

**Psalm 119: 49 & 50; “My Comfort in Affliction”, A Sermon preached at the  
Premier Estates Nursing Home on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019,  
By Pastor Paul Rendall.**

It is always profitable to read about the lives of great Christians. The biography of the missionary Adoniram Judson is one of those books which we can all profit from. It was compiled from the letters which were written by he and his wife, Ann Hasseltine Judson; and commented upon by Francis Wayland. The book has many lessons in it for Christians. The reason that I want to bring it to your attention is because of the way that this man, by faith in Christ, endured the sufferings and afflictions that came to him when he was in missionary service. He and his wife left the United States for Burma in 1813, and almost from the moment that they left, they encountered many difficulties and trials. But they learned by God's grace to bear up under them by faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Learning to bear up under affliction is something that is expected of every disciple of Jesus Christ, and not just missionaries. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all,” it says in Psalm 34: 19. The Lord expects us to learn to “endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ Jesus”. He expects us to “confess Him before men” and “not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord”, or of others who are prisoners because of their faith in Christ. We will learn from these verses that the Lord comforts this afflicted servant, the psalmist David, in accordance with his prayers and the reflections of his heart in the following 2 ways that I will share with you. We will find comfort in our afflictions if we will follow the David's example.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all - The Lord comforts his afflicted servant by remembering His Word to him.** (verses 49)

Verse 49 says – “Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope.” This is a very unusual phrase that we find here; “Remember the word to Your servant.” It is not that the Psalmist is praying that he would remember God's Word to him. It is that he is praying that “God would remember His word to his servant”. Now God has no lack of a good memory. He is not the “Old man upstairs” who has gone daft and He cannot remember what He has promised to do for those who trust in Him. But the prayer here is, that even as God had “caused the David to hope”, that God would remember him for good in all of his afflictions, by coming to comfort to his spirit, he hoped that God would give him that sweet assurance that all that He had promised in His word was true.

And so, when David prayed this, he really believed in his heart that the promise of God's word would come to pass. This is something that each of us must believe as well; to learn to trust in the Lord's word of promise to us, and pray that it would be fulfilled. And so, we do find David praying in faith that God would cause His Word of what He had promised, to come true for him, in this time of his trouble and affliction. He was asking God to be faithful to His promises to help him even then, in the time of his weakness and difficulty. Let me ask you, this afternoon, if you believe God's Word to be true? And if so, have you taken any care to memorize some of His precious and magnificent promises? If you intend to live the Christian life, you are going to need all of His promises at one time or another.

How about Psalm 50, verse 15? “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” You will find that there may be times where you do not understand why God does not come more quickly to your aid, or why He does not rescue you right away. Why, you ask yourself, would God permit such a thing? Well he has a number of holy reasons. But you must learn to call upon Him, and ask Him to give you the strength to remember these promises that He has given to you, and answer your prayers in relation to them. In doing so, He

will give you true comfort, and He would not have you to confuse spiritual comfort with being kept from all physical discomfort. We all desire to be safe from physical discomfort and harm. By nature, we desire ourselves to know the comfort of physical protection and safety. And we very much desire the comfort and safety of those around us, as well, if we ourselves are safe. But gospel grace, and the grace to minister to others, takes us one step farther.

**For 2<sup>nd</sup> – The Lord comforts His people in their afflictions by reminding them that His word has given them life.**

Verse 50 - “This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life.” David is talking about spiritual life here. In his affliction, whatever it was, the Lord was upholding his soul with spiritual life and strength. In relation to this truth I want you to think about 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians chapter 1, verse 3 with me. The apostle Paul says – “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 tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God.” In learning to spiritually walk in the Christian life, having peace and joy, you need to be learn how true spiritual consolation comes to those who are afflicted. Paul says in verse 5, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.” “Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation, and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.” “Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” “And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are the partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.”

There are two main ideas here. The first is that God Himself comforts His people who are suffering for Christ’s sake. The sufferings of Christ abounded in Paul and his companions as they preached the gospel. They received opposition, reproach, and ridicule. They at times received blows, and beatings, and imprisonment. But as they went through these things there was real comfort ministered to them by the Holy Spirit who was working in their hearts and minds, bringing them this real spiritual comfort; that Christ was theirs, and that His grace was sufficient. Can we describe it in any other way? They were satisfied by the presence of Christ assuring their hearts and their minds that they were perfectly in the center of God’s will. “Our consolation,” Paul says, “abounds through Christ”. The Lord was even giving them joy and rejoicing in the affliction, because they knew that they were experiencing the “fellowship of Christ’s sufferings”.

The second idea here is that God had orchestrated their sufferings in such a way that it was intended to bring comfort to all of God's people who heard about it. “If we are afflicted, it is for your consolation.” This doesn't exactly sound right to our ears, does it? How could the sufferings of the Apostle and those with him, bring consolation to the hearts of his Corinthian readers? The answer is; that the Corinthians, hearing and understanding what Paul and his companions had gone through, would be encouraged to realize that Christ would also be ministering to them in their deepest sufferings. The gospel was going forward; it was reaching many people. And its saving, confirming power was at work in the those who preached and those who were suffering because they had preached the gospel. They were indeed suffering affliction, but the spiritual comfort that they experienced was a confirmation of the strength and power of the reality of the grace of Christ in the worst of situations.

This is God “remembering His Word to His servants.” This was God’s Word giving them life. It was the Word of God upon which they placed their hope, and through it they had the experience of being upheld by God spiritual help being given to them. The apostle Paul knew that the believers in Corinth needed to learn how God comforts his suffering people. He also knew that they needed to learn how to wait upon the Lord when they might be tempted to be disappointed that he (Paul) had not come to them at the time that he had intended to come to

them. They certainly needed God's comfort in the big things like opposition and persecution; but they also needed to learn to wait upon God in His timing of bringing Paul to them to encourage them, and strengthen them in their faith, as well. I think that we can apply this to you who are here in the nursing home as well. No doubt there are times when your dear relatives say that they are coming to visit, and then something comes up, and they find that they cannot come and visit you when they had said that they would. What do you do? Are you tempted to think that they do not care for you; that they do not love you? No, this is the very time that you need to trust in Christ and find your comfort and strength in God Himself.

Paul knew that the believers in Corinth's perception of whether he was coming to them was related to whether he was being faithful to do what he said. Paul had not yet been able to come to them when he wanted to. This is evident in Chapter 1, verse 15, of 2 Corinthians. Paul says, "And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea." "Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly?" "Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?" "But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No." "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes." Now look at what he states so magnificently here. "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him, Amen, to the glory of God through us."

Do you see what Paul is saying here? He is trying to turn the gaze and attention of those afflicted believers, to the power of God's grace to comfort them in all things that hurt them, and disappointed them, whether they were great or whether they were small. Sometimes we can become disappointed at what others do, or do not do for us, because they have promised us something and then it does not work out that they can do what they originally promised. This does not always mean that their unfaithfulness is the cause. And each of you, if you find these things happening to you, should exercise faith in God so that you will come to know the reality of His faithfulness to you; to encourage your spirit, when you are disappointed in relatives or people around you. Do not allow yourself to come to the place where you are always suspecting the genuine love of your relatives for you; when you are feeling all alone, here in the nursing home, and you are waiting for them to come and visit. Often there may be reasons beyond their control, they have not been able to come and visit you when they said that they would.

This is where your faith in Christ will help you greatly. If you resolve to wait upon the Lord, and exercising faith in Him, He will most certainly bring the rich dividends of comfort to your soul. This was what the apostle Paul was trying to teach the Corinthians. When you come to believe and to realize that God is faithful, that His promises are all "Yes and Amen", and that He is the One who can cause other people around you to be able to be loving, caring, and faithful, then you come to know the real and substantial comfort of God to your heart, in all of your afflictions. You will come to see, as you exercise faith in God, that He Himself is the One who is upholding you in all of your trials. And so the next time that difficulties come, you won't be afraid, and you will know that you do not need to be discouraged. The promises of God will all be fulfilled in God's good time; that is, at the right time. And the faithfulness of other Christians in your life will also come to be an encouragement to you in time; all this, because of the grace of Christ. All of these good things that you will come to experience in your soul, God will cause to come about and be established, because of His faithfulness to you. They will come as you trust in Him, and pray often to Him in the sweet and powerful name of Jesus.