

Sunday January 21st sermon: "No Man Comforted Our Lord Jesus --
The God of All Comforts (Pt 41)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
by John Pittman Hey

Psalm 69; Mark 14:32-50

We have seen that God's comfort of His people rests primarily in His salvation of them from sin and death and Hell.

Everyone longs for a comforter in times of trouble. Not just words, but someone to come along beside us, and help carry the load with us, or at least to understand and sympathize with our trouble.

We read of the three friends of poor Job. They came to comfort him in all his troubles. They wept when they saw him, and sat in silence mourning with him.

But then they had to open their mouths, and provide their faulty analysis of where Job had gone wrong! They did not understand the ways of God, instead arguing a "prosperity" religion of works, and claiming that Job would not have suffered had he not sinned against God. They didn't understand that suffering is not always brought on by the sufferer's personal sin.

Job defended himself against their accusations, and described them as "miserable comforters!"

The great irony of the suffering and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus is this: in order to comfort us by saving us, it was necessary that Christ have no man to comfort Him!

This was foretold by the Spirit of Christ to the Psalmist David in Psalm 69. There it was said of Christ, that He would suffer rebukes, and shame, and dishonor, and false accusations from wicked men. He would take

upon Himself the sins of His people, and treat them as His very own, suffering for them in our place.

The Psalmist denounced those wicked men: "For they persecute him whom thou [God] hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou [God] hast wounded."

The great composer George Frederic Handel, in his oratorio "Messiah," put it this way:

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart;
He is full of heaviness.
He looked for some to have pity on Him,
but there was no man,
neither found He any to comfort Him.
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
like unto His sorrow.

It was, of course, God's rebuke, and God's strokes against Jesus. It was the reproach of our sins that fell on Jesus.

As Isaiah foretold, the people around Jesus would believe He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. And so He was.

But it was for our crimes that God laid upon Jesus! It pleased God to crush Him there at Calvary, and to make His soul an offering for our sin.

Indeed, the lack of a man to comfort Jesus is seen in the passion of the Savior. When at Gethsemane Jesus wept and prayed regarding the prospect of becoming sin for us, He sweat as it were great drops of blood.

But His three closest disciples fell asleep during Christ's anguish! They couldn't even stay awake to pray with Him and comfort Him there.

No doubt, they did not understand the true sorrow of Christ, and how His sacrifice was necessary to save His people from their sins.

Then, a few minutes later, when the mob came to take Jesus away unto judgment, they all forsook Him and fled.

At the cross, there were a few disciples whom Jesus could see, but even they could not comfort Him.

There was no man anywhere to comfort Him, because nobody understood the travail of Christ's soul that day.

No man could come along side Jesus, to help bear His heavy load.

The thief on the cross could say affirming words of sympathy, but even he could not comfort Jesus by helping Him carry our load of guilt there.

In that crucial sense, the Lord Jesus was quite alone. There was no other human being who could understand what He was suffering, much less help Him endure it!

No wonder the hymn writer said:

He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own!
He bore that burden to Calvary,
And suffered and died alone!

God's Lamb could not be helped or upheld or assisted, as He was made a sacrifice for us.

Had any man been able to truly comfort Jesus, His sacrifice would have been broken, and we would have been lost for good.

The astounding thing is this, that while Christ was without a man to comfort Him there, He comforted the poor sinful thief who cried out to Him for help!

How could this be? Christ comforted the thief the very same way that God always comforts His people: by promising Him salvation and everlasting life that very day!

Having been without a man to comfort Him there, Christ is bound and determined that His loved ones should never be without comfort!

The song writer put it well:

I've seen the lightning flashing,
I've heard the thunder roll;
I've felt sin's breakers crashing,
Trying to conquer my soul!
But I heard the voice of Jesus,
Telling me still to fight on!
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone!
No, never alone! No, never alone!
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone!

That we might be comforted, it was necessary that Christ not be comforted as He bore our sins in His Own body on the tree.

Christ comforts us in our chief and principle trouble: our sins, and that load of guilt, and God's wrath and judgment and the Hell we deserve.

He has come along beside us, and not just sympathized, or put His arm around us, or helped us to bear up under the load of sin and guilt and shame.

NO! Christ shifted the entire load of our sin and guilt on to Himself, and discharged our debt completely in His Own body and blood, so that we might go free and clear.

He offers to us, poor helpless sinners, the same comfort He promised that poor guilty thief: one day soon, we will be with Him in Paradise!

That is why we celebrate, around the Lord's Table, the comfortless Jesus on the cross: His body and His blood saved us from our terminal fear and dread.

Therefore we insist upon this, that the Lamb is all the glory, in Immanuel's Land!