

Christ Our Comforter

1 Peter 5:7, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

Some Bible commentators believe that Peter is probably quoting from Psalm 55:22 which reads, “Cast thy burden (releasing the weight of it) upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (shaken, or made to slip, fall, fail).

"Thy burden," or what God lays upon you, you lay it "upon the Lord." His wisdom casts it on you, it is your wisdom to cast it on him.

Spurgeon writes, “He gives thee thy portion of suffering, accept it with cheerful resignation, and then take it back to him with assured confidence.”

"He shall sustain thee." He who ordains the burden will also ordain strength. Thy bread shall be given thee, thy waters shall be sure. Abundant nourishment shall fit thee to bear all thy labors and trials. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." "He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

He stands firm who stands in God. Like pillars, the godly stand "steadfast, unmovable," to the glory of the Great Architect.

Like the Psalmist, Peter in his first epistle encourages God's people to take their troubles and cares confidently to the Lord.

What the pagan Greeks experienced as anxious concern over a tomorrow they could not control, the believer who knows Christ can experience in calm confidence. Released from fears about tomorrow, we can concentrate on doing God's will today, as obedient subjects of a kingdom over which the Almighty rules.

The difficulty we run into is that we can soon forget Christ and adopt a worldly perspective that looks ahead anxiously and concentrates on running after the things and plans that seem to offer security.

In order to avoid this tendency, believers must learn to orient life to Christ and his eternal kingdom and realize that life's meaning is to be found in living as subjects who are responsive to their loving, wise, and powerful King. Those who know Christ enjoy the blessing and care of the Savior.

Therefore, the title of my message is, “Christ Our Comfort.” Jesus cares for believers. There are three things I would like to say about Christ Our Comfort.

1. Christ comforts us in all our anxiety.

1 Peter 5:7, “Casting all your *care* upon him; for he careth for you.”

There are two different Greek words translated *care* in verse 7. The one has a negative connotation. The other a positive.

Negatively, *care* can be translated anxiety. It means literally to divide or draw in different directions (which is exactly what anxiety does to us!) It is often used in a negative sense and thus it is translated as "worry". From the original Greek, one can see that it describes the state of "being pulled apart.”

Thus when circumstances are difficult, it is easy to let oneself be dominated by anxiety and worry.

This Greek word is used 6 times in the NT (Matt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Lk. 8:14; 21:34; 2Co. 11:28; 1 Pet. 5:7)

I'll quote just two of the passages.

Matt. 13:22, “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Luke 21:34, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

Later in I Peter 5:7 the word *care* is used positively, describing the great compassion and mercy Christ shows to His people, “...for he *careth* for you.”

Peter describes how we are to come to God in our anxiety. “*Casting all your care upon Him.*” The word *casting* alludes to total and complete trust in God.

Casting upon means to throw or cast on. To throw something upon something else, e.g., throw clothes on an animal for riding.

We must once and for all give all of our cares—past, present, and future—to the Lord. The literal picture is seen in Luke 19:35, the only other place where this Greek word is found in the New Testament. "They brought (the colt) to Jesus, and they **threw** their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it."

They did not throw pieces of their coat on the colt but "all" of the coat.

What could inhibit us from casting our care upon the Lord? For one thing, pride can keep us from being willing to humble yourself in this way. We say "I'll do it my way."

But God's care comes when we humble ourselves and trust in and depend upon His grace. And we are humble when we depend on God's grace to live the Christian life.

Peter earlier in I Peter 4:19 said to "let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator."

"Casting...upon" is "an act once for all; throwing the whole life with its care on Him."

How did Paul say to "cast your cares upon God"? In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul exhorted them to "Worry about nothing; pray about everything."

That is, take it to the Lord in prayer, and leave it there! Don't pick it up again.

Similarly believers are to cast "all" (the whole in its entirety) of their care upon Him. The emphasis is not on casting each individual anxiety, but on casting the whole of one's life upon the Lord.

Stated another way, Peter does not say to be "casting the big burdens and keeping the little ones!" We all need to come to the place where we realize that God is all sufficient for all problems that may come into our lives.

No heartache, difficulty or problem is too difficult for the all wise Savior. No sin is too great for the strong Sin-bearer. Brethren, our Christ is willing and able to carry our heaviest (and lightest) burdens but before we can experience God's sufficiency, we need to acknowledge our insufficiency to live the Christian life.

Is there some anxiety you are carrying just now, dear child of God? What is your heartache? What grief do you bear today? What disappointment? What hurt feeling? Whatever the burden, go to His throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace by casting it upon Him, for He does not want you to carry that burden.

Elisha Hoffman the writer of the hymn I MUST TELL JESUS tells the story that preceded his penning of the words...“There was a woman to whom God had permitted many visitations of sorrow and affliction. Coming to her home one day, I found her much discouraged. She unburdened her heart, concluding with the question, “Brother Hoffman, what shall I do?” I quoted from the word, then added, “You cannot do better than to take all of your sorrows to Jesus. You must tell Jesus.”

For a moment she seemed lost in meditation. Then her eyes lighted as she exclaimed, “Yes, I must tell Jesus.” As I left her home I had a vision of that joy-illuminated face...and I heard all along my pathway the echo, “I must tell Jesus. I must tell Jesus.”

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.

Refrain

I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!

I cannot bear my burdens alone;

I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!

Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.

I must tell Jesus all of my troubles;
He is a kind, compassionate friend;
If I but ask Him, He will deliver,
Make of my troubles quickly an end.

Are you telling Jesus all of your trouble?

This leads to my second point. How does Christ comfort His people?

2. Christ comforts us by the Holy Spirit.

We read in John 14:16, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 26But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Our Lord says, "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth."

This is the first time that the Holy Spirit is mentioned as Christ's special gift to His people. Of course we are not to suppose that He did not dwell in the hearts of all the Old Testament saints. But He was given with peculiar influence and power to believers when the New Testament dispensation came in, and this is the special promise of the passage before us. We shall find it useful, therefore, to observe closely the things that are here said about Him.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as "a Person." To apply the language before us to a mere influence or inward feeling, is an unreasonable strain of words.

The Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth." It is His special office to apply truth to the hearts of Christians, to guide them into all truth, and to sanctify them by the truth.

The Holy Spirit is said to be one whom "the world cannot receive and does not know." His operations are in the strongest sense foolishness to the natural man.

The inward feelings of conviction, repentance, faith, hope, fear, and love, which He always produces, are precisely that part of religion which the world cannot understand.

The Holy Spirit is said to "dwell in" believers, and to be known by them. They know the feelings that He creates, and the fruits that He produces, though they may not be able to explain them, or see at first whence they come. But they all are what they are--new men, new creatures, light and salt in the earth, compared to the worldly, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given to the Church, "to abide with them" until Christ comes the second time. He is meant to supply all the needs of believers, and to fill up all that is lacking while Christ's visible presence is removed. He is sent to abide with and help them until Christ returns.

These are truths of vast importance. Let us take care that we grasp them firmly, and never let them go. Next to the whole truth about Christ, it concerns our safety and peace to see the whole truth about the Holy Spirit.

Any doctrine about the Church, the ministry, or the Sacraments, which obscures the Spirit's inward work, or turns it into mere form, is to be avoided as deadly error. Let us never rest until we feel and know that He dwells in us. "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8:9.)

One part of the Holy Spirit's work is to teach, and to bring things to remembrance. It is written, "The Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."

Our Lord knows the ignorance and forgetfulness of our nature in spiritual things. He graciously declares that when He leaves the world, His people shall have a teacher and remembrancer.

Do we feel that at best we know in part and see in part? Do we desire to understand more clearly the doctrines of the Gospel? Let us pray daily for the help of the "teaching" Spirit.

It is His office to illuminate the soul, to open the eyes of the understanding, and to guide us into all truth. He can make dark places light, and rough places smooth.

Do we find our memory of spiritual things defective? Do we complain that though we read and hear, we seem to lose as fast as we gain? Let us pray daily for the help of the Holy Spirit. He can bring things to our remembrance. He can make us remember "old things and new." He can keep in our minds the whole system of truth and duty, and make us ready for every good word and work.

Christ comforts us by the Holy Spirit.

Why does Christ comforts us? This leads to my third and final point.

3. Christ comforts us because He loves us.

Why cast our cares upon Christ? Upon what basis do we do so? In this beautiful phrase, Peter states that it is simply because God cares for us. We must first understand God's caring character before we can carry out carefree casting of our anxieties.

Do you know Him this way? Do you really believe that the infinite, majestic, almighty God of the universe really cares for you in such a personal way? If you don't believe this truth, then you will in fact have difficulty casting your cares upon Him.

If you do come to Christ in faith then you can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon Him, for you are His personal concern. Meditate on what Peter is saying...literally he writes that "it matters to Him concerning you!

Cares means to be interested in, to show watchful care and affection or to show concern for. The verb is in the present tense which indicates that God cares for us continually, so much so that one might say that God is our caretaker!

This same verb is used by Mark, where we find a group of anxious disciples on a stormy sea and (Jesus) Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion and they awoke Him and said to Him, "Master, *carest* thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? (Mk 4:38-40)

Perhaps those are words you too need to hear today, brethren. We see that a stormy sea had been allowed by a sovereign God to teach the disciples a lesson in simple child-like faith. And the same God uses the storms in our life to similar effect.

As a believer you have come to know Jesus as your "**Sin**-bearer" but have you also come to know Him as your "**Burden**-bearer"?

All your anxiety, all your care,
Bring to the mercy seat, leave it there;
Never a burden He cannot bear,
Never a friend like Jesus.

In closing, Christ is our comforter. He comforts us in all our anxiety. He comforts us by the Holy Spirit. He comforts us because He loves us. May the Lord help you and I to cast all our care upon Christ; for he cares for us. Let us pray.