



Hope, Comfort, Encouragement & Healing to Be Found in Christ

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

I love to picture the story Luke 4:14-30 paints. Imagine the moment—put yourself in the middle of a crowded synagogue. You are surrounded by groups of curious Nazarenes waiting to see and hear what might happen next. The atmosphere inside the building is charged. The buzz around this man, Jesus, has been positively electric. ***Who is this man, Jesus, really? What will he say and do next?***

Jesus then stood to read and found the place in the Isaiah scroll that had been handed to him and read aloud for all to hear: *The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me... to proclaim good news to the poor... freedom for the prisoners... recovery of sight for the blind... to set the oppressed free... and to proclaim the Lord's favor* (Luke 4:18-19). When he finished speaking, Jesus handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down.

The story tells us that every eye in the place was fixed on Jesus. Everyone in the room was wondering about him, about this man, Jesus, asking themselves and anyone else around them, ***Isn't this Joseph's son? How... can he teach so well? How... can he be so bold?*** Using the tension of the moment, Jesus simply said, *Today, this*

scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. You can imagine the collective gasp, followed by outrage, and read how the story concludes—with the angry crowd trying to run Jesus out of town by way of a cliff! Of course, they did not succeed.

Jesus used the moment to be crystal clear about his mission. He made no bones about letting the crowd know exactly why he had come.

Although the crowd could not, or would not, recognize him, Jesus announced that he had been anointed. Jesus had been sent and had work to do—the work of giving ***hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing*** to all who would ***come to him***.

Not a week goes by here at CWR/PTM when we don't talk about the joy of our mission in Christ. We preach and teach ***All Jesus, All the Time***. We stand together with you, our Friends and Partners, for ***Faith Alone, Grace Alone and Christ Alone***.

We are unapologetically *Jesus-y*, without all the *-ese, speak and language* used so commonly in the world of big business religion. We believe in the good news of Jesus' true gospel and delight in the good works of sharing that gospel with the world.

How can sharing the good news of the ***hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing to be found in Christ*** ever be wrong? In our world of warfare, political upheaval, runaway inflation, global disease, and the constant disappointments of misguided Christless religion, can Jesus'

words, *"Come to me,"* not lift the spirits of all who are weary and burdened?

How can *he not be exactly Who is needed right now?* The plain truth is: ***He is exactly Who we need right now.***

Do you have family or friends who may have been hurt or abandoned by Christless religion? Do you know someone who feels they are no longer in Christ just because they don't go to a church building on a regular basis?

Or perhaps, someone you know is just honestly overwhelmed by all the fears and stresses life today can present.

We here at CWR/PTM stand ready to help. We offer anyone in need the ***hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing to be found in Christ***. We invite everyone to come to him.

My column, *One Day at a Time*, is introducing a four-part series that will focus on the ***hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing to be found in Christ***.

This series will encourage our readers that we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus. We together, as Christ-followers, are ***saved by faith in him*** (and that is a gift). We receive and share that gift of salvation and good news of the ***hope, comfort, encouragement, and healing of Christ*** with the world.

We are blessed by our Father to come to Jesus, and to do the good works he has prepared for us to do—the good works of sharing his Son with all. Thanks be to God! □

—Ed Dunn