A vast field of pink and white cosmos flowers stretches towards the horizon. In the background, a single palm tree stands prominently, with mountains visible in the distance under a cloudy sky. The text "The God of all Comfort" is overlaid in yellow on the middle of the image.

The God of all Comfort

# God of all Comfort

*'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.'* 2 Cor1:3-5

Many believe that our life should be trouble free and not too much trouble for us to cope with so we can enjoy our time on earth. But is this realistic; is this what the Bible teaches us?

If we can be comforted by God, there must be the reality of discomfort and affliction. While many would rather deny the reality of evil and deception in the world; the world is a place of trouble and strife, since the ruler of the world is the devil. *'We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.'*

1 John 5:19

Consequently, if we believe the world is basically a good place, and if we believe God will keep us from being hurt by the evil in the world, we will be seriously disappointed. Jesus warned His disciples that they would suffer at the hands of ungodly men. *"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. "* Matt 24:9-12

In reality, the world is a place of suffering, trouble, strife, and pain. Even without any unusual difficult situations being considered, ordinary life comes with many struggles, just because of our fallen humanity and self centred desire for more of everything, including control over others. So there is always going to be pain in child birth and the possibility for conflict between men and

women. (Gen 3:16) Difficulties will be part of everyday living on earth because Adam listened to his wife and not the Lord his God.

Gen 3:17-19

*'For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.'*

2 Tim 3:2-5

*"They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."*

John 16:2

The evidence of everyday suffering is seen in the frequency of domestic violence, and pain and suffering is experienced in the very homes where we should find peace and tranquillity. The increasing occurrence of

break and entering for robbery is also the cause of much suffering, both in homes and businesses. Crimes of theft and robbery cause pain and suffering, including to the perpetrator when caught, and the victim at the time of the offence. And then there are the endless wars in our world causing much pain.

The damage caused to the created order of life when Adam and Eve disobeyed God also brings sickness and suffering and death. Along with all this there is financial struggle for most people who seek the things of the world, even though the Bible tells us that wealth, prestige, position, and power in this world are not God's priorities for His people.

1 Cor 1:26-29

In fact, God knows there will be difficult circumstances of our lives. In writing to the Roman Church Paul gives us the assurance that nothing we may face as God's children in the world will be able to separate those in Christ from His love. Look at this list of difficult circumstances that will not overcome

the faithful. *'Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* Rom 8:35-39

Even though the Lord may allow us to go through these things, we are safe for He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. (Heb 13:5) Since physical blessings may or may not be part of God's way for our life; so neither our wealth nor our poverty is an indication of our standing with God. Paul was content in whatever physical circumstances he found himself. (Phil 4:11-12) Paul even went on to say *'If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.'* 1 Tim 6:8

Our life as Christians is not determined by the quality of our circumstances or the duration of life, but with a relationship with God.

## **What has God done to comfort us?**

Everything God has done for us is a source of blessing and comfort. God has forgiven us. (Col 3:13) We have been washed in the blood of Christ. (1 Cor 6:11) We are reborn by God's Spirit. (John 3:3) We have receive every spiritual blessing. (Eph 1:3) We are anointed with the Spirit. (1 John 2:20) We are made part of God's family. (Eph 2:19) We are given a new divine nature. (2 Pet 1:4) We share in Christ's inheritance. (Rom 8:17) We share in Christ's glory. (John 17:22) We are made as living temples of God. (1 Cor 3:16) We are appointed as God's royal priesthood. (1 Pet 2:9) We are able to abide in Christ's love. John 15:4

If we forget all these things God has done in giving us a new life, we will live as if the old damaged life in the flesh is still the only life, and we will not be comforted.

But the holy word of God encourages us. *'He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises'* (2 Pet 1:4) *'All Scripture*

*is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.'*

2 Tim 3:16-17

For this reason, the Christian's life is concerned with “*growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” (2 Peter 3:18) This life is a continual process of learning, practicing, and maturing, as well as failing, recovering, adjusting, enduring, and overcoming, because in our present state, “*we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror.*” (1 Cor 13:12) But one day we will see God face to face, and we will know Him completely as we are known completely. (1 Cor 13:12) We will no longer struggle with sin and doubt. This will be the fulfilled abundant life in the unending comfort of God.

To enjoy God's comforting truth our perspective on life must be transformed to fit God point of view. (Rom 12:2) Just as we become new creations when we come to

Christ, (2 Cor 5:17) so our understanding of life must be transformed. True abundant life enjoying the comfort of God consists of an abundance of love, joy, peace, and the rest of the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal 5:22-23) It is not an abundance of “things.” True life consists of life that is eternal, and, therefore, our interest is in the eternal, not the world of things. Paul admonishes us, “*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God*”  
Col 3:2-3

The Christian life may not be easy, but the difficulties do not cancel out the joy. We *consider Jesus, who “for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Hebrews 12:2). God has set us free from the slavery to sin. The victory is ours now. (2 Cor 2:14) Through the Holy Spirit, believers receive encouragement, strength to persevere, and comforting reminders of our adoption into the family of God. We know that our “*present*

*sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed*’ Rom 8:18

If God is able to comfort us when we experience the painful things of life; (2 Cor 3:5) we need to consider if we actually know this God of all comfort if we are not comforted. If we are not comforted when we face trials and difficulties, how can we say we know Him, and how will we be able to comfort others?

### **Why do we suffer as if we are alone?**

Jesus has promised us peace. *'Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.'* (John 14:27) Is His peace a great comfort to us? Or are we stuck in a dark place where peace and comfort escape us? Is it that we have little true knowledge of the world as it is in darkness, and even less knowledge of what God is doing for us? Is it possible we don't know God well enough to be able to walk with Him in our difficult circumstances so we

are comforted? Do we really believe He has given us a new life? *'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.'*

2 Cor 5:17

Do we believe we are children of light? *'You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.'*

(Eph 5:8) Do we believe God is changing us to be like His Son? *'For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.'*

Rom 8:29

The God of all comfort makes Himself available to us. *'The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they*

*comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.'*

Psalm 23

### **The Holy Spirit is our present comforter**

*"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." (John 14:16) 'So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.'* Acts 9:31

In those early days the whole Church enjoyed peace, were being built up and going on in the Lord in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The peace the Church enjoyed came as a result of the comfort of the Spirit of God. *'The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also,*

*heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'*

Rom 8:16-17

The comfort of the Holy Spirit means we have a real and abiding friend who loves us; a real friend will not abandon us in the midst of difficulty. As our comforter friend He will encourage us; as our friend He will be beside us with strength right when it is needed most. Like a counsellor, He will take time to listen and hear our deepest woes; as a friend He will offer us wise advice and provide help with difficult decisions.

The first real comforter was Jesus in his physical presence. Just a few days after Jesus went into heaven, the second comforter the first Helper and Comforter came. *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."*

John 14:26

If we are to live in peace, if we are not to fall apart when things don't go our way, if we are to stand firm in the faith, we need to hold on to the comfort of God through the person of the Holy Spirit. *'Remember the word to Your servant, In which You have made me hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me.'* Psalm 119:49-50

### **What we need to do**

*'Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.'* (1 Cor 16:13) *'For we walk by faith, not by sight.'* (2 Cor 5:7) We must not compromise our faith but trust in the Lord Jesus. *'holding fast the word of life.'* Phil 2:16

*'Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.'*

1 Pet 4:12-13

*'For this reason we need to bow our knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant all of us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; and that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled up to all the fullness of God.'*

Eph 3:14-19

*"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and*

*twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain."*

Phil 2:12-16

To "*work out our salvation*", means to live out our faith as we trust in God who works all things for our good as we walk like a follower of Jesus Christ. This is not optional.

Our God works the way He chooses, and He chooses to work in us and with us so that we may be transformed into the image of His Son. (Rom 8:29) Therefore, whatever happens to us happens with His knowledge, whether we see it as good or as a problem. For our God uses all things together to accomplish His purpose in us, the good and the bad.

So when things are not as comfortable as we would like, and not helpful to our finances or health, we remember God is at work in us, so no grumbling. When we look to the world and experience difficulties and struggle, we need

to look to God. When we draw near to God, He draws near to us. If we are not able to give thanks in all things, (1 Thess 5:18) we are not living by faith, we are not trusting in God, we are not standing firm in His word, we are not walking in the Spirit. And we will not be comforted by the Spirit because we are looking somewhere else but to Him.

*'For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.'*

Heb10:36-39

*'Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.'* James 1:12

*"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

Rev 3:5

To be comforted by the Lord, we need to abide in Him and He will abide in us. We are the temple of God and the Holy Spirit who lives in us. God does not comfort us from afar, as if He reaches down from heaven, He comforts us from within, because He lives in us as God the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God is our greatest comfort, and He comforts us by His presence. We cannot enjoy His comforting presence if we are constantly looking at the world for understanding or comfort with our attention fixed on our problems and difficulties. God allows difficulties into our lives under His enabling to assist our growth, to strengthen our faith as we hold fast to Him and His word in growing up in the Lord. God does not expect too much, for He will not test us more

than we can bear. (1 Cor 10:13) If we are looking to Him He will always show us a way to overcome since He is the giver of wisdom.

James 1:5

*As His children we are to 'be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'*

Phil 4:6-7

We need to talk with God as we walk. *'Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'*

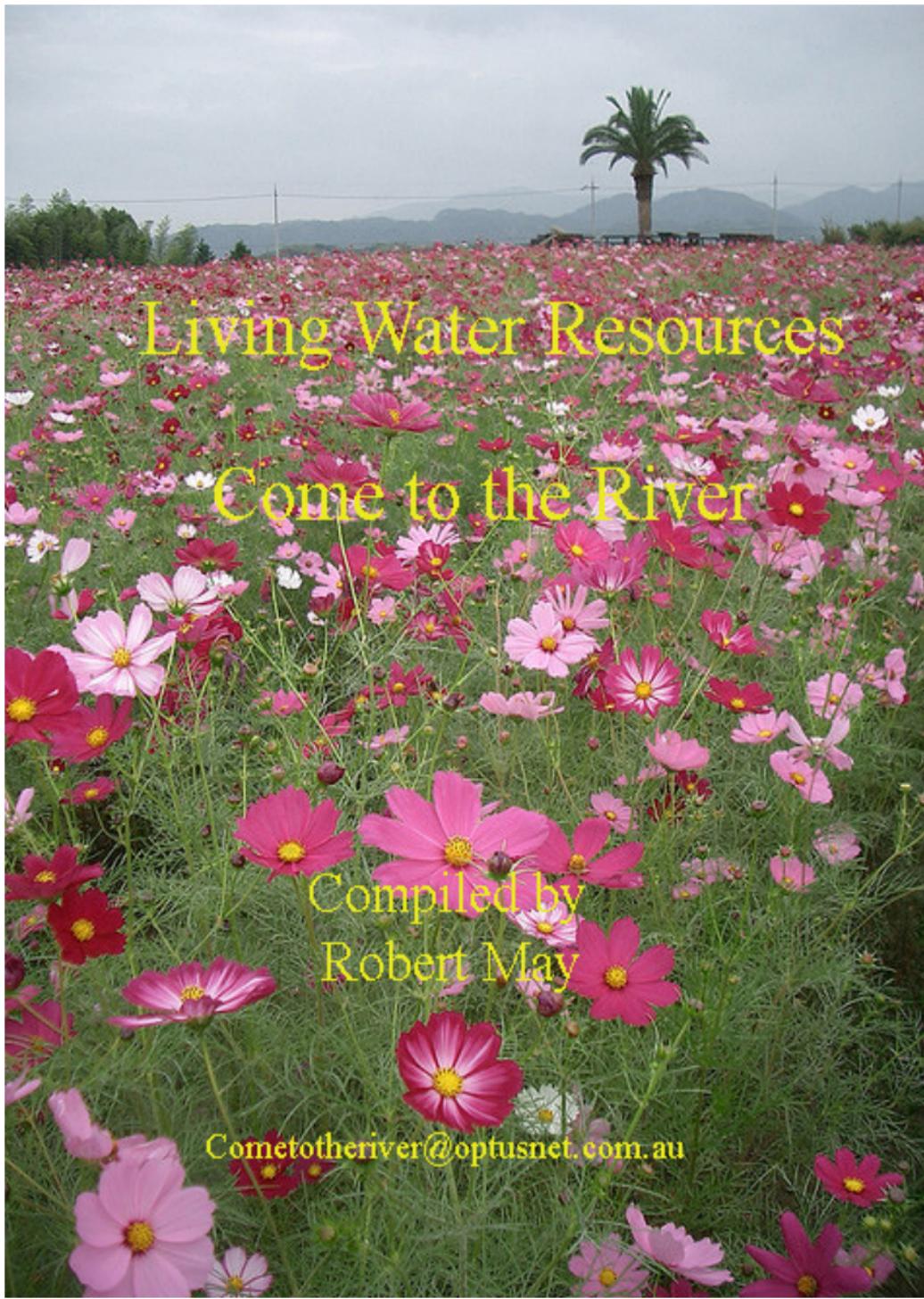
(1 Thess 5:17-18) *'Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.'*

Col 4:2

Be encouraged. *'For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.'*

2 Chron 16:9

Abide in Him



Living Water Resources

Come to the River

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