

The God of All Comfort (2 Corinthians 1)

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Introduction: A living faith will have a daily impact in our lives.

- A. Paul had a great love for the Corinthians and wanted them to learn how to build a strong faith.
 - 1. In the earlier epistle the great problems in the church were addressed.
 - 2. Without question there would be hurt brought on by this necessary teaching. How will they respond? **(2 Cor 2:12-13; 7:5-9).**
- B. The work of an apostle was to deliver God's word which brings grace and peace! In other words – a right relationship with God. **(2 Cor 1:1-2)**
 - 1. We would be making a mistake just to focus on forgiveness alone. What does God continue to promise us as a Christian?
 - 2. When you look at God's promises you will see an amazing power --- only when it is received by faith. **(2 Pt 1:3, Heb 4:2)**

I. God's Certain Comfort (1:3-7)

- A. When God describes Himself you should listen. **(1:3, Rom 15:5, Ex 34:6-7)**
 - 1. God tells us about His certain nature – He will always provide comfort.
 - 2. We may not, however, always receive it.
 - a. As a child I knew to ask for “mama!”
 - b. What does faith do?
 - 3. **Comfort - para,klhsij** paraklesis - 1) a calling near, summons, (esp. for help) 2) importation, supplication, entreaty 3) exhortation, admonition, encouragement 4) consolation, comfort, solace; that which affords comfort or refreshment ... 5) persuasive discourse, stirring address 5a) instructive, admonitory, conciliatory, powerful hortatory discourse. -- **Barclay-Newman**
 - 4. Why does God reveal His nature to us and give us such promises? He wants us to become like Him! **(2 Pt 1:3-4)**
 - a. This involves who we are, where we live.
 - b. “Why did this happen to me?” One certain answer is that God's comfort that He will always give might be used by me to comfort someone else in the future.
- B. Two certainties in the life of a faithful Christian – suffering and comfort.
 - 1. The bulk of our suffering will be a gift from God. **(Phil 1:27; 2 Tim 3:12)**
 - 2. “the sufferings of Christ abound in us” **(1:5) – Why?** “so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”

II. Our example in suffering matters (1:8-11)

- A. Jesus knew the example He would set for His disciples. **(Jn 15:18-25)**
 - 1. We need to see Jesus as our example in how we will live in suffering! **(Heb 12:2-4)**
 - 2. What a powerful example to see one we look up to spiritually to go through the fire of suffering in faith!

3. Nothing speaks as powerfully as living with purpose and powers as temporary things come crashing down. (Ex. My Dad)
- B. Do you know that God delivers? **(1:9-10)**
 1. It is a hard thing to let go of self-trust and trust God instead.
 2. How do I know that I am trusting God? Am I deceived? Suffering will reveal the truth.
- C. What can I do to help another in suffering? **(1:11)**
 1. If our goal is to depend upon God then what should we do?
 2. What is the ultimate purpose of suffering?

III. How an example can silence a critic (1:12-24)

- A. The outward example starts with the heart. **(1:12)**
 1. Simplicity plus Godly sincerity plus the grace of God minus fleshly wisdom adds up to the kind of heart that Paul had.
 - a. Simplicity – single-mindedness.
 - b. Godly sincerity – a purity that comes from an awareness of God’s presence.
 - c. Fleshly wisdom – the outward show to make people think something that is not true.
 - d. The grace of God – Depending upon God for your worth and the things you value.
 2. Paul had those who criticized everything he did. He did not have to match wits with these men. He simply had to trust God!
 3. Paul did not need to remember what and when he told someone something! **(1:13-14)**
 4. Honesty and God’s word will produce a rock-solid consistency! **(Mt 10:26-27)**
 - B. Paul constantly had what was best for the Corinthians in mind.
 1. He ultimately wanted them to go to heaven. **(1:14)**
 2. He dearly wanted to be in their presence. **(1:15)**
 3. He wanted to always say yes to anything that would profit them spiritually. In this he was imitating God! **(1:16-21)**
 - a. Because he was a man, his plans ultimately would depend on God.
 - b. This reasoning is like a loving parent.
 4. He also wanted to give those time to repent before he came into their presence. (1:23)
 5. This delay was needed for their faith to grow. **(1:24)**
 - C. It is easy to see a sincere God-centered heart from the fake!
 1. What does our example really say?
 2. Not many could pass this test in Paul’s day. **(Phil 2:20-21)**
- Conclusion:** How do you view your life?
- A. When you start trusting God then you will start serving others.
 - B. Are you sincere before God or are you wearing a mask?