

Speaking comfort to Jerusalem (ii) (Quality: Very good)

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[0 : 00] Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand a double for all her sins.

This morning we made reference to the context, pointing out that though these words begin a chapter, yet the prophecy is but one.

The impending prophecy concerning the impending Babylonish captivity was such that required God to send this message, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

From another aspect, we viewed, as we read in the second of the Acts, the penetrating power of the Spirit in bringing those people that had crucified the Lord to say what must we do.

Here again was preparation made for the application of these words, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

[1 : 49] Reference was also made to that passage in Hosea, which refers to backsliding Israel, and how the Lord spoke comfortably and graciously.

We should point out that though the Lord spoke comfortably, and these words are indeed precious, yet he did not speak compromisingly.

God is not a God of compromise. We live in a sad day in the professing church where there is a great deal of compromising.

That is, letting things come in, thus reducing the standard that the Scriptures of truth set.

God's comfort is according to the Scriptures of truth. Then we noticed, in speaking to Jerusalem sinners, the worst of sinners, he speaks comfortably, or as the margin says, to the heart.

[3 : 12] So much for a general summary of our discourse this morning. Well, with the help of God, we would continue with the rest part of this verse.

And cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received the lost hand double for all her sins.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is full of comfort. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note, cry unto her.

Cry aloud, we read elsewhere. Is it possible that the people of God under depression, under difficulty, are so convulsed by their innermost feelings that they are at a point, and being at a point, they don't even hear a voice, in which case there is a necessity for the servants of God to cry aloud.

We are reminded of the words in the twelfth chapter, And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee.

[4 : 51] Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Under such circumstances, we hear this exhortation given, cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

Cry. We read a little further on, in this same chapter, the voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?

All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. Will this be comfortable? Will this be speaking to the heart?

When the voice of the cry shall decry all that is of the flesh, all that may be fair in the people's eyes?

The apostle takes these words up. And he says this. Repeating these words, And the word of our God shall stand forever.

[6 : 20] What is therefore written and spoken to the Old Testament were this, was carried on and reiterated to the New Testament church.

Cry unto her. Will our knowledge of our own weakness be a comfort?

comfort? It may not be so, but we can say this, it will lead to comfort. Are we searching for comfort?

Then, it will be something to be fully persuaded that we are in the way that will lead us to comfort. Now, the comfort which is beneficial and which comes from God is not such that will, as the scripture puts it, sew pillows under armholes.

In other words, that will set a person down on a bed shorter than that he can lie on with a covering narrower than that that will cover him.

[7 : 37] We should therefore be glad if the cry is that all flesh is grass. Now, that the grass withereth and the flower fadeth. All that is of ourselves that belongs to ourselves will surely be of no avail.

But then, the cry also tells us that her warfare is accomplished. now, this is the appointed time of deliverance.

We should never want to look at the appointed time of deliverance whilst we are all the while striving to deliver ourselves. This is natural.

How many people have strived to put themselves in the favour with God, have spent much strength and in consequence of being greatly discouraged?

But the word of the Lord through the prophet is to speak unto her that her warfare is accomplished. Now, this will bring us to what we sung in one of the hymns this morning.

[9 : 00] What a desire was expressed therein softly to thy garden lead us to behold thy bloody sweat.

Though thou from the cursed hast freed us, let us not the cast forget. Be thy groans and cries rehearsed by the spirit in our ears till we viewing whom we have pierced melt in the sympathetic tears.

Our warfare, our conflict with the powers of darkness, the appointed time has come when God has spoken, thus far shall thou come and no further and here shall thy proud ways be stayed.

How personal do we find the scriptures in so many instances? The victory which Christ has gained will be a wonderful revelation to that person whose sins are many and the more they strive against sin's power they sin and stumble yet the more and when you exhausted yourself with all your efforts they fell down and there was none to help then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and the Lord speaks these wonderful words thy warfare is accomplished and maybe we shall hear if we listen by the grace of God those dying words of our

Lord Jesus Christ it is finished all our struggles all our efforts to overcome the world and the flesh and the devil are diminished before us and we learn that hard lesson that in ourselves we have no strength at all I ever into row and run but how glorious is Christ if our religion is of any value there will certainly be the times when Christ will be glorious Charles Wesley has just put before us thou oh Christ art all I want because in Christ her warfare is accomplished in

[12 : 08] Gethsemane on the cross we see the Lord Jesus grappling with all the powers of darkness and jeering all incarnate God could bear with strength enough and none to spare in order that the prophecy of Isaiah may be verified the consolation and comfort of it being transmitted to the soul that is cast down with twice ten thousand cares and not least amongst them that sin which doth so easily beset them that her warfare is accomplished Jesus Christ has gained the victory and we overcome through our faith this is not a natural faith but it is the faith which is given to us even the faith of Jesus

Christ which looks to Jesus Christ which sees him as it were overcome and yet also sees him as the ultimate overcomer there were occasions in the Lord's life when the ungodly might well have thought they had overcome Jesus Christ they were unwearied in their efforts to crucify him to put him to death and that would be overcoming indeed but what they did not account of was that though he died he was to be raised again from the dead as we pointed out this morning if people die then in every case except this one that is the end but not so here because God raised Jesus

Christ from the dead when this is known then this is impressed upon the soul her warfare is accomplished look at those words and the exchange of words in the gospel according to Matthew when those women were early at the sepulcher and the angel answered and said unto the women fear not ye for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified would we be numbered amongst that company I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified he is not here he is risen as he said come see the place where the Lord lay this was the clear evidence to these disciples that their warfare was accomplished that Jesus

Christ had overcome all the powers of evil and paid the debt that they had accumulated by their continual sinning that had brought in an everlasting righteousness and that had procured for them their passports to heaven and these passports were signed and sealed and ratified in all things all as well that her warfare is accomplished present tense speaking to us in present times whatever the age the truth of God is ever new the truth of God does not age at all we shall never be in that place even though we may be tempted on the point where we shall have to refer to a part of God's vital truth as having reference to a past age that warfare is accomplished is equally true today as it was a thousand years past and will be until the world comes to its end and time is no longer we can observe from this passage in the last chapter of

Matthew the distress and the anxiety and the fears that arose in the hearts of these women undoubtedly they were proving that all flesh was grass they had no power in this situation had indeed the mighty powers of evil overcome their lord and master had they been mistaken now they were to have a proof that he was risen from the dead confirming that their warfare was accomplished the day of victory was come by divine appointment all our victories are by divine appointment all our trials are by divine appointment and as we noticed this morning with reference to the 70 years captivity it would not go on a day longer than God had appointed it neither would it end a day shorter equally so whatever trial or affliction or adversity or painful experience that God has appointed that we should enter into it will only last the appointed time not a day more though it will not be a day less as her warfare is accomplished is the result of God's appointments that day was from eternity when Jesus

[19 : 07] Christ died upon Calvary it was not a haphazard conclusion it was not a day that just fell out but it was a day of God's appointment and what a day it was may not we apply the words of the psalmist this is the day which the Lord hath made the day of appointment the day when our warfare is accomplished the day when the soul is delivered the day when Satan is silenced the day when we are delivered in the hour of temptation the day when we look to the look to the cross and hear those blessed words and feel in our soul all is finished and my soul approves it well that her iniquity that her warfare is accomplished that her iniquity is pardoned iniquity is a very solemn word it is a more severe view of sin or of transgression iniquity

I've sometimes linked it up with an expression that is sometimes used that such and such an action was iniquitous and when that expression is used we're usually referring to something which is exceedingly base in the context of the scripture iniquity was perhaps never more pronounced than in respect to the publicans who were Jewish people to oppress their own brothers and sisters with the taxing this was quite contrary to what had been spoken in the law strangers should be taxed but the children should go free now it is clear that such behavior would be iniquitous perhaps we can find though we wouldn't want to mention it because it would fill us with shame and confusion of face that we have been guilty of oppressing our brethren■■■■ and exacting from them more than is right or proper or lawful we shall perhaps under such circumstances understand the force of these words that her iniquity is pardoned.

In a very important sense the Lord Jesus Christ the brother born for adversity was indeed oppressed.

Let us look at the occasion in the Garden of Gethsemane in order that the scripture might be fulfilled his disciples forsook him and fled.

What iniquity. Because their fleeing brought on so to speak anti-depression. Will the secrets of our heart before God not before men before God be revealed when we have forsaken his cause when we should have supported it.

[23 : 21] Then if this is brought home to us we shall surely be sad. Not only sad but greatly troubled. And not only troubled but because it will be impressed upon our poor souls our souls that we have sinned against light and knowledge.

That we have done that which we should never even have thought of doing. But we did think about it and we not only thought about it but we did it.

Iniquity. How wonderful then to follow through with this great conquest of our Lord Jesus Christ that it should be said her iniquity is pardoned.

can we begin to enter into the depth of suffering the cost the agony that the Lord Jesus Christ endured in order to pardon iniquity.

May I remind you again that with God there is no compromise there is no question of writing off our sins so to speak as a bad debt it had to be met.

[24 : 46] The debt that we owed. A debt of iniquity. And yet in another passage of this same prophecy we find the Lord speaking such wonderful words I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression and as a cloud thy sins.

And then again I even I am he that blotted out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins.

The psalmist puts up this petition remember not against me the sins of my youth. and the iniquities pardon my iniquity for it is great under these conditions with a soul so distressed wondering whether there can be any hope we hear these words of consolation sounded by the silver trumpet of the gospel say unto her that her warfare is accomplished that her iniquity is pardoned.

You know sometimes we may have what we might call a general conviction of our sins and sometimes there may be in the order of God's providence and purposes a particular and peculiar conviction of one sin.

I've had this experience so I know it's true and wherever you turn in the scriptures you will find that this sin sticks out it will be iniquity if all your other sins were pardoned can this one be pardoned this one that God has taken the trouble to highlight well we have these words her warfare is accomplished that her iniquity is pardoned what a victory did Christ gain in the garden of Gethsemane and on Calvary when he said it is finished finished he had made an end of transgression wonderful is the prophecy in Daniel many people are concerned about Daniel's prophecy not everybody sees the glory of the prophecy concerning

[28 : 00] Jesus Christ the excellency of his offerings the acceptability of his own personal work in the deliverance of the church that her iniquity is pardoned now this pardon is complete there's no going back you may go on and to your chagrin and shame and be guilty of other sins but God's pardon is absolute and it is always applied and therefore it can never be altered the word says I will not alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth and if these words should have been applied to your soul speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that our warfare is accomplished that our iniquity is pardoned then it is accomplished and pardon has been granted dead and in the last part of this we read for she hath received of the

Lord's hand double for all her sins now one view of that is to be seen in these words he has pardoned for sin that's past it matters not how black they are cast and oh my soul with wonder view for sins to come he has pardoned too we do not know what sins there are to come some of us know that the sins to come have shocked us we perhaps have been unwise enough to say in looking at other poor people that have fallen I wouldn't do that but it may be included in the sins to come but if it is included in the sins to come then may we bear in mind that her iniquity is pardoned and this in respect to the sins to come whilst we may be kept and preserved from sin as the world sees it yet sins to come may include that which

Moses had to know and realize when Aaron's sons were solemnly struck down because they offered false fire before the Lord Moses was quick to learn from this by the teaching of the spirit then Moses said unto Aaron this is that that the Lord spake saying I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me and before all the people I will be glorified now this lack of sanctification in worshipping God may be said to be spiritual iniquity it may be as we go on I seem to feel it this way myself that there is a greater concern that we may not be engaged in this kind of spiritual iniquity that is entering into the courts of the

Lord attempting to worship God with an unsanctified heart treating things lightly not being reverent in the presence of God the word of God is so clear in the 89th psalm we read I will be had in reverence of all them that are about me maybe sometimes when your heart has been lifted up or light or concerned with many other things a sudden light might have shined guilt might have come upon your conscience that you had not sanctified the Lord in your heart and then you remembered the case of Nadab and Abihu and maybe you trembled but we have these precious words of consolation iniquity is pardon and so it is if we are in the covenant of grace but if we are in the covenant of grace the fear of the

Lord will instruct us the fear of the Lord if we are guilty of the iniquity of lacking in sanctifying the Lord in the Lord's house or at any time when we approach unto him then the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin and through that blood pardon is obtained pardon is received and pardon is enjoyed for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins before we come to this point we would notice that this is an accomplished fact it is not she will receive of the Lord's hand double for all her sins but she hath received of the Lord's hand it is important to observe these points in the scripture because they mean a great deal if you should be under a great temptation this evening because being sensible of your own sin and iniquity you are wondering whether you will ever know the joy and blessing of it then we have this foundation truth that she hath received of the

[35 : 05] Lord's hand double for all her sins it's already been given into the hand of Christ it has already been purchased by the hand of Christ and there is an appointed day when this knowledge will be conveyed

the blood the blood of

Jesus Christ which is able to take away all sin and the righteousness of Christ put on these two things are requisite are necessary it will be no use our being cleansed unless we were clothed it will be improper for us to be clothed with a pure garment with filthiness underneath in consequence this certainty in the experience of the people of God at the appointed time is she hath received the Lord's hand double for all her sins this will give us then a thought or two upon the value of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse there is nothing comparable to the blood of

Jesus Christ to cleanse we should need much grace and faith to believe it if our sins are black we may say I shall never know the time when there will be anything else coming into the precious experience of the text we shall enter into what the hymn says and when we search to find our sins our sins can ne'er be found black black as they may be yet washed away in that fountain which is open for sin and for uncleanness we shall understand under these circumstances what the hymn describes as invaluable blood we cannot put a price upon the blood of

Jesus Christ we may get a glimpse of the high unattainable value of it when we consider our own sins but then for this to be given for this to be an experience about which it can be said I have received of the Lord's hand double for all my sins he came unto me and he said my blood has cleansed you from your sins but then though we may be clean we need to be clothed and how is this effectively brought about by the marriage I married to my Lord the Lamb this is under God's divine appointment our marriage

[43 : 34] Jeremiah puts it before us this is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness this is the name whereby she shall be called the Lord our righteousness and you know when this husband takes this poor person to be his wife he undertakes all her responsibilities is willing to discharge all her debts and is willing to wash away all her filthiness and whatever it costs he is willing to engage himself and pledge himself to it and not only so but the course is bright to feel that she is knit unto her husband they too shall be one this sets such a high standard upon the marriage state they too shall be one the apostle says but

I speak of Christ and his church so then she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins we come in the next point to consider this if the bride is now married if she is now cleansed if she is now clothed she now also enjoys union great blessing this and communion now this union existed before though maybe she was unaware of it because you see our sins were sometimes blot out that which is really true but now she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins the enjoyment of union and the sweet exchanges of communion we can never have any communion without union because to use an everyday expression the wavelengths will be different but if

God blesses us leading us by his spirit through the verse that we have looked at today comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God there will have been an experience there will have been a preparation there would have been a working out of that word in Proverbs 16 the preparations of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord how wonderful for any poor sinner to enjoy this blessing of union and communion with him the psalmist speaks of communion with his own heart upon his own bed have we communed with Jesus Christ if we have it's because we've enjoyed union that is that which pulls if we have you you