

The Greatest Comfort in the Midst of Life's Storms

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. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (NIV).

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!"

Decide to Drive the Bus

I remember a conversation I had with a woman who told me, "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 insensitive to her hardship – I wanted to help her. So 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.

I'm not saying we shouldn't grieve after a loss or tragedy, but we just don't want to get stuck there.

From the Pit to the Palace

Just look at the life of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37–50. As a young man, Joseph had great dreams for his life. But his older brothers hated him and sold him into slavery, and he was taken to Egypt. But 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, when Joseph was falsely accused of trying to seduce Potiphar's wife, he was thrown in jail. But he still didn't give up. And eventually, when the time was right, the Lord gave Joseph an opportunity to interpret a dream for Pharaoh, who then promoted him to be the highest official in Egypt!

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

Romans 8:28 says, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (NIV). 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 times when I had to press through and seek God for His help and comfort. I'm grateful that I didn't give up during those times because I wouldn't have the privilege of helping people the way I do today.

I know it's not easy, but I want you to see that your attitude and response to the problems you face can make all the difference for you and so many others.

The Source of *All* Comfort

When you are hurting, run to God – “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3, NIV). Spend time in His Word, talk to Him in prayer, and choose to worship Him even when you don't feel like it.

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 be disappointed. However, the Bible says those who put their hope in the Lord will *never* be disappointed (Isa. 49:23).

Psalms 34:18 says, “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted” (NIV). He sees every hurt, every injustice and every disappointment. If we let Him, He will take the bad things that happen and work them out for our good.

Be determined to never, ever give up on God. He's the only One who can take your pain and turn it into a blessing in every storm in your life. {eo}

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