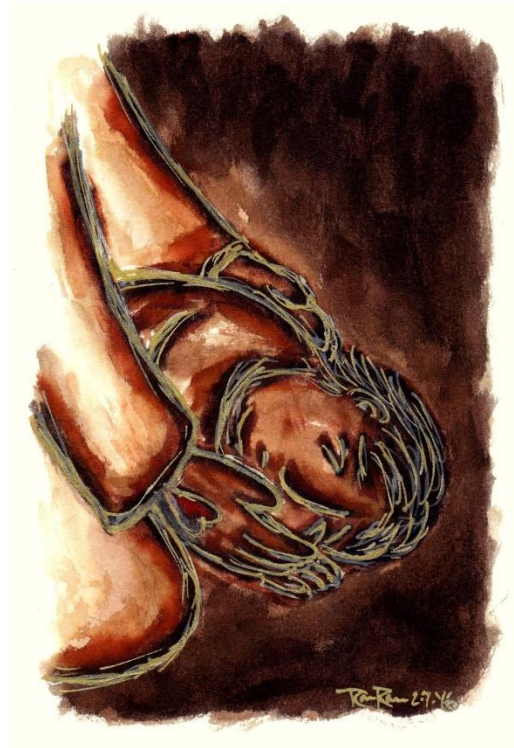


# ***COMFORT FOR THE COMFORTLESS DISCOMFORT FOR THE COMFORTABLE***



That's how he did it.

He brought comfort to the ones who were hurting.

He healed their wounds.

He opened their blind eyes.

He brought them to the Banquet of God.

He forgave their sins.

He gave them eternal life.

But Jesus also disillusioned the comfortable.

He infuriated the scribes and Pharisees.

He angered those who figured they were tight with God.

Here in Christendom we don't do it that way.

We comfort the comfortable.

We keep reminding them that they are "saved by grace".

We keep assuring them how much God loves them.

And the comfortless?

What do we owe them?

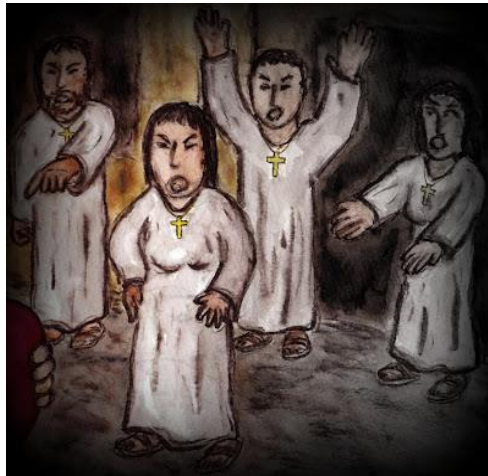
They brought it on themselves!

They're lazy.

They're dishonest.

They're stupid.

Keep them down there where they belong!



***And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written,***

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."***

***And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.***

***And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."***

#### ***Luke 4***

And what did these pious souls do when the service was over?

They dragged Jesus to the edge of a cliff and tried to kill him.

Jesus made them uncomfortable.

Jesus is still at it.

To the ones we reject, Jesus brings the comfort of heaven.

And to all us super-Christians he speaks unsettling words.

***"When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out till you have paid the very last copper."***

**Luke 12**

So we have to decide.

Are we going to follow Jesus out there among the rejects?



Or are we going to stick with the Pharisees and keep things comfortable?

***The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them."***

Ezekiel made those shepherds of Israel uncomfortable.

Ezekiel makes us uncomfortable.

Do we get it?

Do we hear the voice of our Shepherd in Ezekiel's prophecy?

***Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:***

***As I live, says the Lord GOD, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD:***

***Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.***

The fire of judgment is burning through the Church with these words of Ezekiel.

False shepherds are being replaced in droves.

But who will feed the sheep?

God himself.

Jesus the true Shepherd.

And all who walk with Jesus, under his yoke!

***For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.***

***And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country.***

***I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.***

***I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice.***



This ancient prophecy is being fulfilled once again.

It is happening before our eyes.

The word of the Lord is addressing every soul who reads these words:

***"When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"***



*Prayer- Yes Lord help us to interpret the present time. We confess it's more comfortable to be enraptured by our own righteousness. Lord, make us uncomfortable with our righteousness, our hypocrisy, our sense of superiority. Open our eyes to the wounds we inflict. We thank you for making us uncomfortable, for calling us out. Oh that we would heed you. We thank you that you can bring comfort to those who are rejected, that you can bind up their wounds. Help us to have the heart for them that you have. Help us to seek the lost, strengthen the weak and to comfort the comfortless.*

*Maranatha Mirror*

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Featured art: Ramone Romero <http://ramone-romero.blogspot.com/>

## [Maranatha Mirror Messages](#)

[mmirror.net](http://mmirror.net)

[maranathamirror18@gmail.com](mailto:maranathamirror18@gmail.com)

586-530-6983

