

# GOD IS OUR COMFORT

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–5

*<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup>who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup>For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.*

**Additional Reading:** Psalm 46; Psalm 119:50, 76; John 14:16–17; Hebrews 4:14–16; Revelation 21:3–4

In November 1873, a man named Horatio Spafford planned a much-needed trip to Europe with his family. The past two years had been calamitous for them. Because of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, their finances had taken a steep downturn and most of their property and investments had burned to the ground.

At the last minute, Spafford was forced to stay behind because of sudden business demands, and his family went ahead on the steamship. But what was meant to be a family getaway turned into a horrific tragedy. As the ship was crossing the Atlantic, it collided with another vessel. All four of Spafford's daughters perished; only his wife survived.

Spafford found out about his daughters' demise in a telegram, and immediately sailed to England to meet his grieving wife.

Truth be told, tragedies like this are no longer alien to many of us. The coronavirus pandemic has endangered everyone and put to death millions around the world. The trials we've faced have wounded our souls.

Through gaping cracks, however, the light of God's comfort shines through. This was Paul's message in 2 Corinthians: God is our comfort. Paul didn't just write this; having faced trials of many kinds throughout his life and ministry, he had experienced God's comfort firsthand.

The transcendent God who governs all things from His heavenly throne is also an immanent God who is close to the brokenhearted:

- Our heavenly Father is the *God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction*.
- Jesus is our great High Priest, and is able to empathize with us and invite us to approach Him with confidence, so that we can receive mercy and grace in our time of need. Because of His sacrifice on the cross, we are comforted by the truth that we are accepted in the throne room of heaven.
- The Holy Spirit is our comforter and counselor who empowers us and intercedes for us when no words can express our grief. A "comforter" (in Greek, *parakletos*) literally means one who is called near for help by comforting, encouraging, or mediating on behalf of someone else.

In the face of grief, the entire Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is by our side when we call to Him for help. This is our comfort and confidence. Trials and suffering allow us to experience God's comfort in tangible ways, in the same way that the darkest of nights allows us to behold the beauty of the stars.

As Horatio Spafford traveled to meet his wife and his ship passed over the place where his daughters had died, he soothed his broken spirit by writing a timeless hymn that continues to soothe believers today:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well with my soul*

In this world broken by sin, pain and death are inevitable. But God has promised to redeem and restore all things. Someday, He will wipe away every tear, death and sorrow will be no more, and we will experience permanent joy in the presence of the God of all comfort forever (Revelation 21:3–4). Our comfort and hope are deeply anchored on the certainty of His promise.

Like Spafford, as unthinkable as it may sound, may we respond to life's tragedy, grief, and pain with trust in our God who comforts us. May God's presence also cause us to say, "It is well with my soul," and may we comfort others with the comfort we have received from Him.

**THE ENTIRE GODHEAD IS BY OUR SIDE  
WHEN WE CALL TO HIM FOR HELP.**

## Reflect

In the past six months, what has caused the most grief or hardship in your life? How has God been *a very present help* to you in trouble (Psalm 46:1)? What are you learning about Him through these challenges?

God's comfort is not just for our benefit. It is also for others who are suffering. Who can you comfort with the comfort you have received from God? What are you willing to do so they can know God as their comforter?



# PRAY

*Dear God, I cast all my cares upon You, for You are the God of all comfort. Thank You for being my only source of true comfort, my refuge, and my strength. By Your mighty word, You calm the storms that rage in my heart. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for me. Through You, I can come boldly before the throne of grace and find mercy and grace in my time of need. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for You are my helper, counselor, and comforter. Use me as Your vessel to comfort those in need with the same comfort that I have received. In Jesus' name, amen.*