

Psalm 94

How does God give us comfort in life's storms? The answer to the question is multi-faceted, and if we don't realize it, we can lead a disillusioned and troubled life! Sometimes, the Lord subdues the storm immediately. When Jesus' disciples awakened him while they were sailing in a terrible storm, Jesus spoke and all the elements quieted! Our God can absolutely do that sort of thing but, more times than not, the way that God gives us comfort is not through taking away the storm, it is through consolations that He provides in the midst of otherwise turbulent times. As odd as it sounds, it's possible to be consoled and to find peace in the midst of hard times, in fact some of the sweetest moments in our lives occur in trying moments.

Today I'd like to focus on one verse in our text. The theme of the entire chapter is a familiar one as the Psalm describes a time of trouble as he offers a plea for God's intervention. The oft-repeated refrain "where are you, Lord?" is again front and center in this Psalm. God is not showing up in the way that His people thought He would and it is causing some grief and anxiety. Nevertheless, there is hope in this Psalm and I find it most palpably in verse 19.

1. The presence of anxiety

- a. Notice the word in verse 19, some translations use the word "anxiety" but I prefer the translations that render this word "cares"
- b. The reason is that it gives more explicit consideration to multiple sources of worry
 - i. There are multiple cares listed in this text all wrapped around the mistreatment of God's people
 - ii. Each individual situation gives rise to increasing unrest and anxiety as the Psalmist considers the multiple ways that demonstrate the people's need for God's grace and deliverance
- c. This life is not as simple as some would like for it to be! There are often many trials and tribulations that surround us on any particular day
 - i. We have anxiety about the world we live in
 - ii. We have anxiety about our personal sustenance (am I going to have a job? Can I pay this bill?)
 - iii. We have anxiety about our relationships
 - iv. We have anxiety about our health
- d. The list is long and all of those particular worries can combine to become seemingly overwhelming

2. The source of peace

- a. Notice the way that verse 19 speaks to the provided help in these anxious times
 - i. God provides "consolations"
 - ii. The word (as mentioned below) speaks to God's method of consoling His people in tough times
- b. Folks, the Lord does not promise to take away life's storms (at least not initially) but He does provide consolation through those difficult times
- c. What are they? Here are a few:
 - i. His presence

1. Psalm 23 tells us that God's people don't fear the valley because "you (God) are with me"
 2. When the Lord is near, there is no reason to fear (rhyme unintended but kind of neat)
 3. How do we (New Covenant followers of Christ) know that God is near?
 - a. His Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are His children (Romans 8:16)
 - b. Along the way, God promises to testify and affirm our identity as His children and, therefore, to remind us that we are near
- ii. His Promises
1. The Lord has given us a Word full of promises to us
 2. Here are a few that bring comfort:
 - a. Deuteronomy 31:8-9
 - b. Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - c. John 14:26-27
 - d. Isaiah 41:10
 - e. John 16:33
 - f. James 4:7
- iii. His people
1. We spoke about this a few weeks ago on a Sunday morning
 2. God will provide comfort through the fellowship of the saints who encourage and support us in difficult times
 3. We gain strength as we:
 - a. See the power of God in their lives
 - b. Hear their stories of faith
 - c. Recognize that we are not alone
 - d. Fellowship with those who love us
 - d. In these ways, and many others, God provides consolation for His people
 - e. The Lord may not take away your storm today but rest in knowing:
 - i. One day, He will return to conquer all of the things that stand in our way
 - ii. In the meantime, He is with us and for us

Word Study:

"Consolation" is used 5 times:

- Psalm 94:19; Isaiah 66:11; Jeremiah 16:7; translated as "comfort" in Job 15:11 & 21:3
- a term of endearment that speaks of consoling or comforting a loved one
- denotes a near relationship between the comforter and the one comforted
- speaks to God's relationship with His covenant people