

Lesson 1

OUR ONLY COMFORT

Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and death?

Answer: My only comfort is that, with body and soul, both in life and death, I am not my own but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ

Rom. 14:8 – For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Question 2. What must you know to enjoy this comfort?

A. To enjoy this comfort I must know three things: (1) that my sin and misery are very great, (2) that Jesus Christ redeems me from my sin, (3) that in gratitude I am daily striving to do the perfect will of God.

I. All men need comfort because all men are sinners. Sin has brought misery, fear, and death into man's life. All men desperately need consolation, comfort, courage.

The Christian believer has found it. He says, "my only comfort is . . . that I belong to Jesus Christ." He is Christ's because Christ died for him; he was purchased with the precious blood of the Saviour. This is his only comfort. Neither his possessions nor his strength nor his future can compare with the comfort of knowing he is Christ's possession.

It is startling that a man should be glad that he is not his own, but belongs to someone else. Oppressed people fight for freedom; they want to be their own masters and belong to no one else. But the Christian rejoices because he belongs to another, Jesus Christ. For he knows that a man must belong to someone. If he does not belong to Jesus, God's Son, he belongs to Satan, God's adversary. He has one master or another. But only in Christ is there true comfort.

Whoever belongs to Christ is His completely: with body and soul, in life and death. Sickness and injury and suffering come, but he says, "I belong to Jesus." Temptation, doubt, fears attack his soul, but he cries, "I belong to Jesus." Nothing in life can separate him from the love of Christ. (Romans 8:38, 39). Even in death he confidently exclaims, "I belong to Jesus."

Who alone enjoy this comfort? Those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ. Only the believer is the possession of the Saviour. Any person can memorize the answer about comfort; only the surrendered Christian can enjoy this comfort.

II The Threefold Knowledge

The enjoyment of this comfort depends on knowledge. This knowledge is not a mere "head-knowledge," an ability to recite facts and memorize answers. This is a "heart-knowledge," an experience in our souls of certain great truths.

First, we must know that our sin and misery are very great. We have offended God; we have rebelled against his rule we have violated His commandments. We are enemies of the holy God. We deserve nothing else than His wrath. We're sick with sin. We are dying. Only if we know this will we seek the Great Physician.

But along with this we must know that Jesus Christ redeems us from our sin. The mere knowledge of sin cannot comfort us; it can only make us more miserable. But when that knowledge of sin drives us to Christ we will enjoy true comfort. For Christ is our Redeemer; He purchased us with His precious blood. Through His sacrifice there is forgiveness for all our sins.

At the same time we must know that in gratitude we are daily striving to do the perfect will of God. We must know about the new life of the redeemed Christian. We cannot enjoy true comfort unless our lives are expressions of gratitude to God for the wonderful deliverance provided in Christ. The new life is not a forced obedience to an oppressive law; it is a joyful exercise in conforming to the will of a loving Father.