

The Consolations of God

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Job 15:11 "Are the consolations of God Small with thee"

This question, are the consolations of God small with thee, was asked by Eliphaz to Job. Eliphaz was one of Job's "miserable comforters". Job's "helpers" were convinced that he had done something very wrong in order to be receiving the "just punishment" that had been dealt him. Eliphaz says to Job in the 4th Chapter, V 7-8: "*Remember I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same*".

The remarks, however, concerning the consolations of God to Job were grossly unjust. Job certainly did not regard the consolations of God a small thing. Job was aware of the comforts of God. He knew that his transgressions were sealed up in a bag, and that God sewest up his iniquity (Job 14:17). He also stated in Job 19:25- "for I know that my redeemer liveth..."

However wrong the statements towards Job was, however wrongly he was perceived by his "friends" to being justly punished, we must look at ourselves to the words spoken. Many of the comments and questions that were directed to Job would be much more likely to fit ourselves. These friends of Job were certainly not uneducated men. They were said to be among the "*gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father*"- (Job 15:10). Job, in chapter 42:10, was even required by God to pray for them before he would be given twice as much as he had before. Though these men were wise, they were not instructed of God as to the consoling to man. Paul on the other hand was. In 2nd Corinthians 1:3-7, Paul speaks of the ability to comfort God's children through the comfort that God had given him during his tribulation.

With these thoughts before us we should now consider the questions: Are the consolations of God small with thee? Do we regard the consolations of God as small? Do you judge that the comforts of faith are insignificant? Are the consolations of God too small for thee?

Many of God's people have suffered great hardships and trials while in the service of God, and have done so for the joy of God. The three Hebrew children in the book of Daniel would not fall down to the graven image. Nebuchadnezzar became angry and warned them that if they didn't fall down to the image they would be cast into the fiery furnace and "*who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*" They answered and said- "*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king*". The Jews were then thrown in and a fourth person was seen in the fiery furnace with them, "one likened unto the Son of God". It was the Lord who was with them, and they were delivered out of that furnace. They were completely unharmed. They were delivered unbound and the smell of smoke could not even be found on them. The consolations of God certainly were not a small thing to these men. They found great comfort in knowing that their Lord would deliver them.

In the book of Acts (7:55-60) we read of the account of Stephen before his death. Though his persecution was great, his mind was steady on the Lord. He found a great comfort in God who was able to deliver him. He saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God, then cried out (while being

stoned), *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”*. During all this time surely the consolations of God were no small thing to Stephen, for through his consolation in God he was able to bear the pain until death. We also read in Acts (16:22-26) of Paul and Silas who were beaten with many stripes and thrown into the inner prison for healing the damsel that was possessed with a spirit of divination. Bound with their feet fast in the stocks we see the consolations of God manifested to both Paul and Silas. Though they had reason whereof they might call on God for deliverance, or even that their adversaries might receive a just reward for their ungodly deed, we find a much different conclusion to their sufferings. As they lay in that cold and dark prison, still feeling the pain of the beatings that were lain on their back, they could do little else than rejoice. *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God”*. Oh, what a comfort that should be to us, what a consolation, to know that, even during their great sufferings, God was first and foremost on their minds. Had not the consolations of God been a great thing to Paul and Silas, surely they would not have endured the affliction with songs of praise.

Many characters in the bible were afflicted by man while doing God’s service. Paul writes in 2nd Timothy 3:12- *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Chris Jesus shall suffer persecution”*. There is persecution from the world for the child of God that desires to follow and walk according to his will. We read in Hebrews 11:24-25 where *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward”*.

The consolations were not small to these people, they were able to look unto Jesus during times of trials and affliction and rise above them. There was a peace and comfort found that far exceeded their sufferings. Isaiah 26:3 states- *“thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee”*. Oh that our minds could remain steadfastly on our Lord and Savior. Paul says it so well in Hebrews 12:3 – *“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds”*. How we ought to consider him, and put our trust in him. *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not into thine own understanding, in all they ways acknowledge him and he shall direct they paths”*! There is a voluntary obedience for God’s children, one that rewards a child of God with his comforts and blessings while walking this sin cursed earth.

So often we are cast down by the troubles of life. The arrows of the world seem to easily pierce our tender skin, our faith begins to weaken under the heavy burdens of life and we lose sight of what Christ has done for us as we slowly sink in the pits of despair. We begin to feel as Peter did, when once; he took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink in the troubled waters. Though Peter was sinking Christ was there to stretch out his hand and grab hold of him when he cried *“Lord, save me”*. The salvation under consideration here is not of an eternal nature, for Peter had walked to Jesus by faith, and evidence of being a child of God. But the salvation is one of great help in time of need while here on earth. Do you, dear child of God, have feelings of despair? Do you at times feel as though you are facing your trials alone without the help of your redeemer? Has that great trust in God and his righteousness, the thing you once cherished so much, been placed behind you? Paul says in Ephesians 6:16- *“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked”*. Our faith in Jesus Chris is our deliverance. It diminishes our problems and gives us hope and assurance. We cannot find satisfaction in worldly things, but in spiritual. In 2Kings 4:16-37, we read of a Shunamite woman who has a son that dies. She seeks Elisha with her vexed soul. When approached by Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, he says unto her, *“Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?”* Her answer to Gehazi even though her soul was vexed was a resounding *“It is well!”* Surely the consolations of God were not small in her site. So ought we to say, *“It is well”*, for as Job stated in chapter 19:25, *“I know that my redeemer liveth!”* Through hard times at work, family strife, poor and

failing health, loss of loved ones, during despair, trials, and tribulations, when we feel as pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, Paul says to “rejoice in the Lord always”. Not to rejoice only during times of abundant blessings, not to rejoice only when the Lord’s manifested love is present with us, but to rejoice always.

Paul builds us up in 2Thessalonians 2:16-17 by saying, “*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work*”. He gives us a consolation that has no end, it is everlasting. It is always there for us, to pick us up out of the dunghill and, by his grace; we are set among princes and made to inherit the throne of glory.

The consolation of God is the salvation that has been given us by grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is being able to see our Savior and to rejoice in the finished work. This is clearly seen with Simeon in Luke 2:25-32. Simeon was a just and devout man, waiting for the consolation of Israel and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And when Simeon took the baby Jesus up in his arms he said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation”. Though, to the world, Jesus was a small infant, to Simeon he was a great consolation: The consolation of Israel.

We can also see the consolations of God as big when we view Christ while he walked in his fleshly robe here on earth. Isaiah 53:3-5 states: “*he is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed*”. Christ was all too familiar with sufferings, but yet we read where his sufferings were for us! Through HIS death we obtain victory, through HIS death are we, by grace, given life everlasting. Never to banish or decay! But now the sufferings of Christ are past, having paid all by his blood shed on Calvary, and the comforts are set forth in us being raised with him. Colossians 3:1- “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*”. We can then find consolation in Christ who is our great high priest. Who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*” – Hebrews 4:15-16.

With these thoughts, the consolations of God should never be small to us. Even the chastening of God towards us should give us hope and assurance, knowing that he dealeth with us as with sons. In Romans 8:18, Paul says- “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*”. James seeks to further comfort us by saying (1:2) - “*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience*”.

There are many pit falls, trials, sufferings and tribulations in life. One who seeks to follow God will not become popular with the world. He will not find himself in the circle of “friends” that he once knew when he was walking in the world. People will think it strange that you no longer walk with them. And oft times we suffer for our own actions while being disobedient to our Father. But dear child of God, do not regard the consolations of God as small. Hold him in front of you, that you may have purpose in your walk.

