed comfort?

We need to turn to God, even when we realize we have sinned against Him. The purpose of Jesus' parable of the prodigal son was to show how God, the Father, is always ready to receive back with joy the penitent profligate child (*Luke 15:2, 11-32*). Like our Father, fellow Christians should forgive and comfort the brother or sister who repents of their sins. Paul exhorted the brethren in Corinth to “*forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow*” (*2 Corinthians 2:7*). A two-way street should always be clear in our lives as Christians. We should turn to God and His people for comfort and forgiveness, and should be perceived by those in

deep sorrow over sin as people who are quick to forgive and ready to comfort.

When sin is not present, yet we are suffering persecution due to standing for the faith of the Gospel, we should turn to those who have endured like sufferings because of receiving God's comfort. Paul encouraged his brethren to remain steadfast by knowing God “*comforteth us in our affliction that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God*” (*2 Corinthians 1:4*). When you suffer persecution because of your stand for the faith, do you turn to faithful brethren who have been where you are and can comfort you?

We should turn to the Scriptures for comfort. “*For whatsoever things were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope*” (*Romans 15:4*). The Old Testament Scriptures spoke of the coming of Christ in whom we have hope for salvation. Today, we have them fulfilled in Christ, with the promises found in the New Testament Scriptures to provide us great comfort in times of sorrow.

Paul did not want his brethren to sorrow as those who have no hope when death has separated them from their beloved fellow Christians. By inspiration, Paul revealed glorious events that were ahead of all of us. Jesus will return at the trump of God, and the dead in Christ will be raised first. Christians, alive when the Lord returns, will together with those who have died in Christ be caught up in the air to meet the Lord; and together, in this caught-up manner, we will forever be with the Lord (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*). After revealing what is ahead for the Christian, Paul writes, “*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*” (*1 Thessalonians 4:18*).

What do you want emphasized at your funeral that will comfort your loved ones? We should want the Scriptures, containing the promises of God and the reason for our hope in Christ emphasized. We should investigate our life now to make sure the character of our life is harmonizing with the Scriptures read for comfort. How much Scripture do you hear emphasized at the funerals you attend? Our relationship with Christ, and His word should be at the forefront of offering comfort to our mourners.