



SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:41; 42:5-9; 54:11-12. Luke 4:14-21
DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 46:1-11.

God Our Comfort

Lesson for November 6, 1948

AS THE ENGLISH language keeps on changing, words do not always keep on meaning what they once did. "Comfort" is one of these. When our Bible was translated into English in 1611, the translation most English-speaking people use, the word "comfort" had a bigger meaning than most people put into it nowadays. We think of it as meaning sooth; but it is a bigger idea than that. God is not merely a sooth God. We think of "comfort" as meaning to make comfortable; but it is a stouter word than that. God does not always make his people comfortable. The word means to strengthen, to stand against fear and despair, to put backbone into people.

"Fear Not, O Worm!"

AT THE TIME of the prophecies we study this week, the Israelites had been kicked around a good deal. They had felt the conqueror's boots, they were discouraged, as all good people are when somehow God seems to be letting evil forces triumph. Their little world had split wide apart, their little nation had been blown to the winds.

To those people, torn by terror and bowed down by wretchedness, people who were in serious danger of developing a once-for-all "inferiority complex," people who were about to lose all their backbone, the great prophet brings his messages: "Comfort ye my people, saith your God."

The whole idea is in this one sentence (Is. 41:14): "Fear not, O worm Jacob! . . . I am your helper, saith the Lord."

God does not indulge his people in foolish pride. Beside the Almighty they are worms, insects. Nevertheless, worm though he may be, the man who trusts in God will not be afraid. He will not trust in his own powers, he will trust in his trust in God.

A worm by itself is nothing; but with God on his side, the weakest of men can say with Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" God's men do not get their courage up by flexing their muscles or admiring themselves. They grow in courage as they grow in the knowledge of God.

Goodness And Power

ANY ONE who saw "Edward, My Son" will remember the tragedy of that family. A boy's character went slowly to pieces, because his father was determined that nothing should be too good for him. To gain his purpose the father ran roughshod over everyone who stood in his way, and eventually ruined the lives of all around him, including his son's and his own. The mother, on the other hand, could see, as the father could not, what his indulgence was doing to the boy, making him a weakling and a rat. But she was too weak to stand up against her husband, and her life too was ruined. That story is a kind of parable.

The prophet reveals a God who is both powerful and good; but suppose God were only good but not powerful, or only powerful but not good? Then the world would be in a mess, as that boy Edward was in a mess.

But these three are all in the same God. A God who is power only, might do as Edward's father did, destroy his children without even intending to do so. A God who is goodness only, might want to do right by his world yet not be able to do so, like Edward's mother. A God who knew what was right but neither wanted nor was able to do much about it, would not be a God at all.

God Is Not Weary

SUPPOSE GOD were indeed powerful, good and wise, and yet grew tired from time to time? Suppose all God's good qualities came and went, unpredictably, like the wind on a spring day?

Now, God is the Maker and Keeper of Promises, the Covenant God. He does not grow faint or weary; that is our anchor of comfort.

The earth changes, and men with it; but the Word of the Lord abides forever. His "covenant of peace" does not waver. We do not need to lean gingerly on the Almighty. He will bear all our weight.

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RURAL CHURCHES

St. Paul and Winchester
U.B. Circuit
Dale Osborn, pastor.
St. Paul:
Worship 9:15 a.m.
Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
Sermon by Rev. Paul Parker 7 p.m.
Quarterly business meeting Monday 7:30 p.m.
Prayer meeting Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Winchester:
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Class meeting 10:30 a.m.
Prayer meeting Wednesday 7:30 p.m.

Linn Grove Christian Church
Homer Studebaker, pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Lester Reynolds, Superintendent
November 13, Rally Day-Basket Dinner.

Monroe Methodist Church
W. L. Hall, pastor
9:30 Morning Worship, Gordon W. Hirsch, speaker
10:30 Sunday School
6:45 M.Y.F.
7:30 Evening Service
Wednesday: 7:30 Mid-week Service
8:15 Choir practice
W.S.C.S. all day meeting beginning at 9:30 a.m. Thursday

Rivarre Circuit
U.B. Church
L. A. Middaugh, Pastor
Mt. Zion.
9:30 a.m. Sunday school
10:30 a.m. Preaching service
7:00 p.m. Christian Endeavor
8:00 p.m. Preaching service
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, prayer meeting

Pleasant Grove.
9:00 a.m. Sunday school
10:00 a.m. Class meeting
7:00 p.m. Christian Endeavor
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, prayer meeting

Mt. Victory.
9:00 a.m. Sunday school
10:00 a.m. Class Meeting
7:00 p.m. Christian Endeavor
7:30 p.m. Wednesday, prayer meeting.

NOTICE

My office will be closed Oct. 30 to Nov. 6 inclusive.
DR. C. C. RAYL

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