

OUR FATHER COMFORTS

Jesus teaches us to pray to our heavenly Father and to honor his name. Of course, one name could not fully describe God. In this message we will reflect on one of them. We should come to God with reverence and respect. The Ten Commandments remind us to honor our father and mother so that we may live a long life. How much more should we honor our Father in heaven who gives us the very breath that we inhale and gives us spiritual birth through His Holy Spirit. Psychologists tell us that three of the most basic needs of humans are - the need for **love, significance and security**. The best place to receive these is from our heavenly Father.

The apostle Paul could be considered the greatest missionary for Christ in history. Not surprisingly, he suffered for the cause of the kingdom of God as much as anyone has. Whenever we are feeling oppressed by the circumstances of life, we can draw some perspective if we review the things that Paul went through - 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. He learned about God's comfort through those trials.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father of compassion** and the **God of all comfort**, who comforts us in all of our troubles. - 2 Corinthians 1:3

Comfort, comfort my people says your God. - Isaiah 40:1

The root word of comfort means 'strengthen greatly'. The apostle Paul experienced it many times and trusted in God's protective care until he had fulfilled his life mission.

At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. - 2 Timothy 4:16-18 NIV

Who has **loved** us more than God our Father? No one. He sent his only Son to pay the price for our sin and deliver us from slavery to Satan and sin. If we take time to look and listen, we can also see signs of his love every day, in creation and through his creatures. As a gentle shepherd, he gathers us in his arms, carries us close to his heart and leads us through the valleys of life. Isaiah 40:11, Psalm 23:4. (see our message about the 4 dimensions of God's love in the 'Love is the Greatest' section of the website: jesusreigns.net)

Who gives us more **significance** than our Father in heaven? No one. We all like to drop names of famous people we may have met or shook hands with. Those are fleeting. We know and belong to the one who created the universe and filled it with such order, detail and beauty. He is the ultimate ruler who knows the names of every star! - Isaiah 40:10,25-26. Despite being the most powerful person in the universe, God has kindly adopted us as his children. He has also given us the high honor of being ambassadors in his kingdom which has global, cosmic and

eternal dimensions. We have great value to God. He can take a nobody and make them nobility.
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Ephesians 2:4-7, Romans 5:17, 2 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6.

Who can make us feel more **secure** than Father God? No one. He looks after the birds, but he considers us **'much more valuable.'** Kings and flowers are beautifully adorned, but he will clothe us **'much more'**- Matthew 6:26.30. **'How much more'** is a word of comfort and security for believers in Jesus - Romans 5:9,10,15,17. Our life is hidden with Christ in God - Colossians 3:3. We are no longer orphans, aliens or strangers but inheritors of a vast kingdom - Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 4:4-7, Romans 8:14-17. God is preparing a glorious city and dwelling place for us to live in for all eternity. It has high walls and God's protection to make us feel secure forever and no evil is permitted within it - Revelation 21:27.

Roberts Liardon went to heaven when he was 8 years old. He noticed that everyone there looked to be in perfect condition and seemed to be as someone in their thirties in the prime of life. One thing that caught his attention in heaven was when he sat down on a couch. It was as if the couch was alive and 'comfort seemed to just reach up and cuddle him'. On earth, we often move around trying to get comfortable in our seat. In heaven, he was so comfortable when he sat down that he never had to move once. God knows about the minute details of our life and cares about us while we live in this fallen world too. He is a God of compassion and comfort.

As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear (reverence) him. For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. - Psalms 103:13-14

- John Beckerink / enjoying the comfort of God's love and protection