

# The God of All Comfort

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Date: 15 September 2024

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 46a. This is in the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 46a, page 59 of the psalm books.

We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 7, the tune is Stroudwater. God is our refuge and our strength, our ever-present aid. Therefore, though the earth gives way, we will not be afraid.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 7, we stand to sing to God's praise. We will not be afraid.

Though mountains fall into the sea, though waters come and roar, we will not fear.

Though mountains sway, as waves engulf the shore.

[ 1 : 40 ] I'll rip our clothes to sing's delight, the city of our God.

God is within us, holy place. The holy place in which the Lord, Messiah, says aboard.

God is within us, holy place.

The city will not yield. God is within us, holy place. For God will come, that ring of day, to be her help and shield.

The nations are in despair. The kingdoms disappear.

[ 3 : 05 ] God speaks, and at His mighty voice, the whole earth melts with fear.

The Lord Almighty is with us, to strength and glad sustain.

For Jacob's blood, our strong defence, and war shall remain.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you as we come, singing praise to you for these words that remind us that you are a God who is a refuge, a strength for us, that you are one who is almighty and always with us.

And we pray to know that today as we gather here, as we come from the youngest to the oldest, as we come, gathering under the name of Jesus, gathering to worship you, to praise you.

[ 4 : 33 ] Help us to know that you are with us. Help us to know your presence. Help us to know through your word that you are speaking to us, that we would learn more and more about you.

And we pray for all our young ones. We pray for them as they go out in a moment to the tweenies and the Sunday school and the Bible class. Thank you for each one of them and for all who help with teaching.

And we just pray that you will be with them, Lord, that you will bless them and be near to them in that time that they share together. And also through the week, Lord, in our schools and in our communities as families and as children in our communities, Lord, we pray for your blessing and peace to be upon us day after day.

Guide us, help us, help us to know that you are with us. Help those who are going away from home in these coming days for the first time or returning to studies. Bless them and keep them as they go away, as they continue their studies elsewhere, Lord, that they would know that you are with them, that you are for them.

So, Lord, be with us, bless us, guide us and help us as we ask all things in that name above every name, the name of Jesus, our Lord and our Savior, for his sake and for his glory.

[ 5 : 49 ] Amen. Well, we word to the young ones before you go out. We're just going to think about what we're going to be looking at in the service this morning. We're going to be thinking about a word that we find in the Bible quite often and especially where we're going to look at later on.

We're going to be reading in 2 Corinthians. It's a word that keeps coming up in chapter one there. And it's a word you're probably familiar with, comfort. What does comfort mean?

What does comfort mean? What do you think of when you think of comfort? It's maybe the place that you sleep, your bed. It's a comfortable place.

It's a place that you like. Sometimes a place that you don't want to get out of because it's such a comfortable place. It might be comfortable clothes.

Maybe, like many people, you just like to get out of a suit and a tie like this or out of something that you're wearing coming to church. You like to just put on your pajamas again when you get home

because you're nice and comfortable in that clothes.

[ 6 : 52 ] There's lots of different things that make us comfortable. But what about when we come into church? What about when we come and learn together around God's word?

Are we comfortable there? Well, God wants us to be comfortable. God wants us to know that he is with us.

That's what we were singing in that psalm in verse 7. The Lord Almighty is with us. And it's amazing how he has promised to be with us.

As we're thinking of that word comfort, in the Gospel of John, where Jesus was with his disciples, his close friends, and he was telling them that he had to go away from them, he says, I'm not going to leave you alone, though.

And what he says is, I am going to give you a comforter. A comforter. And what did he mean? Well, he meant the Holy Spirit.

[ 7 : 51 ] He was like, you know, it's not. And it's like something we cannot see, and yet we know it's there. For example, think about yesterday, and how windy it was yesterday.

And you're seeing maybe the trees shaking around or something that's been sitting outside. It's not tied down, and starts blowing around. What's moving it? What's moving the trees?

You can't see it, but it's the wind. It's the wind that's moving it, even up here. Sometimes I show you what's in the pool, but you never believe this.

But look at this. What does this do? It's a fan, isn't it? So when I'm getting hot and bothered up here, I can switch on the fan and it'll cool me down. But you couldn't see the wind that it moves, but it's still there.

You know it's there because you feel it on you. And that's the way that God reminds us that he is with us. The Holy Spirit is described as a wind, a mighty wind.

[ 8 : 50 ] We can't see him, but we know he's there as we trust in him. So even as we come together today, we come worshipping Jesus. We come looking to God, but we come remembering the Holy Spirit is with us and in us when we trust in Jesus.

That's the promise that he will give us his comforter, his Holy Spirit. So as we come together here, we can see it's a place of peace, a place of comfort, a place to come away from the busyness of everything else that is going on and just come and know that God is with us.

That he gives us his comfort and his comforter, the Holy Spirit. And so we look to him to be with us today and every day. We might not see him, but he helps us to know that he is there in every situation of every day.

He is our great comforter. Well, we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Let's pray. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[ 10 : 11 ] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. We're going to sing again now.

We're going to sing in Psalm 9, in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 9. This is on page 9 of the psalm books. And the young ones can go out to the Sunday school at this time.

Psalm 9. We're going to sing from verse 7 down to verse 12. The Lord forever reigns on high. His throne for judgment stands. He'll judge the world in righteousness with justice.

Rule the lands. We'll sing from verse 7 down to verse 12. And the tune is done firmly. And we stand to sing. The Lord forever reigns on high.

The Lord forever reigns on high. His throne for judgment stands. He'll judge the world in righteousness with justice through the lands.

[ 11 : 32 ] The Lord will be a hiding place for those who are oppressed.

And he will be a strong defense for those who have oppressed.

All those who know your name, O Lord, in you their trust will place.

For you do not abandon those who seek your gracious face.

Sing praises to the Lord who sits. In Zion on his throne.

[ 12 : 43 ] Among the nations of the world. See ones Smith- Any news emblens The vessels of the world to appear.

He never will ignore. We'll turn together now to read God's word in 2 Corinthians chapter 1.

2 Corinthians chapter 1. We read from the beginning down to verse 11. You'll find this around page 1160 in the Church Bibles.

2 Corinthians chapter 1 at verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 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.

[ 14 : 34 ] For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation, and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.

Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia.

For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, but that was to make us rely not on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead.

He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

And so on. And may God bless that reading of his word. Let's again bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we do thank you for this day.

[ 15 : 57 ] We thank you for the reminder of it, that it is the first day of the week, and that we begin it looking to you. We are reminded of it, the very power of the resurrection on this day.

For on the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the grave. And we thank you that we come today to worship him as our Lord and as our God, as our risen saviour.

We do pray, Lord, that together we would know that power of the resurrection in our hearts and in our souls, that power that gives life to us, that power that keeps us and sustains us day by day, the power of your grace that is all-sufficient, and the power of your word that is a power unto salvation. We pray that as your word is proclaimed, as your word is preached this day, not just here, but far and wide, that it will be accompanied by that mighty power of the Holy Spirit, that mighty rushing wind, as it's described in the book of Acts, that power that is there to quicken our hearts and our souls, to remind us of the wonder of your grace and the precious nature of your love, your steadfast love towards us, that love that is unchanging and unchangeable, that love that is so demonstrated in your giving your Son, Jesus Christ, and that as we look to him, as we look to the cross, as we look to all that he has done for us, remembering that he is risen, but that in order to rise, he had to go down, and that he came under the power of death himself, in order that we might know the power of life through him.

And so bless us, Lord, bless your word to us, remember us as your people, remember us as a congregation and as a church here. We thank you, Lord, that we have that promise of your presence with us, and we pray to know that day after day, that we would depend upon it for all our different needs, not just as we worship you together here, but as we go away from here, as we go into the day ahead and even into the week ahead, that we would go rejoicing in you, acknowledging you as Lord and God, and knowing that you are with us, that that might be your help.

[ 18 : 23 ] In every circumstance, we find ourselves, even in the days ahead. We thank you that you are God, and there is no other. Remember our homes and our families, remember our communities.

We pray, Lord, for your peace to be over us. We pray for your help in the many different situations that we see around us, people going through times of ill health, people going through times of grief and sorrow, people going through times of anxiety and worries, perhaps over work or lack of it, debt and anxiety for the future of what might come.

But Lord, we thank you that you are the God of all comforts, and we pray that we would know that power and presence in our midst as a people, that we would know your Holy Spirit working around us in the many lives that we see, the lives of your people who have already trusted in you, that you would strengthen and encourage our faith, and the lives of those who have not yet trusted, those who are still, as the word describes finding themselves in the darkness of this world, that they would

see the wonder of the light of the gospel and the glory of the face of Jesus Christ, that you would draw them to yourself.

Remember your church far and wide, O Lord. We thank you for the way you build your church, the way we are assured that your kingdom comes with power. And we do pray for the ministry of your word, and we pray today especially for the beginning of a new ministry in North Uist, giving thanks for the induction yesterday of Reverend David Ferguson, remembering him as he preaches, even at this time, as the first service and as a minister of the congregation there.

May your blessing be with him and all the people who are gathered there as well. And we thank you for David, for Catherine, and for young Duncan. We thank you for the way you have guided them and led them into that place.

[ 20 : 25 ] And we pray that they will know your nearness, your presence with them each day, in each moment of it. We do pray for the wider church as well.

We pray for you to raise up those who administer the gospel as we hear of vacancies and upcoming vacancies so often, as we see the great needs around us, as the harvest is so great in our cities, in our towns, in our villages, Lord.

We long for days of salvation. And we know that the word needs to go out, that your word is that power to salvation. And so we pray for those who would come and hear your call and be obedient to it and to respond, saying, here am I, send me.

And all the fears and anxieties you might have in that, Lord, we can depend on you. And so we pray for people, men, to be raised up to proclaim the wonders of your gospel and for men and women, boys and girls, to be encouraged in sharing the gospel of being lights in this world in which we live. Remember our nation, Lord, as we pray for our leadership over us in all the difficulties and trials and experience that they have at this time. Lord, we pray for your wisdom and government over us.

[ 21 : 45 ] We pray for your blessing to be poured out upon them, that we will be led by a people who know the power of the Holy Spirit, the power that you have to transform and to change a nation from a decline to delight and to delight in the Lord.

So hear our prayers for our people, for our nations of the world, for the gospel cause far and wide and for your people near and far, that you would remember us, Lord, that you would do us good, that you would make your face to shine upon us, that we might rejoice in you.

So hear our prayers. Continue with us, pardoning all our sins as we confess them anew before you this day, our shortcomings, our omissions, all that we do, though, Lord, that is against your will.

We pray to know forgiveness and your mercy upon us. So hear us now and continue with us and we ask all in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, for his sake and for his glory.

Amen. Before we turn back to look at 2 Corinthians chapter 1, we'll sing again to God's praise. And we sing in Psalm 121 in the Scottish Psalter, page 416.

[ 23 : 05 ] Psalm 121, we can sing the whole of this psalm. I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my need.

My safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made. The tune is French and we stand to sing the whole of this psalm, Psalm 121. I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my name.

My safety cometh from the Lord through heaven and earth hath made.

Thy food till naught lets thine nor will be the blood that he keeps.

Beholding that gives Esgiel his slumber sod or sleeves The Lord he keeps the Lord thy shade On thy right hand doth stay The moon by night they shall not not smite nor yet the sun by day The Lord shall keep thy soul it shall preserve thee from all hell As forth thy going out and then on thee on ever will we can turn back to our reading in 2nd

[ 25 : 36 ] Corinthians chapter 1 and we're going to read at verse 3 these two verses verse 3 and 4 and that will be our focus this morning together blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of Marsha and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with a comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God as you read through this section of 2nd Corinthians these opening verses of this chapter of this letter second letter Paul is writing to the church in Corinth you quite quickly begin to see the point that he is going to be making in this section by that word that keeps appearing in all its different forms and the word is comfort comfort and comforted it just comes up again and again in one form or another it is there ten times in verse three through to verse seven and it's just keeping appearing there and this is one of the great passages of scripture where you see

God's divine comfort for his people it's not about telling others to go and comfort somebody it's a reminder that God the father is the father of all comfort and that is he that is doing the comforting and maybe when you hear the word comfort and help and comfort in a time of need an immediate response is to think of a time of bereavement and the sorrow and sadness that that brings and of course it is a time when we need comfort and a time when God is able to offer comfort but this passage and what he is saying to the church at Corinth is not just for a time of bereavement although that comes into it it is much much more than that it is such a wide ranging form of comfort that God offers to his people and it is a comfort in a whole host of experiences that God's people will go through and it is a reminder of the wonder of God's care towards his people the mighty God is with us that's the theme from the Psalms that we have sung that we can look to God God who is there for us God who is with us and so that is what is at the heart of this passage and at the heart of this passage is that it's about salvation in God as well it's about a people that God has called to himself as you see in this section he's writing to God's people and begins with that in the opening verses Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy to the church of God that is Corinth to the people of God who are at Corinth and so it begins by outlining that in order to know and experience this comfort we have to be a people who know and experience the salvation of

God who put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and so there's these two things going side by side because we know in our day to day experiences we know for ourselves that we go through experiences where we need a sense of comfort for our hearts and for our souls and we often ask where can we go where can we find this comfort or we think of others around us going through different experiences and you long for them to be comforted you know that they're looking for comfort where can they go where can we direct them to well we can direct them to what this passage explains to us blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort that there is the Lord who is with us there are times in our life when we maybe think of a place where we can go and we just find a sense of peace and a sense of comfort there you might have a place that you enjoy going yourself it might be just a room in the house where you feel like you just want to get away from everything

I just want to have my quiet time I just want to have a sense of just being by myself as it were or it might be a place outside that you go to a place that you enjoy just being there because it's away from everything and everyone and you're just wanting to find a sense of solace there a sense of peace but where can we ultimately go to find that comfort that peace to a place and above all to a person as we think of Paul writing this letter to the church at Corinth to a people who are going through as we will see all kinds of afflictions there are people who have come to experience the wonder of the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ it's always there before us here blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

[ 31 : 27 ] Jesus Christ is there at the heart of it all he is the one that we are to look to he is the one that we are to see as the place of all comfort we have God the Father we have God the Son and as we see here to the comfort of the Holy Spirit where do we see it we see God's love to us at the cross we see that God wants us to have peace and comfort through him and so he has given us his Son and so now we can come to God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ and know the comfort of the Holy Spirit in our hearts so in these two verses verse three and four there's three things we want to draw out of these verses in regards to the way that Paul speaks about comfort and these three things the first thing is we need comfort we as a people are a people who need comfort the second thing is that we receive comfort and then the third thing that we'll see is that we are then able to share our comfort with others to offer comfort to others so there's these three things in these verses and the first thing is we need comfort

Paul writing to the Christian community here in Corinth he's writing to them as it says here as an apostle chosen an apostle of Jesus Christ chosen by the will of God it says in verse one he's writing through the will of God and this is the will of God for the church at Corinth for the people at Corinth that they would hear this message that God has given to Paul and it's the will of God that we would hear this message ourselves today it is the will of God that we are gathered here today to hear this wonderful message of comfort that God still speaks to his church to his people and our comfort as we see begins with faith faith is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what Paul begins by saying here grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ grace and peace they're the foundations of our faith our faith is by grace through God the grace of God

and the peace of God through Christ Jesus our Lord so faith is at the heart of this and in the midst of our faith our afflictions are not hidden from God blessed in verse 3 blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort why is he saying these things well he's saying them because in verse 4 who comforts us in all our affliction he is saying these things because he knows the experience of his people he knows what's happening in Corinth he knows what's happening in their lives he knows all the different challenges that they are facing because of their faith because of their faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ and he knows that they need comfort in these afflictions because affliction itself has behind them meaning of being pressed down upon that their circumstances that everything that they are going through is weighing heavy upon them that is what is happening to the people of God in Corinth their faith is bringing trials into their lives trials that they haven't had when they weren't believing in the Lord Jesus Christ but now that they have come to faith those around them who are opposed to them are bringing them affliction upon affliction of all kinds of different things there's no hiding place from it for them in the same way as there isn't for us the afflictions that come in life even as believers even in our faith there are struggles there are challenges that will always come our way and we can feel a great burden we can feel pressed down and we feel a longing for comfort just imagine as you're feeling unwell maybe you've a sore head or sore joints or muscles there's a pain that just wouldn't go away you just want a sense of relief you want a sense of being free from it well here we are reminded that the

Lord knows our every affliction our every pain our every experience that we are finding difficult and he is giving a promise of his presence a promise of his help he knows your need of comfort he knows my need of comfort and so often as you see and if you tie this in with the psalms and the experience of the psalmist when he's often crying out to God in affliction and trouble and pain it's almost like he's saying where are you God have you forgotten me and yet God so often reminds the psalmist no I am with you and so instead of blaming God in our afflictions and losing sight of the fact that there is comfort we want to look at the scriptures we want to look at the word of God and see how serious

[ 37 : 31 ] God is about the need that we have for comfort and the knowledge that he has of it and that as we look to the word of God and we take seriously and take to heart the word of God we do see more and more the comfort that he offers and the desire of God to comfort it's there right throughout the scriptures you go back to the Old Testament to the prophets Isaiah chapter 40 when there's this turning point in the experience of God's people when things have been going so well for them but now they are coming under attack and being taken into captivity when they're suffering and affliction is becoming more and more what does the word of God say what does God say to his prophet he says comfort comfort my people says your God comfort that is what God wants for his people Jeremiah chapter 31 it's the same the prophet there again ministering to a people who have turned their back on

God but now are coming under the warning of the judgment of God in chapter 31 verse 13 it says that a time is coming then the maidens will dance and be glad young men and old as well I will turn their mourning into gladness I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow so there is this knowledge that God has that he knows his people circumstances he knows their situation even with Paul himself later on in this letter in chapter 4 he says we are hard pressed we are afflicted on every side but not crushed and he goes on to list so many things and it's all going through it by the comfort of God God the Lord knows we need comfort and so even as we read through this letter we are reminded that God is a

God of knowledge for his people and he knows exactly what we need he's the God of all comfort and it's interesting that he uses that phrase the God of all comfort because Corinth was a place that was full of idols full of false gods so you would have had the God of this comfort the God of that comfort the God for this need the God for that need they would have all been there a whole host of gods for the people that they were relying on but Paul says here blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort and it's a powerful reminder that the comfort we need it cannot be found anywhere else he is the God of all comfort he is the one that we are to go to in our need of comfort because he's the only one who is able to help he is the God of all comfort and it's not only the God of some comfort but all comfort it is not a one size fits all as it were it's a personal comfort a tailor made comfort so he knows every individual need of comfort and he's able to provide for all aspects of comfort that we need and it's all degrees of

comfort there is nothing that God can say well that's beyond my reach that's beyond my capability he's the God of all comfort he gives for every experience there is nothing out with his reach he knows our need of comfort he knows that every circumstance that needs his comfort and that's an amazing thing for us to remember that as we go through these experiences in life just like the church the people in Corinth in the midst of all their affliction they had the God of all comfort who knew their every need and so do we he knows we need it the second thing we see is we receive comfort

Paul says we need comfort but he's also directing us to the one who is able to give comfort and it's there in verse 4 the beginning of it who comforts us in all our affliction God comforts us in all our affliction God's promises are so many and the promises so often remind us that he is there for us when someone makes a promise to us we can so often be let down when they fail us but when God has promised something it will come to be and so if he has promised comfort it will come to be who comforts us in all our affliction he reminds us there that he is there for us every step of the way how often have you seen that poem footprints in the sand many homes have it hanging on the wall there's a picture of these footprints walking along the beach and the story behind it is that the person is looking at these footprints in the sand as their journey through life and how these two sets of footprints were going side by side there was a companion along the way but the person says but at the point

[ 43 : 43 ] Lord when I needed you most there's only one set of footprints why have you left me then when I needed you most and the response is I haven't left you that's when I carried you now it may not be a biblical verse it may not be something we can look up in the scriptures in that sense of it's there to tell us these very words but the theme behind those words is so clear it's there for us as you look through the scriptures it's a reminder to us of the God who speaks through us through his word even in these verses that we're looking at all comfort the one who comforts us in all our affliction that's not a God who has left us in our need but that is a God who is with us in our every need in the gospel of

John chapter 14 when the disciples are with Jesus we were saying to the young ones earlier on there's that promise of the comforter the Holy Spirit I will not leave you orphans he says I will come to you I am not going to abandon you I am not going to leave you helpless I will come to you and he comes to his people through the comforter the Holy Spirit the word comfort itself it has that meaning behind it of one called alongside the paraclete is another name for the Holy Spirit and that word basically means the one who is called alongside and so that's the experience we have in the comfort that God gives who comforts us in all our affliction the comfort comes through the one who is called alongside the one who comes in those times of need the one who is with us we have that great assurance and

Paul himself has known this assurance he has seen it again and again and he outlines it in this letter once more later on in chapter 6 he has been imprisoned he's been beaten he's been shipwrecked in 2nd Corinthians 6 verse 9 and 10 he says how could he have that experience how could he say all of these things because he's enjoyed the experience the gracious presence of the Lord with him he's looked to Christ he's met with Christ he's trusted Christ and so that as he goes on as he's pressing on in all these troubles and all these afflictions he's able to say as he does elsewhere I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me the one who is with me the one who comforts us in all our affliction he looks to

Christ Christ who is in control of all things and that's who we are to look to Stevenson in one of his writings he tells a story about a ship that was off the coast in the midst of a storm and this ship was in danger of being foundering on the rocks of being shipwrecked and the passengers felt this fear in the midst of it and the way he tells the story he says about in the midst of everything that was going on and people had been told to stay below deck for their own safety but one man decided to go up on deck and just see for himself what was happening and so as he went up on deck he made his way to the wheelhouse or towards the wheelhouse and he looked up there and he saw the pilot as he describes or the captain as we might say who was at the wheel of the ship and it was holding steadily onto the wheel of the ship inch by inch just guiding the ship through the storm and away from the rocks and the pilot the captain looked down and saw this man and smiled at him and in that moment the man knew that it was going to be okay and so he went back down below deck and said to the other people on board that it was going we can say in our lives

I'm not in control I am not in control of this situation but we can also say by God's word as we trust in him but I am deeply loved by the one who is in control that we have a God we have a Lord we have the Holy Spirit the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of mercies and God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction it's an amazing thing to know that God is with us that he is the one who is comforting who in chapter four of this letter says for God who said let light shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that is the comfort that he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of [ 49 : 32 ] God in the face of Jesus Christ our captain the captain of our salvation who says it is all well he comforts he comforts the third thing and the final thing that we see here is that in the midst of our comfort that we are given we too are able to offer comfort he comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with a comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God John MacArthur the American preacher he says the trials of life inevitably provide God with the opportunity to humble us and humbling is a path to glory he allows so much trouble in order that he might give so much comfort and so much strength that we might not in our own strength but in his become all he wants us to be we are comforted in our own trials and part of the outworking of that then is that we are able to comfort others and how often has it happened in your own life experience you go through a difficulty that you don't see any reason for and yet in the providence of

God is an experience used to comfort somebody else later on or on the reverse of that you have been comforted by someone who has come alongside you in their experience and they're able to see when we often feel we don't have words we ourselves are able to comfort through the way we were comforted by God through the way we knew his promises the way we knew his grace the way we knew that he was with us in all of these things the comfort that has been given to us we are able to share with others and it doesn't matter who we are it doesn't matter what level of life we are in we are all a people who will go through all kinds of different experiences there was a story told once of a queen a queen who had in her own life experienced loss and grief and this queen heard of a woman who had lost her baby and she could enter in to the hurt that this woman was going through now that time in as with her own days royalty would not just mix readily with others but this woman when she heard about the mother who had lost her child she felt so moved by that she wanted to go and visit her and so she did she went in to see this woman in her own home and after she left the neighbours asked the woman what did the queen say to you and the woman replied nothing all all all all all she did was put her hand in mine and we silently wept together and yet there was comfort in that no words but just the presence was comfort enough when we think of who is comforting us the king of kings and lord of lords is the one who has come to comfort his people and it is his comfort that we are able to offer to others to know for ourselves the wonder of the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ the God who made the heavens and the earth the God who is in power over all things he has come to comfort us he is the God of all comfort he is the God who comforts us in all our affliction so we might comfort others we all look for comfort in our lives we all go through experiences where we need comfort or we see others around us who need comfort what do we have to offer sometimes we feel at a loss we have no words but we look to God to God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the God of all comfort because there is nothing beyond his reach and if you need comfort today he is there he's there for you he is the God of all comfort and he comforts us with a comfort beyond anything else so may we be comforted and may we be comforted to those around us for the wonder of the God who remembers us the God who says comfort comfort my people says our God let us pray our father in heaven we do rejoice in your goodness to us that you remember us that you are the God of all mercy and the God of all comfort we thank you for the way that you are able to comfort us in all our needs and we just ask Lord that you will make us comfort us to others as well of the wonders and the glory of your grace and your mercies towards us hear our prayers Lord remember us remember us in all our needs you know them Lord you know our needs and so we commit them to you in the precious name of

Jesus our Lord and Saviour Amen we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 84 in the Scottish Psalter page 339 sorry page 340 Psalm 84 at verse 8 and the tune is Amazing Grace I'll hear what God the Lord will speak to his folk he'll speak peace and to his saints but let them not return to foolishness to them that fear him surely near is his salvation that glory in her land may have her habitation we'll sing from verse 8 down to the end of the Psalm we sing to God's praise

God your

[ 56 : 36 ] God of hosts my prayer dear O take up scott here where say God thou shield look on the face of thine anointed dear for in thy courts one day excels a thousand rather in thy God's house will I keep at for that well in case of sin for for the

Lord has sun and shield till grace and glory gave and well with hope no good from him that a bright new land O thou old bad heart the Lord of hosts are that heart is truly blessed who by our children and hope the hands of thee alone the best of love after the benediction i'll go to the main door we'll close the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God father son and holy spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore forevermore amen end your your ■ who at what happens or in km up have been thank you you me