

Comfort in Christ's Knowledge of Us

by J.R. Miller

Christ's perfect knowledge of us is a comforting reality that gives us security and confidence in his love and patience.

Scripture: Psalm 139:1

Topics: "Comfort in Christ", "Divine Omniscience"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the comfort found in Christ's perfect knowledge of us, contrasting the common fear associated with divine omniscience with the assurance that Christ's understanding is rooted in love and grace. He explains that while we may struggle with failures and inconsistencies, Christ sees our sincere intentions and true love amidst our shortcomings. Miller encourages believers to trust in Christ's patient love, which does not waver despite our flaws, and to find solace in the fact that He knows our hearts and intentions. The sermon highlights that Christ's knowledge allows us to approach Him with confidence, knowing He understands our struggles and remains committed to our salvation. Ultimately, Miller reassures that we are kept by Christ's enduring love and grace, which nurtures our potential for growth and transformation.

Transcript

To many people, the thought of Christ's perfect knowledge of them is an unwelcome one. It frightens and troubles them. But if we are living as we should live, if we are true to our purpose and sincere in our striving, the consciousness that Christ knows all about us should give us great comfort.

Too often this thought of the divine omniscience is presented as an element of terror. Children are told that God sees them; and the fact is presented to them as one which should inspire dread, and they are made to fear God's eye. The words "You God see me" are quoted and commented upon as if it had been in stern aspect that the Lord appeared to Hagar. Really, however, it was a friendly revealing that these words were first used. Under God's all-seeing eye, was a shelter of love for the poor woman. So it is always that God looks down upon his children; his look is ever kindly. He is our friend, not our enemy; and his feeling toward us is very gracious and loving. The thought of his perfect knowledge of us should never be an oppressive one; and it will not be so if we understand even a little of his yearning interest in us, and if we have even a faint conception of his infinite patience.

True, our life is full of failures and blemishes. We mean to be loyal to Christ--but the world is hard, and we are very weak. At the best, we get only little fragments of the beauty of Christ into our character. We are

Christ-like only in dim, blurred resemblances in our disposition and conduct. We intend to be gentle and loving; but we mar our days oftentimes with unhappy tempers, grumblings, bickerings, unseemly complaints, and selfish strivings.

We intend to be strong in faith, allowing nothing to make us fear or doubt; but our trust fails us many times, and we grow fearful in life's stress. We mean to be consistent Christians, to live blamelessly in this evil world; but our strength is small, and temptations are great! Where is the day which is not marred by failures?

When we come into the presence of Christ with our broken vows and our stained records, what can we say? Can we look up into his blessed face and declare that we love him, with the memory of all our faults, inconsistencies, and failures fresh in mind? Is not our poor Christian life--a denial of our fair profession? We might say that we are sorry, and will not repeat these sins and follies; but have we not been saying this over and over, perhaps for years, and then almost immediately repeating the sins we deplored and promised never to repeat?

What shall we do? If Christ were but a man like ourselves, judging of love by its deeds, we could not hope for his patient bearing with us. Men are not so tolerant of our failures. They grow weary of our broken vows. They do not know our inner life; they cannot see the sincerity which is in our heart beneath all, which would seem to prove us sincere. But here it is, that we find the comfort in Christ--in his perfect knowledge of us. He knows not only the sin and wrong which are in us--but he knows also whatever in us is true and sincere. He sees the little true love--little, yet true--that there is amid the weakness, the broken vows, and the sad failures.

It was in Christ's knowledge of him, that Peter found his comfort when, after his denials, Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love me?" What could he say about his love, with that sad story of his awful denials so close behind him? He could take refuge only in the assurance that his Master knew all--what was true and sincere, as well as what was so false and unworthy. "You know all things--you know that I love you."

We may find comfort in the same consciousness. If Jesus did not know us perfectly--if he, like men, judged only from our acts, our behavior--then we could not make such an appeal. But he sees into our heart. The sincere love for him which we know we have--in spite of all which seems so contradictory of love--he sees. So we can ever, with simple confidence, say, "God, You know all things--you know that I love you!" and rest there.

There is another phase of the comfort we have in Christ's perfect knowledge of us. The world is not charitable toward our faults. Men are quick to note our inconsistencies. They see our faults with unfriendly eye. They are not patient with our infirmities. They easily doubt our sincerity, when we fail to live up to our profession.

Then at other times, men misunderstand us even when in our hearts we are really most faithful. Jesus himself was continually misjudged and misunderstood. Men took his noblest and divinest acts, and made them appear unworthy and sometimes even disreputable. The disciple must not hope to escape the misrepresentation and the maligning which the Master himself had to endure. There are few good men, who are not at some time in their life misjudged or falsely accused. But in all such experiences we know there is One who knows the truth about us, who is always charitable in his judgment, who never misunderstands or misjudges us. When we have sinned and failed, yet knowing in our heart that we are repentant and sincere; or when we are misunderstood or falsely accused--we can look up with confidence

into Christ's face, and say, "Lord, you know!" There is wonderful comfort in such cases in the consciousness that he understands all.

This love which is in the heart of Christ--is a wonderful love. It is a love which never tires of us. We are not sure always of such patience and endurance in human affection. We complain if our friends do not return as deep, rich, and constant love--as we give them. We are hurt at any evidence of the ebbing of love in them. Human love is oftentimes chilled and even repelled by the discovery of unworthy things, traits of character which are not beautiful, acts which are not right.

We are not sure always that human friends will still love us--when they know all about us. We could not trust anyone in the world with the perfect knowledge which Christ has--of our real inner life. There are records in the secret history of most of us, which we would not dare spread out before the eyes of men. There are things in us--jealousies, envyings, selfish desires, earthward turnings, unholy affections--which we would not feel safe in laying bare even to our dearest and most patient friends. But Christ knows all. Yet we need not be afraid to trust him--with all the innermost frailties, faults, and failures of our life. His love will not be turned back by these repulsive things--while it finds in us even the feeblest true love for him. "He knows all--yet loves us with an infinite affection."

In one sense it is not easy for Christ to save us. We struggle and resist, and there is much in us which persistently disputes his sway. It was the prayer of a saintly man, "Lord, save me in spite of myself." We must all be saved, it would seem, if ever, in spite of ourselves. Paul found a law in his members forever opposing the impulses of the new nature in him, making him do the things he would not desire to do. The only way Christ can save any of us--is by never giving us up, never letting go his hold upon us, never allowing our stubborn earthward striving to drag us out of his hands.

If he ever did grow weary of our persistent sinning, and were to let us have our own way, what would be the result? Suppose that Jesus had let Peter go that night after his denial--what would have become of the poor fisherman? He would have been swept away on the dark bosom of sin's floods, and would never have seen his Lord's face again. We do not know the perils of our own weakness, nor our capacity for sinning.

When the disciples were told by their Lord that one of them would betray him, they did not begin to suspect one another. Each one seemed to be seized with a terrible dread lest it might be himself which would do this dreadful thing. Who has not shuddered when hearing of the fall of some other person into sad, dishonoring sin--feeling that it might have been himself! Terrible are the possibilities of sin in human hearts. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

We talk lightly of sin, and sin's dangers. We speak oftentimes sternly and bitterly--of those who are overcome in temptation, and swept down in its relentless tides. Oftentimes we have little charity for those who fall. It is because we do not know sin's dreadful power. There is evil enough lurking in the heart of the holiest of us, if only it were not restrained by God--to destroy our souls forever! Nothing but the mighty power of the grace of God, keeps unto final salvation, those who are preserved blameless through life. We cannot fathom what we might have been, abandoned to ourselves to drift in the wild floods--had it not been for the hand of Christ, who saves us from our fatal self!

It is told of a saintly man that by his own request the only epitaph on his grave was the word "Kept!" We are all kept--we who do not fall away into the darkness of eternal death--we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Some people speak of the beginning of their Christian life, when they decide

to follow Christ--as if that were all, as if the struggle were all over when the choice is made. We hear it said that certain people are saved, as if the whole of being saved were accomplished in the one act of deciding to be a Christian. Really, however, the struggle only begins with the conversion, ending only when the life reaches glory.

Some speak, too, as if all Christ's work in saving us had been done on the cross nineteen hundred years ago, in his giving up of himself for us. But his actual work in saving us--is continued with us--in teaching us life's lessons, giving us grace to overcome in temptation, lifting us up when we have fallen, going after us and bringing us back when we have wandered away, and keeping us from the world's deadly evils. Were it not for this patient, never-failing, watchful love of Christ--not one of us would ever be saved!

It is Christ's perfect knowledge of us--which gives such infinite patience to his love and grace. He knows the sincerity which is in us; he sees, too, the possibilities of good that are in us--not what we are now--but what we are to be when the work in us is finished.

There is a word of John's which says, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." This is a vision of the final outcome of Christ's work in saving us. The mother of the artist saw in her boy's childish attempts, some gleams of genius, and kissed him to encourage him. That kiss made him an artist. So the patient, loving Christ sees in our poor living, in our yearnings, our human discontents, our strivings, our hungers, our longings--some gleams of what we may become; and it is to bring out these possibilities that he deals with us in such grace and gentleness.

So we may trust Christ with the innermost things in our life. We need not be afraid, however faulty or sinful we know ourselves to be, to lay all at his feet in holy confidence.

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