

Heavenly Comfort

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing the comfort of Christ, living a life of love and humility, and maintaining a happy and blessed marriage through keeping one's eye on Christ.

Duration: 42:33

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 4:32 - 5:2, Ephesians 5:22, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 5:33, Philippians 2:1-5

Topics: "Comfort"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of finding joy and peace in all circumstances, whether they are good or bad. He refers to a letter from Paul, who wrote about being happy at all times, even in the midst of terrible circumstances. The preacher shares a story about a black man who escaped from a trunk and sought comfort and forgiveness from God. He highlights the need for comfort in difficult times and the role of the Holy Spirit as a comforter.

Transcript

Dear Jesus, You who changed the water into wine, we pray that now the same will happen. These are just earthly words that we read and that we speak. But You can, through the Holy Spirit, make every word, every letter alive.

That it will be of meaning for us. That it will mean happiness, joy, life for us. In the name of the Lord.

Amen. The text for today we find in the letter of Philippians chapter 2, from the first to the fifth verse. Since you have experienced the consolation in Christ, the inspiration through love, the fellowship through the Spirit, the inner feeling of more and more life, make my joy now complete, through being one in mind, one in love, one in heart, one in striving.

Do not do anything out of selfishness or pride, but in humility you must respect one another more than yourself. You must not only think of your own interests, but also of those of others. The same sanity must be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, so far.

Just a few points I want to talk about in this text. In the beginning it is spoken of consolation in Christ. The inspiration through love, the fellowship through the Spirit, and then of joy, complete joy.

And that this sanity must be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus. Now the first point, the consolation in Christ. The consolation in Christ.

What does it mean? Last night there was a black man here. They said he was very dirty, and he wanted to see me. Then they said, no, he can not see me.

I do not know where I was. Yes, but he wanted to see me. They said it looked like he had not eaten for a long time.

He had not eaten. He had not washed for a long time. He was very dirty.

He said, no, I have to see that man. I can not leave without seeing him. They asked him, what is it you want to talk about? He said, no, I will not tell you, but I want to see him.

Then they said, there is a black employee. And he can talk to him. Then he said, well, then he will talk to him.

And then he talks to him. And he tells his story to him. He said, the 4th of April I escaped from the trunk.

I am in great difficulty. There are at least 9 big complaints against me. And a white man talked to me.

He said, if you want to receive help, go to Qasizabaan. And talk to that man. He said, why? I escaped from the trunk.

He could not take a taxi and people did not drive. Then they would see him right away. Then they would receive him.

After all these months, he was on his way to this place. And he said, look, I must make peace with God. I am a sinner.

And a great sinner. I do not know what will become of me. But I said, as long as I can get out of this place, and talk to that man, I will receive help.

And all my sins will disappear. I want to bring everything to light. And the employees said, it was precious to see how he made his life right.

And said, pray for me, that God will forgive me. That he will clean me with his precious blood. And when he did that, when he prayed for them, he said, man, I feel so good.

The pain is gone. God has forgiven me. My heart is full of joy, of peace.

I have found it. What I was looking for. And when they were done, they said, what else can we do for you? He said, bring me back to the police as soon as possible.

Back to the trunk. I have found life. God has made my life.

Now I can go back. Take me to the police as soon as possible. Now I have joy and peace in my heart.

The Lord has comforted me. He received comfort. He received comfort.

Our text begins with, Because you have found comfort in Christ. Is it not wonderful that a man here on earth can find the comfort of Christ? That is something wonderful. Something wonderful.

When I heard that yesterday, I said, I will start with that. That is the best. If man experiences that.

That is the comfort of heaven. Now this letter was written out of prison. Paulus was not a thief.

He was not a liar. But, according to the Gospel, they put him in the trunk. And here in this letter to the Philippians, he shares with them the circumstances in which he found himself.

Do you know the circumstances? Yes. There are many different circumstances in this world. They seem as far as the east from the west.

We do not even know what will happen to you, Carl and Susanne. We do not even know what the future holds for you. We do not even know about dreams.

Nobody knows what it will be. About fruits, tears, we do not know anything. But, as the English say, we do not know what the future holds, but we know the One who holds the future.

The One who holds the future for us. And the Lord Jesus, when he said to his disciples, I must go back to Him who sent me, their hearts were filled with pride. And the Lord saw it.

And He said, look, how come your hearts are filled with pride? It is better for them. It is better for them that I go. If I do not go, the Comforter will not come.

Look, the Comforter who comforts. He will stand by you. He will be with you.

Now the black people would understand this better. A bride, when she marries, she cries. She cries.

Because it is the end of her father and her mother. But our white people are different. They are always surprised.

They say, how can you young people be so happy when you marry? At our institution it is the opposite. But our white people also need comfort. Because circumstances can be such that we are sick and tired of life.

We say, life has no meaning for me anymore. And we know where it sometimes ends. But we have the Comforter who stands by us.

Even in difficult times. Paul said to us where he was when he wrote this letter. He was in the trunk.

It is not a nice place. It is not where we want to be. It is not nice and pleasant circumstances.

But we are surprised when we read this letter. What it is about. And what he said to us.

He said, May the new life in Christ, which God has given for him by His grace, and by His faith and obedience, may He overcome in all circumstances. He said, may the life that He has received meet all other things, and bring peace and happiness, regardless of the circumstances. And that is why he could write in prison.

Oum Langpiet is not here now, but his son is here, Gert. He said, Always be happy in the Lord. I repeat, be happy.

He did not say that when circumstances are good, when the sun shines, and the sun smiles, No. In all circumstances, always be happy in the Lord. It is not the same there.

Sometimes it is full of joy. Sometimes it seems beautiful and beautiful. But sometimes there are storms.

There can also be diseases. Sometimes it is life, sometimes death. But the life that God has given for us, we can always be happy, always have joy, always have peace in our hearts.

And he said, I repeat, I do not know how the community felt, to receive a letter from Paul, who led in such terrible circumstances. None of us would like to experience such a thing. And he said, Be happy, always happy, at all times.

Whether it goes well or badly. And he said, I repeat, Be happy. This is how this black man died.

And there the circumstances, it is not nice circumstances. They let the police come. Five of them came to get this man.

When they asked him, What is it that you want? He said, Take me back to the trunk, where I escaped. And he tells them the whole story. And the officer, the biggest of them, said, This is the first time in my life that I have experienced such a thing.

That I have experienced such a thing. This is the first time, I have never experienced such a thing. It is wonderful that the Lord works in such a way and can comfort such a man.

If the Lord did not know us, where would we be today? Maybe I would have been dead already. I was unhappy when I was a little boy. I did not know what the sin of life was.

When we played with our cousins at our house, there was a big pile of trees. And I said to them, I wish I could be such a big tree. Or a dog.

Then one girl said, How come, Erlo? I said, Look, the tree is being cut off. And then it is the end. Everything is done.

And if I were a dog, would you kill me? And it is the end. How happy I would be. Then the girl laughed and said, Ah, that is why you are a tree.

I am so happy that I am a human being. One day I will be like an angel in heaven. Then I said, Yes, that is how a little girl speaks.

But I do not understand it. There was no happiness and joy in my life. But the consolation of Christ, when the Holy Spirit already testifies to us wrong things and we make peace with God, we realize that we have sinned, that we have sinned, then the Spirit of God comforts us.

He comforts us. He says, The blood of Jesus cleanses you because it gives us peace, joy and true love. That is how it is.

When we found for the Lord the consolation of Christ, He died for us, He turned our sins, and when He turned those sins away and gave us our lives completely, even though we do not know what the future holds for us, we know this thing, nothing will go wrong. Because we are in the hands of Almighty God, who is perfect. And those who love God, everything works for good.

Although it seems wrong, but it works for good. That is the best life that a person can live in this world. Now Paul says, He says, Since you have experienced the consolation of Christ.

If we have not yet experienced it, we do not realize what it means. But fortunately, that person who experienced it, experienced it. And then he goes on, and says, The inspiration of love, the inspiration of love, we have sung about love, we can say anything, but if we do not take the divine love, then heaven and hell will change.

This is the end of happiness, the end of joy. But if there is love in our lives, and where we say, I can not help but have love for Him, because He first had love for me. And if He had love for us, then He also had love for us, and not only for Him, also for each other.

If I say, I have love for Him, and I do not love my fellow man, says John the Apostle, then he lies, and the truth is not in us. The love, and the community, through the Holy Spirit, is what the Lord can give us through the Holy Spirit, the community. If we do not know it, we sometimes want to be alone, or go alone, but if we know the community of the Holy Spirit, He brings us closer together, and we become one.

When the Spirit of God came, the people had one soul, one heart, one spirit. They had the same spirit. It is the taste of heaven.

And if these things in your lives are reality, then I can guarantee you, and assure you, that as long as there is a God in heaven, it will get better every day, in your marital life. You will have more, the love will grow, the community will grow, it will always be more glorious. And then, because the Spirit of God does not lead us apart, but brings us closer together.

And then, inner compassion, and co-existence, inner, it is not just an external thing, that you smile, that you laugh, but inside, there is nothing. The inner compassion, and co-existence, the old translation in Afrikaans, speaks of the inner tenderness, and distance. The inner feeling, inner feeling, co-existence, always comes closer to each other.

And, after this point I say, then make my cup full. Then make my cup full. What is in the drink? I say, everyone can make my cup, here in the drink, full.

But it is not just the happiness of Paul. It was the Holy Spirit that inspired him to write this. And ultimately, it is not just the happiness of Paul, the apostle, but God's happiness.

That God, the Trinitarian God, will be happy for your lives. It happened a few times, when the Lord Jesus was here on earth, that a voice came down from the blue, and said to the people, this is my Son, He makes my heart happy. And we must be proud, that the Father in Heaven will be happy for us.

Not that He will be sad, but that God in Heaven will be completely happy when He looks at us, when He looks at you two. How wonderful it would be. You are still young, but in your young lives, when God is happy, in Heaven, you two will be happy.

And He says, then make my happiness complete, through what? Through being one in sin, one in love, one in heart, one in soul, one in striving. It is wonderful, that man can live such a life in this world, in this world of darkness, darkness, sin. And we can hardly say, the devil is severe.

Because the Lord has called him, the God of this world. Even though the devil works, but how wonderful, that our Christians can live such a life. That shines brighter than the sun.

One family, among the children of the Lord, one in love, one in heart, one in soul. And you know the characteristics of the soul. It's your feeling, it's your will, it's your taste.

Those are just three characteristics of the soul. One in our feelings, our will, our goal. Isn't it wonderful, what God can do in a man's life.

When we unconditionally give our lives to Him, and completely give them to Him. And He says, in Ephesians, where it speaks of love, man's, you must love your wives, as Christ loved the church. The same love that Christ had, the man must have towards his wife.

And of course, the Bible says, the old wives must learn from the new wives, how to love their husbands. God has a work for everyone. Even the old ladies.

The young must learn how to love their husbands. Now, I'm already at the last point. This family, which was in Christ, must also be in you.

This family, this love, this spirit, which was in Him, must also be in you. I believe, it speaks of immense things, I think, exactly 25 years ago, I had a wedding in Zurich, in Switzerland. It was a Walter Mannhardt wedding.

And then I said to them, that in Afrikaans, the old Afrikaans translation, says it, where it speaks of the man and the woman. I said it, with the eye on Christ. Isn't that wonderful? The new translation uses other words, but the old translation says, the man must be like this towards the woman, he will leave his father and mother, cling to his wife, and the woman will be like this.

But I said it with the eye on Christ. Now, let your eye always be on Christ. Don't take your eye away from Christ.

Then things will go wrong. So if you steer your car, and you look left or right, you will come off the right side of the road. You should never do that.

Keep your eye on the road. Don't look left or right. Keep your eye on Christ.

Karl, if you do that, things will go well. And so will you. Keep your eye on Christ.

Then circumstances won't matter. Nothing. That won't be a problem.

Even if you married a German-speaking son. That won't be a problem. They say they are square-headed, and this and that.

My daughter says, Papa, don't worry. Even if we marry an African-speaking man. The African-speaking man is much better than the Germans.

Now you have a German. See? But keep your eye on Christ. Then it won't matter.

Even if you speak German. Keep your eye on Christ. And the English say, they say, Get the center right.

And the circumference will take care of itself. Don't worry about those external things. Get the center right.

Then everything will be right. But if you have taken your eye away from Christ, you will try, you will try. Later you will be sick of it.

Then it won't be right. But it's easy. Keep your eye on Christ.

Then marriage won't be a problem. Even if it's a German. Even if it's a German.

It doesn't matter. Just keep your eye on Christ. And you Germans have to do the same.

I said, I can guarantee it will go well. But if you don't keep your eye on him, and on these words, and if you chose this text, point it at your neck. Never forget it.

It's one of the bad things in this world, that we forget things that we shouldn't forget. Always remember it. In good and bad days.

Whether it's raining, or a time of drought, never forget it. Then it will go well with you. And you will be able to write letters to other people.

You will be able to say to them, Be happy in the Lord. At all times. Then it will be a wonderful life.

Thank you. Carl, believe with all your heart that Suzelle is the one, the woman that God has chosen for you. And Suzelle, believe also that Carl is the man for you.

Now, the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, will be with you. He is the comforter. He will teach you everything that you need.

And don't worry about the circumstances. If you walk with Him, it will go well. And the Lord will bless you.

And make you a great blessing for your parents, grandfathers and grandmothers. And far beyond the family boundaries. That is what the world needs.

People that are happy. People that are blessed. And people that are led by the Holy Spirit.

Now, you have heard, there are good days and in human terms, bad days. Of joy and heartache. But with God, you will always overcome.

It doesn't matter. Then the Bible says, He who has money, must be as if he does not have money. And he who does not have money, must be as if he is rich.

Look how rich I am. See? And I am happy. Good.

And this ring is an external sign of that you believe. And the Lord says, these two will be one flesh. Will be one.

And make God a gift that you will not only be one in flesh. But one in spirit. Every day that you are not one in spirit is a lost day.

But if you are one in what we have heard, you will be happy. And may the Lord, by His grace, when He comes, find you so. If He has other plans, we never know.

Anything can happen. It can also happen to me. Maybe I am without a wife.

But still, I enjoy the heavenly life there. And I am happy, full of joy, and peace, and joy. And so it must also be with you.

And it may be that at any time He returns and that we are prepared. Come, let us pray that the Lord will see for you. Ladies and gentlemen, you have now for the community, for heaven and earth, a duty that you believe that you are determined for each other.

And that it is your holy will that you also be one in the body. Be with them, gentlemen. Be with them every day of their lives to the end.

That their married life will be a heavenly life, a blessed life, a good example for young and old. That the love, the comfort, the strength, the happiness, the joy will always be visible. And that because of that they will be a great blessing not only for themselves, but for the rest of the family.

And for the rest of the world. Now, Lord Jesus, may your grace and the love of the Father and the community of the Holy Spirit fulfill their life, that they will survive and that it will be glorious every day. That they will grow in your grace and become strong.

To you, in the sanctification of your holy name. Amen.

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