

# COMFORTING THE COMFORTABLE



You want to grow your church?

All you have to do is comfort the comfortable.

Allay their hidden fears.

Assure them of their salvation.

Remind them that Jesus took care of everything.

Spread over them a blanket of forgiveness and grace.

And reserve the judgment of God for those pagans outside the church.

If you do this right, the numbers will increase, and so will your bank account.

On the other hand, If you want to follow Jesus....

**.... you'll just have to go out there with him to the outcasts of the world....**

**....and comfort them.**



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

*Luke 4*

**Jesus never comforts the comfortable.**

**He knows what they need, and it is not comfort....**

**They need truth!**



***“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.” (Matthew 23)***

**If we are lost, stumbling and crying out for help, Jesus will comfort us.  
We cry out to him, and he never lets us down.  
One way or another our Lord lifts us up and gives us strength.**

On the other hand, if it should be that we are a bit too comfortable in our faith,

....too satisfied that we are “tight with God”,  
....too certain that we are “children of grace”....

.... We need to brace ourselves for some strong words from the Master.

***“Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7)***

**It’s safer to be a bit uncomfortable as we walk with the Master...  
....than to be too sure that we are “good and faithful servants.”**

Our need of his mercy.... never ends.  
Our need of forgiveness.... is continuous.



***Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.  
And see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting!*** (Psalm 139)

*Prayer: Yes, Lord search us, know our hearts. Open our eyes to our own faults, our own wickedness, and our own need for your mercy and forgiveness. We do not want to face you with a smug faith, having evangelized for numbers, for pride, and for our own standing in the kingdom, yet never reaching out in love, or bringing comfort to the comfortless, never truly bringing the kingdom of heaven to those who need it. We don’t want to hear that you never knew us...because we had religion, but cold hearts...that we offered doctrine, we offered the fear of hell.... but not comfort, not hope. Change us in this way, instead of judgement and criticism for the broken and lost may we reach out and bring comfort, real comfort. Especially since our need for your mercy and forgiveness is no different than anyone else’s. Amen.*