

## Introduction

The staff is a comfort to me

1. We haven't had a lot of comfortable moments in the last few years.

1. COVID
2. Politics
3. More COVID
4. And now transition

1. How should uncomfortable times affect a church?

(1) In many churches, COVID & political unrest revealed how uncomfortable a church can be when times get uncomfortable.

1. The discomfort in the world around us should be inversely proportionate to the discomfort in the church

(2) Three questions to ensure this season isn't more uncomfortable than necessary

1. In fact, they might make this season one of the most comfortable in years.

# I. Is God where you turn to be comfortable?

## 1. What is comfort? (vs-4a)

(1) Greek: **Paraklesis**

1. Kaleo (to call) verb
2. Para (alongside) preposition
3. = to call alongside of

(2) Other uses:

1. to encourage
2. to console
3. to relieve

(3) **Working definition**: True comfort occurs when others respond to our calls for relief of pain, consolation in sadness, or encouragement to faithfulness... by involving themselves, not just their solutions.

**Psalm 23:4 ESV** - Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

1. Comfort is a reminder that we're not alone & we're not in Heaven
2. Comfort is in, not from

## 2. Where do you turn for comfort?

(1) **God of all comfort, not some**

**John 14:26 NLT** - But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

**Matthew 11:28, 30 NLT** - "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest... For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

1. Comfort rolls up

(2) **for all trouble, not some**

**Now... how does He do all this?**

## II. Can God trust you with being comfortable? (14)

### 1. How God's comfort works

(1) He uses others to comfort you

Psalm 119:50 NLT - Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

1. God comforts us by His person (source) and according to His promises

2. Comforts us through His people and for His people

**Cultural Option:** Disengage with places or people that are the source of discomfort

**Biblical Option:** Call others to engage with you in

(2) He uses you to comfort others

story → 1. "Someone" should really help them

### 2. How God's comfort is increased

(1) Your experience of God's comfort is determined by your extensions of God's comfort

\* But people are the reason I'm uncomfortable most of the time!

1. We are good at calling others alongside of us

2. Not so good at going alongside others.

(\*) Are you willing to give more than just solutions?

### III. Do you see the church as a comfortable place to be during uncomfortable times? (v 5-7)

1. The church should be a place with more than enough comfort to go around (v 5)

(1) We need to be "abngside" more, not less, when things are tough or transitioning

1. The tendency is to withdraw

2. The church should be a place where uncomfortable times are repurposed for meaningful ministry (v 6-7)

(1) Koinonia includes *paraklesis* (v 7)  
"share"

1. If community means participation, then participation includes comfort

(2) How can I help create a culture of comfort?

### SLIDE 1

1. Reassess your priorities

Mark 8:36 NLT - And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

2. Focus on what others need

Php 2:4 NLT - Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

3. Go straight to the source

Isaiah 51:12a NLT - "I, yes I, am the one who comforts you..."

→ What do you need to change?



# Conclusion

1. So, how should uncomfortable times affect a church?

- (1) A collective turning to God as the source of all comfort for all trouble
- (2) A general trustworthiness with the comfort we're given
- (3) The more things get uncomfortable out there, the more people want to be in here
  1. A real season of opportunity

2. Jesus is enough comfort during uncomfortable times

Luke 2:2a5 NLT - At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel...

(Paraklesis)