

NOTES OF MINISTRY

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CHRIST'S SPEAKING AND OUR HEARING

Daan Dekker

Page 1

DIVINE COMFORT

John Speirs

Page 16

EXTRACT

E M Walkinshaw

Page 23

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from the Darby Translation

CHRIST'S SPEAKING AND OUR HEARING

Revelation 1:1-6,9 ("I John" only),10 (from "and I heard behind me") -18; 3:14-22,7-13

I seek help, dear brethren, to say a word about the Lord speaking to the assembly and his love for the assembly, as seen in chapter 2 and chapter 3. But before that I want to touch on several points in chapter 1 about how we should approach His speaking to us, and how we should acknowledge His speaking and know His voice. In our reading meeting earlier, we spoke very much about our privileges, and also about our responsibility, and these chapters in Revelation go much into the thought of responsibility. The seven assemblies were to be light bearers in the absence of the Lord Jesus after He went on high. And I suggest that in chapter 1 there are several points which should have preserved the assemblies from going astray and would have helped them to stay near to the Lord, and to cling to God's original thoughts. And this applies also to us, how we should be preserved in nearness to the Lord Jesus in hearing His word.

The first point from chapter 1 is in verse 1, "to shew to his bondmen what must shortly take place". We should all acknowledge that we are bondmen, bondmen of the Lord Jesus and bondmen of His God and Father. It is a great privilege to be such a bondman. A bondman is someone who is completely at the command of his master. Even the centurion in Luke 7 could say about his bondman, "Do this, and he does it" (v.8). Being bondmen is not only a privilege of the saints of the assembly; all believers, from all times and dispensations, are bondmen. We read in this book about Moses, God's bondman (chap.15:3). We read about the bondmen of God, the

one hundred and forty-four thousand (chap.7:3-8). We read about the prophets in this book, that are the bondmen (chap.10:7). In chapter 19 it says, "Praise our God, all ye his bondmen" (v.5). What a privilege it is to be a bondman, because to bondmen the Lord can make His mind known. A fine example is in Simeon, of whom it is said, "it was divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he should see the Lord's Christ", Luke 2:26. What a privileged man Simeon was, and when he had discerned who the Lord was and took Him in his arms, he says "Lord, now thou lettest thy bondman go, according to thy word, in peace" (v.29). We are in the time when we are very close to the coming of the Lord Jesus, and I suppose that every one here wants to be alive when He comes.

The prime example of a bondman is seen in the Lord Jesus Himself. In Exodus 21, we have the Hebrew bondman, just after the law was given. We know that no one was able or is able to perform it, except the One who could say, "To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight, and thy law is within my heart", Ps.40:8. After the bondman had served, he could go out freely, unless he said distinctly, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go free" (v.5). The Lord Jesus will be a bondman for ever, and He is the great example for us. He loves His Master, His God and Father, above all. So we love the Lord Jesus as His bondmen, and we love His God and Father, because we are not only bondmen of the Lord Jesus but also of His God. James in the salutation of his letter says "James, bondman of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ", Jas.1:1. We should serve God in the way that the Lord has served Him. The Lord said, as it were, 'I love my master, my wife' – that is the

assembly; we should love the assembly as it is in God's thoughts. And we should be occupied with what is so precious to the heart of God and to the Lord Jesus. Then He would say, 'and I love my children'. That refers to the individuals who compose the assembly; they are our brethren and we love our brethren, and therefore we serve them in the measure that the Lord has given us in everything. It is not a specific service, but a service in relation to the whole household of faith. So let us be bondmen in the true sense of the word. In several parables, it speaks about the bondman who did not do the will of the master. We want to be true bondmen as John was. John was a bondman of the Lord Jesus, and he was here for the word of God and the testimony of the Lord Jesus, completely for Him, even when he was in isolation on the island of Patmos. It did not take away from the fact that he remained a bondman, and we have this book written by him which speaks about the end of all God's ways.

The next thing I want to draw your attention to is in verse 3: "Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written in it." As far as I know, there is not another book in the Scriptures where a blessing is given as we have here, to read the words of the prophecy, to hear them, and to keep them. How important it is to keep the Lord's words. We read in the gospels of a woman called Mary, from Bethany, and she sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus listening to His words (Luke 10:39). She was perhaps the only one who, in the life of the Lord Jesus here, discerned that He was going to suffer and die. The Lord says of her that she poured out the ointment for my burying, and that "Wheresoever these glad tidings may be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done

shall be spoken of for a memorial of her", Matt.26:13. How important it is to keep the words and to keep the things written in this book, and indeed all the words of the Lord. How privileged that sister was. It also says of Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, that she "kept all these things in her heart", Luke 2:51. After the Lord ascended up into heaven, she was with the twelve in the upper room. She was preserved; she was one who stood by the cross of Jesus; she was there, because she had kept the things that the Lord had said in her heart. Perhaps at the time she was not able to understand them all, because that involved the incoming of the blessed Holy Spirit; but after the Spirit came, she was able, along with all the others, to understand the words that the Lord had spoken.

Then I draw your attention to what we have in verse 4: "John to the seven assemblies ... Grace ... and peace from him who is", and so on. This letter is written to the seven assemblies, and we know that these seven assemblies were real assemblies in Asia Minor. We have been taught that seven is the number of fulness; and these assemblies also represent phases of the history of Christendom in an outward sense. But I want to suggest that to work out the truth of the assembly in the days in which we are, we need much grace. Peter refers in the salutations of both of his letters to 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied', 1 Pet.1:2; 2 Pet.1:2. How much we need grace to work out the truth of the assembly in our local places, and in relation to the assembly as a whole, and as we do so the result of that will be peace. How important it is, that there is peace as a result of the working out of the truth of the assembly. The resources are available in the whole Godhead, so to speak: I suppose that is conveyed in the "Lord God"

in verse 8. And also, at the end of this book, it is the Lord Jesus Himself who says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (chap.22:13).

And then “the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness.” The assembly in an outward sense has failed – we shall see that later on – but He remains the “faithful witness”. He was faithful when He was here through the whole of His life, especially seen in His public ministry in these last three and a half years. He stood before the governor, before Pilate, and witnessed to the truth, and the truth was seen in His Person in all that He did and spoke. He is the “faithful witness” – how we can rely on Him. And He is “the firstborn from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth”. These are several glories of His; we can hardly take in all the glories that the Lord Jesus has.

Then I want to draw attention to the last part of this verse: “To him who loves us”. It seems to me that when John wrote this to the seven assemblies, when he comes to this point, when the name of the Lord Jesus is mentioned, that immediately from the saints of the assembly there is in their hearts a response that goes out in praise and adoration to Him as the One of whom it is said: “To him who loves us”. That is present. He *has* loved us – that is linked to His giving Himself for us – but He spoke from the glory, and He *still* loves us. He loves His own to the end, John says (chap.13:1). How important it is in going over these chapters to have a sense that the Lord loves us, that He is the same, and that He has an interest in us. We can say it collectively, and we can all say that ‘He loves me’. He loves us: it is a precious thought, to be conscious of the love of the Lord Jesus, in whatever circumstances we are. Some of the

saints of these assemblies were suffering; yet John writes “and has washed us from our sins in his blood”. We spoke about the first principles of the gospel in our reading. One of the things that we see here is that we are never to leave this great truth that He “washed us from our sins in his blood”. Is everyone here able to say that? Can we say that the Lord Jesus has washed you and washed me from your sins, from my sins, in His blood? And He has “made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father”. That is what we are now. He has made us that; He has set Himself in service for His God and Father and that was His goal, that “to him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen”. Glory can only be given to a divine Person. He is worthy of glory and might, because all things are under His control. It is blessed to realise that.

The last thing I want to point out in this chapter, in relation to the Lord’s speaking further on, is in verse 17. John saw the vision of the Lord Jesus. He had known Him for three and a half years when He was here on the earth and he is the only one of whom it is mentioned that he was in the bosom of Jesus. He was near; he was nearer than Peter, because Peter wanted to ask something of the Lord, and he called on John because John was in the bosom of Jesus (John 13:23-25). How precious that is. But here John saw the Lord Jesus in a different attitude: he saw Him in an attitude of judgment. When you read this passage from verse 12 onwards, you become in awe of Him in the greatness and majesty of His Person. When you read Daniel 7 you see almost the same thought: “one like a son of man, and he came up even to the Ancient of days” (v.13). The description of the Ancient of days in Daniel 7:9 is similar to that of the Son of man here. It is

marvellous, and there is mystery in it, because the Lord Jesus is the Ancient of days, but at the same time, He is the Son of man. And John, when he saw Him, “fell at his feet as dead”. He was so near to the Lord, but in the majesty in which the Lord presents Himself, John could not sustain it, and he fell as dead.

But then – and I want to point this out – the Lord Jesus “laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not”. I have read chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation many times, almost with fear; but the Lord says, “Fear not”. He says, as it were, ‘When you are in the right attitude towards me, towards my God and Father, towards all that I have done, there is nothing to fear, because “I am the first and the last”. Whatever happens, even in the seven assemblies in relation to their responsibilities, I am He. I am the One in control of all things’. I think it is very important to see, in spite of all that is happening in Christendom, in spite of all that is happening among believers, in spite all that is happening in the world, that the Lord is in control of everything and we should hold to that, cling to that in faith, because He is there.

“I became dead”, the Lord says, “and behold, I am living to the ages of ages”. How precious it is to realise it, that He once went into death, and it was because of us, not because of Himself. He went into death for us, to save us and to set us up for His God and Father as a kingdom of priests in order that there should be glory to God. We had something of that in the reading. And the Lord adds that He has “the keys of death and of hades”. He is someone who has the keys: He has authority over death; He has the power of it and the might of it; He has the keys of all things. “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand” (John 3:35); that includes the keys of

death and of hades. And He is the One who shall judge the world, because He is the Son of man (John 5:27).

It is in the light of these things that we should approach the Lord's speaking in chapter 3. The Lord has many things to say to the assembly in Laodicea. It was once an assembly in Asia Minor; but it was also, as I have mentioned, a phase in the history of Christendom. It is the last phase, and we are in the last phase. We can point to places where what the Lord says to Laodicea has come to full fruition. But I do not want to go into that, because when the word of God comes, it is always, in the first place, for ourselves. It comes to me; it comes to us. What has this word of the Lord Jesus to say to us? Already in chapter 1 the Lord has pointed out that He is "the faithful witness", and again He says it here, but this assembly was not faithful. The Lord says, as it were, 'I remain faithful, I am there'. And His faithfulness is seen in dealing with this assembly, with the character of this assembly. He says, "I know thy works...". I do not want to speak in detail of these things, but in Laodicea they were in a very poor state. To say it in one sentence, they thought that they had all things, but they did not have the Lord. And the difference with Philadelphia is that those in Philadelphia had nothing in themselves, but it was all in the Lord. The question is, 'What do we have?' Am I boasting in spiritual things that the Lord has given us in His grace? Are we boasting in these things, as though we had received them by our own efforts? In Laodicea they were lukewarm. It is a far more serious state than that of the assembly at Ephesus, of which it says that they had left their first love (chap.2:4), because in Laodicea it seems that the Lord was not in their minds at all. Perhaps in their profession they

said, 'We are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus'; but they were not: the Lord was outside.

The Lord is speaking: He says, "*thou* art the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". The Lord has a word for us also, if I am in that state. He always has a word suitable to the state of the assembly, and He wants to bring the saints back. I know that this state in Laodicea is irreparable, because the Lord says, "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth", but He counsels them; the Lord counsels them to buy of Him. And these things the Lord speaks of are things that He Himself has secured for His own: "gold purified by fire" speaks of God's righteousness, that we should be marked by what God has done in the Lord Jesus; and these "white garments" also. The "eye-salve" is to enable us to see. Do I see that I am in that state? Perhaps that was the biggest problem, that they were not able to discern that they were in such a poor state. Can I discern that? The Lord says, "I counsel thee to buy of me". When you read it, you can sense the feelings of the Lord Jesus. They should have been faithful in His absence, as He was faithful. He says, "I counsel thee to buy of me". He says, as it were, 'I have all these things you are lacking; they are presently with me. This is the only thing that you need to do, to ask of me, and I will give them freely, because that is my attitude towards you'.

Then I want to refer to the love of the Lord Jesus. He says, "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love". I do not know about you, dear brother or sister, but most of the time the rebukes that the Lord gives me are gentle rebukes, not harsh rebukes. In His rebuke, He comes to us and He wants to bring us back to Him; these gentle rebukes. When you have

discerned something of that, you feel, 'How poor I was, through not asking for His mind'; but how faithful He is. "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love": I know discipline can be a very severe thing, and all of us here know something of God's discipline and the Lord's discipline. In Hebrews, it speaks of the discipline of the Father: "But no chastening at the time seems to be matter of joy, but of grief", Heb.12:11. But the motive is love, for the Lord says, "as many as I love", which means every one whom the Lord loves. He rebukes and chastens in order that we might have part with Himself.

We then come to what I think is the most touching thing in this letter: the Lord says, "Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking". Can you imagine the Lord Jesus, who has given Himself for His assembly, being outside and knocking to come in? How touching that is, that He stands outside the door, and is knocking to come in. I think that action of knocking is going on, and will go on until He comes. That assembly is about to be spewed out of His mouth, but He is there and He stands at the door. There is a helpful note to the word "stand", meaning 'I have placed myself there and am standing'. It is something that the Lord did, and it continues to this day. He is there: 'I am knocking'. Have I heard His knocking? It will continue until He comes: "I stand at the door and am knocking".

And then, "if any one hear my voice": the Lord is not now speaking about knocking, but about hearing His voice. If there is someone with the exercise to hear the Lord's voice, that one will let Him come in. "if any one hear my voice": the Lord did not expect that the whole assembly would open the door. We know that because later in the book, we see the

“great harlot” (chap.19:2) which is an extension of what we have in this assembly, and perhaps also of what we see in Thyatira and Sardis. “If any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him”. What a word of the Lord Jesus. We see here that He is still a bondman and still serves. “I will come in unto him and sup with him”. You have a personal transaction with the Lord Jesus in this way. How precious that is: “I will come in unto him and sup with him”. He will come into my circumstances, to where I am. I have seen that I was poor, and blind and naked, and the Lord has given me the answer. Then, “and he with me”. That is even more precious; He comes into my circumstances, but “he with me” – He takes me out of my circumstances and brings me into His circumstances, and that is something that is secure and stable: “and he with me”. What a precious word, despite the state of that assembly, but let us never think that it is not us. Let us not think that we can never be in such a state. It is nearby. We should all know our hearts. It says in the prophet Jeremiah that our hearts are incurable (chap.17:9). My heart can deceive me.

And then there is the promise: “He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome”. The Lord is pointing to the fact that He has overcome, and he that overcomes in Laodicea will sit with the Lord Jesus in His throne. How precious that is.

I want to end with the assembly before Laodicea, that is, the Lord speaking to Philadelphia. Although I cannot point to specific places that are marked by what the Lord takes account of in Philadelphia, I know that there are believers who desire to be answering to the Lord’s commendation

to Philadelphia. I trust we are all among them. He presents Himself as “the holy, the true”. I think “the holy” is a priestly title of the Lord. Peter confesses the Lord Jesus in every gospel in a slightly different way. The best known is in Matthew: “*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (chap.16:16); but in John, he says, “we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God” (chap.6:69). The reference to the “holy one of God” is connected with the Lord Jesus in His priestly service. It says in one of the Psalms that Aaron was the “saint of Jehovah” (Ps.106:16), and the note says, ‘holy one’. Jehovah Himself, mainly in the book of Isaiah, is called “the Holy One of Israel”; and here the Lord speaks of Himself as “the holy, the true”. In John 7 the Lord says of Himself “he is true” (v.18). He would present Himself to this assembly as who He is in Himself. He also has the “key of David”, relating to the way that David set up the service of God in 1 Chronicles. We are reading 1 Chronicles at home, and you see how marvellous it is that David sets up the service of God; he had it in his heart. In Psalm 132, David was concerned that there should be a place for the ark of God. He found a place, and then he set up the service of God. The Lord says here that He has the key of David, and He has the power to open and to shut. I think the Lord has opened the door in what we call the revival of the truth, and we can certainly say that the persons that the Lord has used were marked by Philadelphian features.

But the question is, are we marked in the same way as they were? The Lord says, “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door”. It seems that one of the differences between Laodicea and Philadelphia is that in Laodicea, they think much of themselves but in Philadelphia, they feel

themselves poor and the Lord encourages them. They felt in themselves that they had only a little power. It says in Zephaniah, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah" (chap.3:12). Such will be in Jerusalem in the day to come. I think these people in Philadelphia feel themselves so, "an afflicted and poor people". But the Lord commends them, and reading this passage you see that the Lord opens His heart completely to them, because He is pleased that they have kept His word and have not denied His name. The name "Philadelphia" means brotherly love. The saints there had accepted the Lord's command to love one another. It is an obligation to love one another, and at the same time it is the result of having been born of God. The Lord said, in John 13, "A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you" (v.34). Also in John's first epistle, it says, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (chap.3:14). That is a consequence of having been made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet.1:4), and having been born of God, these two things. But then the Lord adds, "and hast kept my word". That is, there is something nearer than His commandments; they have "kept my word".

One of the things that the Lord values very much, is that we remember Him in His supper. I think that is a distinct matter that has come out in the revival of the truth, that there has been an answer to the request of the Lord, "This do in remembrance of me", Luke 22:19. It is not exactly a command; it is more a word. One of the hymns says,

‘Love’s remembrance, Lord, Thou seekest’
(Hymn 30)

It is a question of doing what His desires are. That is the thought of the “word” – the desires of the Lord. In 2 Samuel, David desired to have some water from the well at Bethlehem (chap.23:13-17). It was not a command, but a desire. Then three men went and broke through the army of the Philistines to bring water for David. That is an example of hearing the Lord’s word and answering to it. They had “kept my word, and ... not denied my name”. How precious that is, to acknowledge the name of the Lord Jesus. He is despised in this world, even in outward Christendom. But there are faithful persons now and there will be until He comes – I am quite sure about that – because the Lord has said: “and hast not denied my name”.

It says here, “Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not”. There is a great profession in Christendom. There are some who say that they are the people of God, but the Lord says no, they “are not, but lie”. In a coming day, such will know that the Lord has loved His poor people, those who have not denied His name. I do not think it was necessary for the Philadelphians themselves to be told that the Lord loved them, because they had the conscious sense of the Lord’s love for them; but they were told that His love for them will come into display and will be acknowledged. That will be seen as regards the whole assembly: what the Lord is saying here is for the whole assembly, and it is always so.

Then we have the very precious thought that the Lord will come: “I come quickly”. That is a very striking thing that came out in the revival of the truth, that the Lord’s coming is near; He could come at any moment. The Lord gives those in Philadelphia the

promise that “I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”. Those who “dwell upon the earth” are persons who are marked by all that is of this earth. That suggests that these poor people who are not marked by what is of the earth are a heavenly people. Are we marked by heavenliness? The Lord adds: “I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown”. How important that is; the Lord has given us something to hold fast. There are many precious things that the Lord has given; do we value them? Do we hold them fast? “Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” That will cost us something. It has been said that to come into fellowship costs you something¹, and I believe that to stay in fellowship costs you even more. I trust we all have the desire, the obligation, to follow the Lord Jesus and to answer to His word and to His commandments.

I want to finish by referring to the Lord's promise to him that overcomes. What a promise it is that the Lord Jesus gave to these poor people in Philadelphia. He says He will write upon them “the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem”. I have for years thought about it: why is it that the Lord speaks about “the city of my God, the new Jerusalem” at the beginning of this book, and only at the end of the book we see the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven (Chap.21:2)? I think I know now. These believers in Philadelphia were already living as if the new Jerusalem was coming down out of heaven; they were living already in the assurance, in the light, of that coming city; and that is an eternal thought. In Thyatira, the promise to the overcomer is something

¹ FER Vol.16 p.299

that will be seen in the world to come, but the new Jerusalem is an eternal thought. At the beginning of chapter 21 what you have is in eternity, and after that it is “the holy city, Jerusalem” (v.10), and that is the thought in the millennium. How precious it is that the Lord will write upon those who are overcomers the name of His God and the name of the city of His God, and His new name.

All these things are what the Lord values, and to be an overcomer – to say it in a few words – is to value what the Lord values. May He bless the word.

Address at Sunbury

6 June 2026

Daan Dekker

DIVINE COMFORT

Psalm 69:20; Hebrews 4:14-16;
John 14:15-18,25-27; Acts 20:7-12; 1 Peter 5:6,7

We have been occupied in the earlier meetings with two things that we very much need at the present time: divine power and divine wisdom. I seek help now to speak about something else that we very much need at the present time, and that is comfort – divine comfort.

We are in a world where there is a lot of sorrow. There is sorrow that is experienced by all men – the sorrow of bereavement, of illness, of difficult circumstances. Then there are sorrows which are specific to the believer in the Lord Jesus; we

speaking about 'assembly sorrows'. When we are experiencing sorrow, we feel the need of comfort, and God is ready and able to provide divine comfort. I seek help to speak from these passages, whilst feeling limited about what I can say about them, to reassure us, beloved, that if you are experiencing sorrow now, God is ready and able to comfort you.

I read in Psalm 69 to remind us that God is able to comfort you because there is a Man who has been in a position of the deepest sorrow where there was no comfort and no sympathy, as the psalm says. These words in verse 20 tell us prophetically about the feelings of our Lord Jesus, that precious, holy, sinless Lamb of God. Think of how He suffered. If you are experiencing suffering, know that there is One who has suffered already. He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their faces", Isa.53:3. He said prophetically, "see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow", Lam.1:12. What incomparable sorrows Jesus bore, and He says prophetically, "I looked for sympathy, but there was none".

Beloved, the Lord Jesus went that way of suffering, He went to the cross, He suffered at the hands of men, He "endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself" (Heb.12:3), for you and for me. And more, at the hands of God He endured the atoning sufferings. It says, "I looked for sympathy, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none". How thankful we can be that no matter what we pass through in sorrow or suffering, none of us will ever have to say that there is no one to comfort us. You have a Comforter in our Lord Jesus. The same One who endured "great contradiction from sinners against himself" is also our "great high priest who has

passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God". Although He has passed through the heavens, He is very near to you; very near to you and very available.

When we try to comfort someone who is sorrowing – and it is something I find very difficult to do – we may not know what to do or what to say, but the Lord Jesus knows: He knows what to do and what to say. He is our "great high priest ... Jesus the Son of God". What a dignified, wonderful person our High Priest is. Our scripture says, "For we have not a high priest not able to sympathise with our infirmities". Perhaps that is one particular thing that leads to sorrow, part of the weakness of the human vessel in which we find ourselves. Illness and weakness come into our lives due to the effects of sin. The Lord Jesus never suffered illness, because He was sinless, but He knew what it was to be weary. He knew the reality of the human condition, sin apart. He knew about infirmities from being near to them. The force of this passage is that He is able to sympathise with our infirmities. It adds, "tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart".

What a wonderful Person to have as your High Priest, interceding on your behalf in the presence of God. He is "always living to intercede" for us (Heb.7:25); He never fails in that service. We read in the Psalm, "I looked for sympathy, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none". If you look for sympathy, you will find that He is there and that He is ready. If you are looking for comfort, you will find that He is there. He is "always living to intercede". What a wonderful High Priest we have in our Lord Jesus; what a Comforter He is. He assures us that He is the One who is able to sympathise. That is one way we can comfort someone, by

sympathising with them – to show that, to the extent you can, you have entered into what they are experiencing. The Lord Jesus knows *exactly* what you are experiencing. He has experienced and endured sorrow like none other. And now, having passed through the heavens, He is ready and available to comfort you. He always lives to do so.

Where we read in John's gospel, the Lord Jesus speaks about "another Comforter". He is speaking about the Holy Spirit. "I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter": what a provision of grace, an abundance of grace. Not only is the Lord Jesus Himself our Comforter, but He gives us "another Comforter". I do not think the Holy Spirit is "another Comforter" *instead* of Jesus; He is "another Comforter" *as well as* Jesus. What fulness of provision God has made for you in the Holy Spirit. You can comfort someone simply by being with them; it may be a comfort to someone just to know that you are there. The Holy Spirit is with you for ever; you will never be alone. If you have received Him, the Holy Spirit is "with you" and He is "in you" – "that he may be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth".

The Lord says in this passage, "whom the world cannot receive"; the world cannot comfort you. It has nothing to offer that can comfort you, despite what it may claim to be able to do. But the Holy Spirit, this One who is "the Spirit of truth", is able to comfort you; "he abides with you, and shall be in you". What a wonderful matter to know that a divine Person, One who is God, is with you and in you, and available to you. How does He comfort you? He "abides with you", but further on in our passage the Lord says, "*he* shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you".

Sometimes when someone is passing through sorrow or difficulty, a person writes a few words on a letter or card. The most effective words of comfort to a person who is sorrowing are the words of Jesus. When you receive a card that has a quotation of the words of Jesus on it, that carries a particular comfort; the Holy Spirit uses His words to do that: He is able. The Lord says that He “will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you”. How comforting to have brought to our remembrance the words of Jesus. How comforting, beloved, that the Holy Spirit would bring to your remembrance things that Jesus has said, and in that way He would comfort you. He would be with you, assuring you of His presence and assuring you that He is not going to leave you. He is there ready to help you, and He tells you about Jesus. He is going to teach you about Him and He is going to bring things about Him to your remembrance.

In the Acts of the Apostles, there is another aspect of sorrow: I suggest that we might consider this passage as referring to a sorrow that may take place in the local assembly. It says that “a certain youth ... fell from the third story down to the bottom, and was taken up dead”: they thought he was dead. Beloved, God would comfort you if you are feeling a sorrow like this. Perhaps a young person, or indeed anyone, is for the moment causing sorrow; perhaps, for the moment, they are not available to us. But comfort is available, and divine comfort can be dispensed through one and another. In this case it was through the apostle Paul; it says, “Paul descending fell upon him, and enfolding him in his arms”. This would remind us that we can comfort someone by assuring them of our love for them. That would be done in nearness, and Paul did that in a notable way here. Eutychus fell, but Paul descended:

it was a dignified movement of love, and reminds you of the character of that movement in Philippians 2 that we were referring to earlier: “For let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (v.5). I think “this mind” was in Paul at this moment; Paul was descending. We may have experienced something of this ourselves. Perhaps I have been wayward, perhaps I have been pursuing my own will, perhaps I have been weak and fallen away. Then how I have appreciated someone who has descended, has acted in gentleness and in love and in the spirit of Christ Himself to draw near to me, and reassured me of their love for me. It is really God’s love expressed in my fellow believer: “and enfolding him in his arms, said, Be not troubled, for his life is in him”.

Beloved, if there is a work of God that you once witnessed in a person and know was there, it cannot be lost; it can always be revived, and brought back into circulation. No one is too far away for God to recover them. Let us take comfort in that: “his life is in him. And having gone up, and having broken the bread”. It would seem that the youth was included in that. A person who once broke bread can be restored to that again; and they “were no little comforted”. Divine comfort is available as we draw alongside one another. If, in the power of the Holy Spirit and as subject to the Lord Jesus, I draw alongside someone who may need comfort, or who may need to be restored and revived and recovered, divine comfort will come in. I feel how limited I am in that, but one thing we can always do is to draw near, expressing affection to one another; I suggest that as we do so, no little comfort will be proved in our gatherings.

I read in Peter because the passage illustrates that another way we can comfort someone is to listen

to them; to hear what is on their heart. We spoke in the previous meeting about the queen of Sheba. It says that she spoke with Solomon of all that was in her heart (2 Chron.9:1). Peter says in relation to God, “having cast all your care upon him” – “all your care”. That means that if anything is causing you sorrow, God is ready to listen to you; He is ready to hear and He cares about you. He has your best interests at heart, and He knows what is best for you; He is ready to listen and to point you to the Lord Jesus. God will remind you that your great High Priest is ready and willing to serve you and comfort you, and that the Holy Spirit remains within you, the divine Comforter who is with you and in you. God is also ready to remind you of the brethren that are round about you and who love you. And He is ready to remind you that He Himself is a caring, loving Father. It says, “for he cares about you”.

What fulness of provision of divine comfort there is! The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all engaged in comforting believers. What a wonderful provision is ours at the present time, no matter what the sorrows are. Our Lord Jesus, who has known sorrows like no other, is able to sympathise with you; the Holy Spirit will never leave you; and you can cast upon God all the cares you have. And you have brethren who love you.

May the Lord bless the word.

Address in Birmingham

9 May 2026

John Speirs

EXTRACT

Now what can one person do? What can *you* do, dear sister, in your locality? You may say, Well, I cannot speak in the assembly. But at any rate you can *pray*, you can be with God. You can be discerning as to what is needed in your locality, and what is needed in the assembly generally. You can be exercised about it. You can be feeling, as is said of Hannah, in bitterness of soul about conditions. And then I think you will find, as you are with God, that your influence and effectiveness will extend in the locality. There will be greater substance and greater power given to the assemblings of the saints. And you may never see the full answer. You say, Well, it is rather sad that Hannah may not have seen the full answer. Stephen never saw the conversion of Saul, did he? ... And we are not told whether Hannah saw Samuel in his prime, if I may use such an expression, when he was the great prophetic link between God and His people.

What I wanted to draw attention to is what one man or one woman of like passions with ourselves can do, what *one* person can do ... Let us look into the Scriptures, and we shall find a multitude of instances of what one person did, because that one person was with God. May we be more with Him, dear brethren.

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