

## Words of Consolation and Trust

### Prayer

Our dear Father, we are grateful for the rest that is found in Christ. Our souls were like waves crashing against a shoreline, and our lives were in tumult and disarray, confusion and chaos. And then You rescued us. You brought us forgiveness and relief, and You introduced us to a wonderful four-letter word that has become for us a lifeline for survival: *rest*. Thank You for the peace that accompanies this rest. Thank You for the freedom from worry. Thank You for carrying the weights that we used to carry on our own shoulders, for giving us literally thousands of promises that become ours to claim, to grow in, and to be comforted by.

Father, you have the ability, being who You are, to know each need in each heart, each concern in each mind. So, we pause and release to You those things that have plagued us long enough. We give them over to You now. In doing so, we invite the Spirit of God to plough the soil of our souls so the seed of God's Word can be sown, take root, and be watered in time so as to produce spiritual abundance. We commit these valued moments to You, resting in You. And may this allow us to be lost in wonder and love and praise. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Dear Friends,

Whoever dubbed our era "The Aspirin Age" wasn't far off. We live in a time when huge numbers of the world's population use medications to relieve, anxiety, sleeplessness, heartache, much of which I believe could be stress related. According to a 2014 article, prescriptions for the treatment of depression increased by 40 percent between 1996 and 2007 among patients with no psychiatric diagnosis. But for the multitudes who are seeking inner peace, medicine cannot fully relieve the deep emotional pain of a troubled heart. That takes a friend who tunes in to our troubles, and precious few of us are even aware of other people's struggles.

The importance of being sensitive to the needs of people around us can scarcely be exaggerated. Even though you may not be steeped in Bible knowledge, you should realize that God can use you effectively as a counsellor, friend, and interested listener simply because you know the Lord Jesus Christ! Naturally, the deeper your knowledge of His Word, the sharper your discernment and the wiser your counsel will be. Job's counsellors, for example, dealt with him miserably and spoke unwisely. (You might take the time to read Job 13:3-4; 16:2; 21:34.)

Solomon, however, praised the value of a wise counsellor: A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out. (20:5)

The thoughts and motives of a person lie deep within, and deep in this sense doesn't mean "profound." Think of a deep well or cistern, where reaching the water requires special effort and lots of energy. Similarly, reaching the thoughts and motives deep within a troubled heart requires special effort and lots of energy, but a wise, discerning, insightful friend can help us pull up our feelings and examine them honestly. As one experienced counsellor remarked, "The issue is never the issue." We think we understand our own thoughts and motives, but very often we are driven by internal forces we do not fully understand. At any given time, we might need someone to help us examine our inner self, or we ourselves might be in a position to help someone else do the same. Personally, I believe this is exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote: "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Let us keep and hold on to our faith.

Finally, I will like to conclude with one of the most powerful scriptural verses of all times.

Isaiah 26: 3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

## Pastoral Letter 2.3.22

In the words of hymn by Joseph M. Scriven, the writer of “What a friend we have in Jesus” let us enfold our hurts, fears, frustrations, pains, anxieties, depressions and sleepless nights into His loving care. He cares and He will help, guide and comforts us. What a friend we have in Jesus. Have we trials and temptations? Are we weak and heavy laden? In all take them to the Lord in prayer.

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there

### Prayer

Father, you have the ability, being who You are, to know each need in each heart, each concern in each mind. So, we pause and release to You those things that have plagued us long enough. We give them over to You now. In doing so, we invite the Spirit of God to plough the soil of our souls so the seed of God's Word can be sown, take root, and be watered in time so as to produce spiritual abundance.

We commit these valued moments to You, resting in You. And may this allow us to be lost in wonder and love and praise.

The Lord richly bless the Wey Valley Circuit, and all within her environs.

The Lord cares. Amen!

Thank you, George.