

# The Lord will comfort Zion (Quality: Good)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] dependence upon the Lord for all needed help I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Isaiah chapter 51 and verse 3 Isaiah chapter 51 and verse 3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion He will comfort all her waste places He will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord Joy and gladness shall be found therein

Thanksgiving and the voice of melody Zion signifying the whole church of God setting forth before us the inhabitants of Zion and I am reminded also of one of our hymns that just comes suddenly to my mind glorious things of thee are spoken Zion city of our God he whose word cannot be broken from thee for his own abode on the rock of ages founded look and shape thy sure repose with salvation's walls surrounded thou may smile at all thy foes further blessed inhabitants of Zion washed in the Redeemer's blood

Jesus whom their souls rely makes them kings and priests to God tees his love his people raises over self the raises kings and as priests his solemn praises each for a thank offering brings what a mercy to be numbered among them what a mercy to be an inhabitant of the Zion what a mercy to say I'd love to meet among them now and at thy gracious feet to bow though feeling to be so unworthy I'm no more a stranger nor a guest but like a child at home Zion was a high place of Jerusalem and when they sought to anoint David as king of Judah you remember the high place in Jerusalem was occupied by the inhabitants called Jebusites who were so assured that no one could possibly conquer them take possession of this high place that they even dare to say that they could put those that were blind and lame and so forth on God and they would prevent anyone capturing the city however and without going into the historical part at length you will remember how that the people were given strength and the warrior

I think it was Jeho from memory was given strength and the citadel fell and David took possession the high place Zion now the inhabitants of Zion and you may well see confirmation in your soul that you are one of them not to promote unbelief but it's a good thing to be searched out a good thing for God's work of grace to be confirmed in our souls and I was thinking of this that these are they who in the teaching of the Holy Spirit in some measure some deeper than others some shorter and some longer are led to Sinai to the mount where there was the manifestation of the glory of God the justice of Jehovah the giving of the law and no one dared to approach that mound dared to touch that mound and where they all feared as the voice of God was heard as that trumpet that grew louder and louder and the law proclaimed and the law that demands perfect obedience the law that says the soul that sinneth it shall die but ye as the apostle Paul writing to the Hebrews ye are come unto Mount Zion and as I think of Mount Zion

I think of Jerusalem as I think of Jerusalem I think of Calvary as I think of Calvary I think of one who came from glory to this earth one that man said away with him away with him crucify him crucify him this one who came to save sinners this one a man indeed a real man but God the God man this one they nailed to the cross this one there died in the room and place of sinners bearing the punishment of God so that that law that thundered down from Mount Sinai had no demand because the payment is made because the demands of the law are there because there's one whose blood can cleanse from all sin whereby the Holy Father is the just God and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus now this is

[ 6 : 41 ] Mount Zion and these are the inhabitants of Mount Zion and these are they that love to come and worship their dear Lord and Saviour these are they who come mourning over their sin these are they who come praying to be fed in their souls praying for the blessings of the gospel to be poured forth constantly and praying that the Lord will prosper his world praying that thou would do good unto Zion and build up the walls of Jerusalem but now our text says that the Lord shall comfort Zion so it signifies that there's sorrow there is distress there are tears and so it is and my dear friends God will wipe away all tears from their eyes but here on the lowlands of earth we have the divine comfort and consolation and I've often tried to name it in this way it is from

Father Son and Holy Spirit and from the scriptures of truth this signifies to me that we must not be dismayed if there are sorrows in the way trials in the way temptations in the way times of testing if there may be things that seem to almost quench the very life of God out of us I say this very solemnly when we feel to be like the bruised reed and the smoking flint one thing with these inhabitants of Zion they are born again sinners they are the possessors of spiritual life they are the possessors of spiritual light a life that will never die a light that will never be extinguished and a faith that will never be destroyed and a faith that will be with them until they die until they reach glory and that faith shall be turned into glorious sight

God the Father oh my dear friends the great holy God of heaven the God of all comfort that comfort us in all our sorrows and trials and ways and my friends this is divine comfort this is powerful comfort this is comfort that is applied this is comfort that is not just a vein like we might try encourage one another where we perhaps feel there is no hope to encourage a person a certain matter but here is comfort that comes from heaven itself and I often think of that wonderful word in this self same prophecy where we read as one whom his mother mark that God the Father speaking now we're not despising fathers but there's something and I think it's readily acknowledged very special particular peculiar nothing quite like a mother's love like as one whom his mother comforted so will

I comfort you and so shall ye be comforted in Jerusalem the God of all comfort like as a father pitied his children so the Lord pitied them that fear him and so have you not tasted this from time to time I know this is a thanksgiving day but in these days on the path there's been sorrows and we give thanks to our God that is the God of comfort we thank God that he does draw near to us he says I know their sorrows he knows the path you tread he knows how weak you are how weary you are how lonely you may be how dark you may be but this is our mercy he is the God of all comfort now what about the dear saviour oh what does he say I will not leave you comfortless

I will come to you and I was thinking there when the dear saviour was here on this earth how when he came to heal the sick when those poor things came to when for example blind Bartimaeus was there in his blindness a beggar outside Jericho and he started to cry out he heard it was Jesus and he couldn't see him couldn't go to him but he went to him in the desires of his heart and he cried Jesus thou son of David mark what he said he didn't say Jesus thou son of Nazareth he said the son of David signify the Messiah have mercy on me and they tried to stop him but the more they tried to stop him the more the poor man cried and I believe some of us know what it is when he's desperate and he's mercy we can't plead anything else and that door of mercy stands open all day to the poor the poor and the needy not by the way and none are ever empty sent back who come seeking for mercy for Jesus sake did Jesus hear that prayer you know

[ 12 : 46 ] I've just touched that at this point again because you read in one of the gospels Jesus stood still I've marveled at him the power of the prayer of a beggar the Lord will not cast out turn from you may say but he seems so silent to me it may be and I seem to be going on a strange path for a moment out of my thoughts but it may be with you like the woman that came about her son about her daughter and he answered her not a word and everything seemed to go against her he wasn't going against her he was drawing her drawing her in a need in the agony of her faith drawing her closer to him and yet he seemed to be pushing her away I said there was reverence they'll go back to the blind man what did they say they said be of good comfort be of good courage be of cheer he's calling you there's hope yet and he cast his garment rose and went to Jesus and oh my friend

I love to think of it his open eyes what did he feast on the one that opened his eyes and what when poor sinners had their eyes opened even if not shall I say fully open not to see him the Lord as you long to see him one day you'll see him as he is but just glimpses of him just a glimpse of him and he's altogether lovely is he so precious to you why do you love him because you need him because you see in this Jesus no one else you see in this dear Jesus everything there that will be your help and oh my friend pray on pray on but comfort here's one says I will not leave you comfort but then there's the Holy Spirit look at that I will not leave you comforters but he said I and if I go away I will send another comforter and even the spirit of room that will abide with you forever oh and breathe comfort says one where distress abound make the whole conscience clean and heal with balm from Jesus wounds the festering sores when the dear

Holy Spirit applies the word when he brings that word and puts it right into your poor heart when he puts as you've got that dreadful sore that deep sorrow that dreadful temptation that burden you can't bear anymore that mountain that is before you that thorn in the flesh whatever it may be and I'm not speaking lightly friend these things are very real deep depths dark depths lonely depths but all then comes by the grace of God comfort and the power is such that immediately immediately we find there's like peace be still and there's a great God there's nothing compared because his power with the comfort his application with the comfort it comes just where you are the Lord shall comfort Zion and we're comforted too by the very scriptures of truth how often has it been when you've been in deep distress and aren't you giving thanks this is a thanksgiving day for what the

Lord has done in these times of distress and providential trials difficulties spiritual exercise spiritual trials sore temptations and the Lord has come and what has set you free what has brought comfort to you what a word from heaven and that word that you've received by divine faith and that word that has been applied to your very heart and that word that has come with such power that your troubled soul has been brought into a measure of peace and quietness before God that the Lord shall comfort Zion and we read he shall comfort all her waste places he will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord I seek now as we may be helped to consider this expression the garden of the

Lord by nature we are like the waste howling wilderness the waste ground that brings forth nothing but briars and thorns and weeds and so forth but here by the transforming power of God's grace there is this great work of heaven where before all we could yield was that which was of the flesh but now there is this transforming power I view it in a double sense really but most particularly as the inhabitants of Zion born into this world without grace without love without mercy without divine love love but now I say I think first that the garden signifies something where great things have been done

[ 18 : 24 ] I'm speaking of a beautiful well kept garden it's different from the wilderness why because it's set apart because a work has been performed because God has blessed that in that garden and so we see it in the case of every true believer but first of all let us not lose sight of what we were you see without spiritual life without the grace of God all we can bring forth at that which are weeds and like the wilderness I know thank God still there is that where we read of the ungodly with their kindness and good deeds but I'm speaking as far as the salvation of their soul is concerned they think that doing the best they can will gather them to glory my dear friend it will not bring you to heaven good works yes faith without works is dead faith will follow us to glory never go before us but

I say let us try and look at this transforming power here then is a part set apart it's distinct and this garden belongs to somebody this garden belongs to the Lord himself this people are manifested as the people of God and here I say is the owner of this garden now in this garden plants are set in their appointed place and here we see the hand of God view this as Zion as a whole every one is likened to a plant in a garden and I speak very simply that there is a large garden great variety you may see as you went into a garden there's certain flowers that stand out well and you see them straight away but as you walk around you see some more plants you may see right there in the shadow some very small plants but they are all there in the garden now what is the difference between those plants in your garden and an artificial plant that man can make today

I was in a home only this week and in a vase there was look like one rose very beautiful rose and it was it was standing in water too so I thought I believe that must be real and yet I wasn't sure I wasn't sure man can make it's amazing what man can do in fact as I looked into it I didn't touch it or smell it or anything like that but I could see even in with the petals a different colouring just like you see with the rose when the outside petals start to drop away it must be so I spoke to the friend no she is artificial artificial I tremble one could be in a pulpit preach things from the head and be in a dead profession be in a pew sit in real life under the truth and yet be dead artificial what is the distinction that artificial plant I don't know why it put in a bit of water but water would make no difference to it it will stand you have artificial plants I suppose if you just dust them or wash them they stand for ages

I suppose but not the living the real plant must have water must it will grow it will faint it will draw now every plant then has a root it's rooted it's planted and my friend here speaks of the work of God's grace here speaks of that work begun in the heart that seed sown that which is under the soil that which cannot be seen I would change the seed a little bit there to wheat because I'm so ignorant of these things I confess it but there just use it as illustration there it is sown there the miracle is performed there is the death of that seed the rotting and yet there's the brooding and there's the life and from the death there's life from that life there's a springing up and there's a going down and that going up oh I feel it's a miracle it is a miracle

I know people may explain what it means but to my uneducated mind in that way and I do have to confess I most of the subjects that children do to school today I never did them at all in my life so I'm quite ignorant but I do know this in the simplicity of it that the power comes and presses through all the earth whether it's very deep or small yet you think of what's on top of that it has that power to press through again have I not marveled when I've been walking through a park and see these great trees and see that the roots of those trees even push up the concrete path as it were or the tarmac path you see the power is life friend and so it is with God the work of God's Holy Spirit in the heart and that brings us to a sense in the first place a sense of death of hope in all that is in self and yet leading us in hope to the death of

[ 24 : 58 ] Christ and then the springing up the work and tender shoe and you feel oh everything seems on top of you it seems sin condemns you and yet there's something in your heart I speak of the early seeker something in your heart that's pressing out reaching up after Christ and my friend there it is and so here you see there's the upward growth and here and going on with the theme I think perhaps I better keep to that for the moment on the matter of wheat there is the blade that first sign and there again with the garden I'm no expert gardener I don't confess that at all but I like just the little bit I do and it's lovely to watch it personally I have to buy little plants but when you think that they're grown from seed and I had a dear friend who's still with us but he's now retired who did a lot in selling small plants and I know in the springtime they were busy pricking out

I think they called it and my work close work the beginnings little beginnings and then watch those little things you put them in and if I can use an illustration and put a few in these busy lizards just to use an example they're so small but the miracle the wonder how fast they grow how quickly they spread how beautiful they appear now do you see my friend these plants do you see the transformation you see that waste handling wood you see that garden a garden that's full of weeds and nothing but weeds and brambles and so forth you compare it with a well kept garden you see the life of a believer it should be distinct it should speak of a creator it should speak clearly of God's work it should speak clearly of something that speaks of God himself his creation so I say then collectively looking at it in Zion so you have whether you might think of the great cedar in Lebanon or the great fir tree or you might have the humble myrtle tree down there in the valley great things but also you have the lily of the valley you have the rose that you read of in the song of Solomon and you have the smallest flowers that there may be but all in their appointed place and so in the church of

God you have the pillars in the church you have men and women men that preachers of the gospel deacons pillars women that are mothers of Israel and who lives bear testimony of their usefulness and faithfulness but some are in hidden corners some perhaps you hardly see them hardly notice them but there again suddenly you observe this hidden plant and there's something very beautiful something that is very lovely I've marveled sometimes not only as I've seen in one part that I go to a magnificent tree which is really amazing sight but I've also seen some little flower my new flower and yet it speak what does it speak to it God is my beauty what does my life speak of does that speak about

God does it speak of a new creation does it speak of a bramble a weed or does it speak of something that speaks of Jesus Christ so here all in their appointed place and in the church of God that little hymn you in your small corner and I in mine but now all these plants are planted but all these plants need watching and care they need watering they need constant care my friend God takes care of each but there's also our solemn responsibility to watch and to pray a gardener that does not watch his plants watch against disease watch against the smallest insects that can do damage if I may use again a simple illustration you take the green fly it doesn't tell you it's come you have no warning of it it's only and I'm speaking as a very ignorant man I don't claim to be a gardener but I do love a little bit of gardening and suddenly especially in the springtime and think well they won't be there yet and then I remember once looking at a rose bush it was covered with it they didn't tell me they were there now my friend you see it's not only the great things

I feel I know the great winds and gales that can uproot plants but lordly speaking I think in some cases it deepens the road but look at the damage that can be done with something that's silent something that you can hardly see and look at the little things in our life that may be crippling the enjoyment of the love of Christ in our soul that may be marring that spiritual growth that may be hindering that fruitfulness and that usefulness oh may God help us to watch against all these things that are so damaging and so hurtful but now what about the plant it needs watering and nourishment again I'm ignorant I'm not attempting to speak of nourishment I know certain things you put with your water that I must leave but there what do we speak of it spiritually we speak of that watering of

[ 31 : 10 ] God's holy precious word in your soul and again the Lord uses his own word mainly through the ministry not entirely mainly through the ministry but if I may be permitted it just comes to my mind on the occasion of my 40th anniversary as a pastor I was asked somewhat unexpectedly just to speak a few words at the end and I hadn't prepared anything whatsoever but I believe the Lord gave me a word straight away and I supported it in this way I said in my shed in my garden there's an old water can that was at that time I said if that water can could speak it would tell you that the master would come and pick him up and take him and fill him and take him into the garden and walk round and when empty take him back again fill him again and water the plants the big plants and the little plants gratefully receiving the water now are you and then when that's done he put the can away now are you going to say that the water can did it all the water can did nothing at all it was the instrument yes it was the hand that was on it and my friend that's it that's the secret the ministry we're but a vessel may we be a vessel made me for the master's use for his honour and for his glory but I say when the word of

God comes with this refreshing reviving and have we not been amazed again I speak in simplicity of these things but sometimes I thought some that the heat has been so great they won't revive give them water an amazing the recovery the dew from heaven look at the refreshing there again pardon my ignorance but I just speak of simple things I see it in the spiritual aspect of it wonderful what dew does refreshing reviving it does come not like a mighty shower silently refreshingly into the garden and revives and refreshes so here we have the garden with all its variety and all its particular beauty but my friend also as I was thinking of this the garden needs weeding yes I know what

I do sometimes fail it didn't get it out properly a bit tough I'll take the top of that be the end of it it's not grows again has to be uprooted completely my friend are there too many weeds in our life I feel if we're sensitive we should watch very closely against these weeds then some weeds again I don't know the there's one that I think of it comes from the garden which is next to me at one time was neglected and it would bind itself round a plant strangle it mostly I think I've got rid of it but never mind and some of them very small and it's no good yes you do it and you think well that's done now for a long time you've still got to keep at it still got to watch keep watching that is I'm speaking of not that I claim to have a perfect garden I don't but what I mean is if you're going to have a garden that's going to be well kept you've got to keep at it haven't you and I've just thought of something I must have it out now unless I forget it some visitors in Switzerland many many years ago viewing a magnificent garden but not very great but a beautiful garden obviously it belonged to some high person some wealthy person and the gardener was there very busy and he said that's beautiful they said oh that the master was away oh they said he must be coming back tonight then because you've done it you're working so hard to get it already said I don't know when he's coming it's always ready that's the way to look at eternity we don't know when he's coming maybe be ready maybe be active watching serving watching and pray and Lord remove all these hindrances in my life these that are so dangerous that they can harm my spiritual growth and that fruitfulness in my life another thought came to my mind and that is pruning

I confess I have a friend that does that for me my roses I don't think I would do it hard enough or not or perhaps too hard he does that for me now why do you prune it why does these things come into your life that cut you cut back like cut the dead wood out or that which is you say why those fruit trees I think of them in my old county of Kent those fruit trees almost the same line as you see them all done in a certain way you think well surely the more that they grow the more fruit yes might be more fruit but they're very small why you might have some more roses but they're very small the pruning is needful for more fruit now no chasing for the present seeming to be joyous nevertheless grievous yet after it needed the peaceful fruit of righteous yielded the peaceful fruit of righteous unto them that are exercised thereby so friend the hand that prunes it's God that does it it's your father that does it it's the

God of love that does it it makes no mistake it's all for more fruit and this may be painful to the flesh but oh my friend it is good unto them that they exercise thereby what is your concern when you come into trouble well I want to get out of it my friend the first concern is Lord what does it mean speak to me in my trouble bless this trouble sanctify this illness may there be more fruit in my life may I be drawn more closely to thee dear Lord there's a garden of beauty the pruning and then again I thought of the seasons of the year you have the winter now I know in America and Canada and the USA that the snow and the severe cold and yet that forms a blanket over the grain and my friend again the winds and the gales break off the dead wood again the frost break up the shore

[ 38 : 43 ] I know it's all simple to you dear friends in the country you probably may smile at my ignorance I don't know but I see spiritual beauty in it because there's a winter experience with my soul at times everything seems dark my heart is hard as iron the water like stands like a stone and so forth oh friend what a great and yet do you remember I remember one occasion when we'd had a long spell of cold weather some years ago and suddenly there was a thaw all the transformation the birds starting to sing the sun to shine the icicles dripping and the grass appearing and that's what it God's power God doing in my heart sometimes wonderful it is true the spring time and the spring time when everything seems fresh and everything seems lively a spring up oh friend I do want that spring up in my heart spring up of that spiritual life that revival and that growth through the summer months and then we come into the harvest time or the glows and now we're coming to when most of the plants go over and what does that mean well I come to my closing thought here I think of the word we read in the song of Solomon that he's come down into the garden to gather lilies and the Lord comes to gather his people but now this first of all take that first you pick your garden in your flowers and you put them in a room but eventually they die sometimes with a lovely flower may have a bulb in the springtime with lovely flower and so forth but it's gone but you know a little odour sometimes lingers in that room with a child of

God whose life has lived near the Lord where they witness in their life the grace of God there's an odour that remains a sweet odour may there be so with us when we come to die we come down to the garden but no other aspect I expect with us there'll be a clearing out pulling out that which is finished there's burning the bonfire if you have them or the throwing away my friend the final at the time of harvest when there will be as I say a final separation now the word says here then the Lord shall comfort Zion he will comfort all her waste places he will make her wilderness like Eden a desert like the garden of the Lord joy and gladness shall be found there in thanksgiving and the voice of melody well friend

I pray this day that we shall experience in our soul not just emotionally not just shall I say in a natural way but a spiritual way and that spiritual way will be nothingness of self and giving all the praise and all the glory to our God the spirit the joy and gladness shall be found there in and thanksgiving and the voice of melody yes and they shall come and sing in the height of Zion and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord for wine for oil for the young of the flock and of the herd and their soul shall be as a watered garden and they shall not sorrow any more at all the Lord bless his word day bad tea will be served in the

Sunday school between the services our evening services at six o'clock and the collections today are to be reported it's called True 363 we are a garden walled around chosen and made peculiar around a little spot enclosed by grace out of the world wide world in 363 great out CHOIR SINGS

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[ 45 : 36 ] ■inhayte, the heavenly homophobia, The grâce of His love and peace. The Yard decree To roaring the storm who'd like to do and my baby grace is alive