

Title: The God of All Comfort
Text: 2 Corinthians 1: 1-11
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Believers suffer many trials in this life. We suffer many afflictions which are the same as unbelievers. But the difference with the believer and the unbeliever is that the believer is a member of the body of Christ. The suffering of the believer is the suffering of Christ.

Have you ever wondered why you suffer in trials? We will try to answer that question this morning from the word of God.

2 Corinthians 1: 1: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: 2: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul always gives all the glory to God--*an apostle of Jesus Christ BY THE WILL OF GOD.*

- God the Father chose him.
- God the Son redeemed him.
- God the Holy Spirit called him, gifted him and put him in the ministry.

an apostle of Jesus Christ BY THE WILL OF GOD.

Paul includes young Timothy--our brother. Timothy was also a child of God and a minister of the gospel *by the will of God.*

He writes unto the *church OF God.* Who makes us a member of the church OF GOD? *By the will of God.* Notice this other description of each member of the church of God--*saints.* All who have been chosen, redeemed and called of God are holy, separated saints unto God

2 Corinthians 1: 3: Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

Blessed

It means all praise, all thankfulness, all glory--all the highest adoration--goes to our God.

Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

The Father of mercies

The Father is the beginning--the Author--of mercies. The Father gives his mercies to his sons and daughters. And you and I who are mercy beggars are so glad that his mercy is "plural"--*mercies!*

Psalm 25: 6: Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

And the God of all comfort

All comfort is of God. There is no comfort--no rest--except from God our Father. No comfort except in and by his Son, Christ Jesus our Redeemer and Mediator. No comfort but by the Holy Ghost who is called the Comforter! He is the God of all comfort; and look at this next word

2 Corinthians 1: 4: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Trials keep the believer ever mindful that our only comfort is the God of all comfort. And why does God comfort his children? That we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the same comfort wherewith he comforts us.

2 Corinthians 1: 5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

The Sufferings of Christ

1) Paul suffered for Christ, for doing the work which Christ had given him to do. Consider what Paul suffered:

2 Corinthians 11: 24: Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25: Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26: In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28: Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. 29: Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

Standing for the truth of the gospel of Christ, Paul suffered in many, many ways.

2) Also, this word "the sufferings of Christ" declares the glorious oneness of Christ with you, believer. Paul's sufferings were personal to Christ because Paul was a member of the body of which Christ is the Head.

Example: Before Christ called Paul he was persecuting the members of Christ's body. But when Christ appeared to him, the Lord did not say, why do you persecute them. He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Application: Know this brethren, when one member of Christ's body suffers, it is as personal to Christ Jesus as it is to us when we suffer injury to our hand or foot. What do we do when one of our bodily members suffer? We comfort that member. Even so, the comfort wherewith the God of all comfort, comforts us in all our tribulation IS Christ Jesus the Lord. Christ is the consolation of Israel.

3) And his comfort comes to us BY Jesus Christ, himself.

2 Thessalonians 2:16: Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17: Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Hebrews 2: 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the

sins of the people. 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Paul says, as our afflictions increase, so Christ increases our comforts--as our sufferings for the sake of Christ abound, so our consolation aboundeth BY JESUS CHRIST.

2 Corinthians 4:10: Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Why is the trial needful? Why is the comfort needful?

Do you ever wonder why your brother or sister is suffering in a trial? Has it ever crossed your mind that it is for your future good? That is what Paul declares here:

2 Corinthians 1: 6: And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

Application: There is something so incomprehensibly profound in how ONE the believer is with God our Savior and how ONE we are with one another. Through tribulation in this world, God causes us to grow increasingly more dependent upon Christ and to see how much we need our brethren.

Illustration: Recent letters and conversations

2 Corinthians 1: 7: And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

Experience grows hope.

Romans 5: 3:...tribulation worketh patience; 4: And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

When we experience trial, the God of all comfort, by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, comforts us over and over by shedding abroad in our hearts his everlasting love for us.

Our hope grows so that we know he will never leave us nor forsake us. So we can say with a blessed assurance to our brethren who are suffering: **our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.**

Romans 8: 35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36: As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When we see his name "God" joined with this word "all comfort", think of sovereignty and covenant.

He is sovereign to work all things together to keep us every looking to him. And he is the covenant God who promises never to leave us comfortless. That insures us our God and Father of all comfort shall comfort us in all our tribulation. In fact, his power and grace to perform this for us and in us is our comfort.

Paul gives us an example:

2 Corinthians 1: 8: For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

What did Paul learn from it?

2 Corinthians 1: 9: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Who was in control of every aspect of that trouble? God was. Who was it that brought Paul to be pressed so that he was made to see he had absolutely no strength to deliver himself. God did.

Application: Who is control of every aspect of your current trials? God is. Are you pressed out of measure, above your own strength, insomuch that you despair even of life? Who brought you to that place? God did.

And why would God do that to one of his children?

If we are going to be able to point each other away from ourselves to God and to speak from experience that God shall comfort us, then we must suffer trials which makes us look away from ourselves to him and experience that all comfort is of God alone. Whether we are afflicted or comforted, that is the purpose. That our hope in God--our confidence in God--might be matured so that we can say to our suffering brethren with all assurance-- **as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.** God also works something else by these trials.

2 Corinthians 1: 11: Ye also helping together by prayer for us,

Through these trials, God not only uses our brethren to comfort us by reminding us of what God has taught them through painful experience, but also, he sweetly constrains us to help together by prayer for those who suffer! You see how needful the trial is? He causes all the brethren involved--together--to set our affection on things above.

- 1) By comforting our brethren with the promises of our God we, ourselves, are drawn to the feet of Christ
- 2) And as we pray for them we are drawn to the feet of Christ

There is another reason for all this:

2 Corinthians 1: 11:...that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

He causes all the brethren involved to thank him. Men may boast of their will all they like, but if we would be consider our prayers we would find on whose will we totally depend. Our prayers consist of two parts:

- 1) Asking the God of all comfort to give to us
- 2) Thanking the God of all comfort for giving to us

Application: Review:

1. By sending the trial and the comfort, the God of all Comfort, abounds toward us in Christ and keeps his children--*not trusting in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.*

2. He grows us in hope of our everlasting security in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 49:16: Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

Luke 24:39: Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself:

3. He keeps us ever drawing near to him in prayer and thanksgiving.

4. In all this: this is how he makes us to know how one we are with God in Christ, how dependent we are upon him and how we need our brethren in this world.

5. Thus he brings us to glory, not in ourselves, but to say with Paul...

2 Corinthians 1: 3: Blessed be the God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort!