

Finding Comfort in the Storm

At one time or another, all of us have experienced a setback or endured a significant loss. Maybe that's where you are today; perhaps you've lost a job, a relationship, or even someone or something you love.

If so, I want to encourage you with Matthew 5:4 (AMP). Jesus says, "Blessed and enviably those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!"

I used to think this was odd. I wondered, "How can we be blessed if we are mourning?" Then God helped me understand that our times of pain are actually perfect opportunities to receive and experience His *supernatural comfort*.

In fact, having a problem is one of the best places to begin again. Why? Because God's comfort goes *far beyond* any ordinary kind of comfort. He is the only One who can carry you through the pain and help you to actually become a better, more powerful person than you were before.

With God's help, we can look at our pain as an opportunity. I believe we can have an attitude that says, "This may be tough right now, but I will never give up. I'm really hurting, but I'm going to bounce back!"

I recently went to a coffee shop and met a woman who recognized me from my television program. She began telling me what a mess she was in and said, "Joyce, life has just thrown me under the bus."

Almost without thinking, I responded, "My life used to be the same way, but I decided to *drive* the bus."

I wasn't trying to be flippant or imply that I made anything happen on my own. I explained that when things go wrong, the enemy wants us to spend the rest of our lives under the bus,

feeling sorry for ourselves.

But **God's plan** is for us to bounce back, get in the driver's seat, then go pick up other hurting people who are under the bus.

There is definitely an appropriate time to grieve after a loss or tragedy, but we just don't want to get stuck there.

Just look at the life of Joseph. The Bible tells us his story in the book of Genesis...

As a young man, Joseph had great dreams for his life. But his older brothers resented him so they sold him into slavery and he was taken to Egypt. However, Joseph refused to give up. He found great favor with his master, Potiphar, and was eventually put in charge of his entire household.

Years later, Potiphar threw Joseph in jail for a crime he didn't commit. But he still didn't give up. In fact, the Lord eventually gave Joseph an opportunity to interpret a dream for Pharaoh, who then promoted him to the highest official in Egypt!

Joseph literally went from the pit to the palace. Then, years later, when a famine struck the land, the Lord used Joseph to save his family and the entire house of Israel.

Romans 8:28 says, "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them" (NLT). When we refuse to give up, the greatest tragedy of our life can actually turn out to be one of the greatest blessings.

Some of my greatest victories have come out of difficult moments when I had to press through and seek God for His help and comfort. I'm grateful today that I didn't give up during those times because I wouldn't have the privilege of helping people the way I do now.

Similarly, your problems may never completely disappear, but your attitude and response to those problems can make all the difference for you and so many others.

When you are hurting, I encourage you to run to God—the “Source of every comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). Spend time in His Word, talk to Him, and choose to worship Him even when you don’t feel like it.

Yes, the Lord will often use others to comfort us. But even those people who are extremely close to us cannot give us everything we need all the time.

When we expect others to do for us what only God can do, we have our expectations in the wrong place, and we will always be disappointed. However, the Bible says those who put their hope in the Lord will *never* be disappointed (Isaiah 49:23).

Psalms 34:18 says, “The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart...” (AMP). He sees every hurt, every trial and every disappointment. And if we let Him, He will take the bad thing that happened and work it out for our good.

Friend, I encourage you to never, ever give up on God. He’s the only One who can take your pain...*and turn it into something great.*

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