

## **The God of Comfort**

### **2 Corinthians 1:1-10**

#### **Introduction**

Good morning, Lighthouse, Are you ready for the Word of God this morning? The God of comfort. My prayer for today's message is that you would be comforted. Somethings may be tough, but it's God's Word and we should always be ready to receive it regardless of how we are feeling.

#### **Background**

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Corinth in Scripture. This church was established during his 2<sup>nd</sup> mission trip where he stayed 18 months. After firmly establishing this church, Paul moves on, concluding this missionary journey by returning to Antioch. He then moves on to the Asia region where he stayed in Ephesus for 3 years. This was a church filled with many issues and received a lot of rebukes from Paul. They questioned his Apostleship, his speaking ability, they had division over which leader they preferred, a member was having affair with his step-mother, they made the Lord's Supper a party – there was issue after issue. You would think it'd best for Paul just to say "Forget these people, there's better things to focus on" but despite these things, Paul still had a sincere love for them and desire for them to grow in the Lord.

#### **Scripture**

2 Corinthians 1:1-11 (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. (3) Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; (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. (5) For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also

aboundeth by Christ. (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. (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. (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: (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.

### **Outline**

#### I. Paul's greeting to the Church, vv. 1-2.

##### A. Paul introduces himself.

###### 1. He introduces himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

a. This may seem to just be common knowledge, but it holds significance.

This was a church full of people that challenged and doubted his position as an Apostle.

b. He is an Apostle "by the will of God." Paul

was not an apostle by the decision or desire of any man, including himself.

###### 2. He makes mention of Timothy.

a. The implication here by including Timothy could be his involvement in the letter writing.

b. Paul often introduced his letters in a plural or group perspective.

##### B. Paul identifies the recipients, v 1b.

###### 1. He writes unto the "Church of God" at Corinth and with all the saints in

Achaia.

2. Paul's intention of his letters was to be passed around in the region, not to stay in one place.

C. Paul's peace wish v. 2.

1. "Grace be to you and peace . . ."
2. ". . .From God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."
  - a. We are not children of God by nature, but through adoption.
  - b. The blessing of being children of God is significance. We come to Him in prayer as our heavenly Father. He is a father to even the fatherless.
  - c. David said this in Psalm 27:10 "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

## **II. God of all comfort, vv. 3-4.**

A. Paul opens by praising God v. 3.

- (3) Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;
  1. He praises God who shows mercy and gives comfort. Paul certainly knows the mercy and comfort of God by experience. Not only in his salvation on the road to Damascus, but it's evident in his life after.
  2. He titled God as the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.
    - a. Mercy is the idea of not getting what we deserve.
    - b. Before a righteous God, we are fallen sinners in deserving punishment, but in His mercy, He gave us the provision through the cross.
    - c. The word comfort in this passage is the original is Paraklesis. The idea behind this word for comfort in the New Testament is not in the way we

would typically use such as “feeling comfortable or relief from pain.”

This usage in Scripture has the idea of strengthening and helping. The biblical sense of comfort gives the believer strength in weakness with assurance and unbending resolve. The idea is that God provides encouragement and exhortation under challenging times.

d. This is a title also associated with the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is also given this title. He promised after Him, He would send another Comforter. That is the Holy Spirit.

#### B. God’s comfort in action, v. 4a.

(4) Who comforteth us in all our tribulation,

1. “Who comforteth us in all our tribulations.”
2. If you had the mindset like I once did that the Christian life and walking with the Lord was going to be this trouble-free life, I have bad news for you, but there’s also good news too.
3. This is assurance here that there will be trouble in this life even as Christians. It’s why he uses the words “who comforts us in all tribulations.” It is also assurance that the God of comfort isn’t going to leave you alone through it. Some of you had been through quite some hurting and I know some of you are going through it now.
4. We’ve never been promised a trouble-free life. In matter a fact, things will probably get even harder as a Christian, but it is a life full of joy and blessings as we abide in Him. It’s because we have amazing God to comfort us and a new family to lift each other up.
5. God is the source of two of our great needs: Mercy and comfort. Many

unfortunately including believers turn to anything but God for comfort. We see this evident in drugs, alcohol, materialism, and other things in this world.

6. Receiving comfort from God is going to require you to turn over it to Him.

Not only did God give us His Word for instruction in this life, it's also for comfort.

Romans 15:4-5 (4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (5) Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6. Comforting us in our tribulation also implies receiving comfort of things not caused by ourselves.

1 Peter 4:15-16 (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. (16) Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

1 Peter 3:17-18 (17) For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

(18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

a. Many of the sufferings out there are results of poor decisions and facing natural consequences. Many others are beyond your control.

b. If you have suffering and tribulation because of your faith and stance in Jesus, you identify with Christ as you glorify God in your trials.

C. The purpose of God's comfort in tribulations v. 4b.

...that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

1. Our trials are also not meaningless; He carries us through and comforts us for a purpose and that's to make a difference in another's life.

2. God's comfort is also given and received through other believers; especially those in your church.
3. It's not a misery loves company type of comfort, but a real encouragement and strength.
4. When was it you drew closest to God? Through the highs or the lows? Many here can testify that through difficult times, they have grown closer to the Lord and learned to depend on Him. It's even allowed taught you to lean on your church and grow closer to your brothers and sisters. You are going to need to open yourself up though and allow others in. If you want God's comfort, you're going to have to allow let Him do it.

James 4:7-8 (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

5. Satan's plans for your tribulations is to keep you out church and away from the Lord. God's purposes in it are to draw you closer to Him and strengthen you into someone more like Jesus.

### **III. Paul's personal experience with God's comfort vv. 5-7.**

#### **A. Paul's personal suffering and consolation, v. 5.**

(5) For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

1. Paul viewed his sufferings as Christ's sufferings.
  - a. If there was someone who knew suffering it was Paul.
  - b. Also if there was someone who knew what it meant to be comforted by God, it was Paul.
2. Since the sufferings were for Christ's sake, He counts it as Christ's suffering.

3. God allows situations in our life where our only comfort is found through Christ. Sometimes we think the only comfort is found in a change of circumstances, but God wants to comfort us in the midst of our difficulties. He also wants you to give comfort to others.
4. Many of the times that looks like simply being there present in their life. Not necessarily have all of the right words to say.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

#### B. Paul's perspective of the affliction, v. 6.

(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.

1. If Paul and other ministers were afflicted, it was for the sake of God's people.
  - God had a larger purpose in Paul's suffering than working on Paul himself.
  - God was bringing consolation and salvation to others through Paul's sufferings.
2. He writes it is effectual in the enduring: God's desire is that we would be enduring through suffering. Endurance isn't the idea of passive acceptance, but of the kind of spirit that can triumph over pain and suffering to achieve the goal.

#### C. The hope in the suffering, v. 7.

(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.

1. Paul's hope in Corinthians is steadfast because just as they are partakers in sufferings, they also are partakers in consolation.
2. We may be told that we will have difficult times and trials, but we are also promised by the God to always be with us – to comfort us – to strengthen us – to provide for us – and to lift us up.

#### IV. Paul's Experiences, vv. 8-10

##### A. The overwhelming trouble, v. 8.

(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:

1. Paul faced many oppositions and trouble that would cause just about anyone to quit.
2. Trouble that pressed them above measure and beyond strength that he anticipated death.
3. You may have heard the phrase "God will never allow more than what you can handle."

a. There is some truth in that in regards being tempted to sin.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. (13) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

b. It says here in v. 8. "we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:" This shows it was beyond what they could handle.

c. However, it not about what YOU can handle.

d. God allows things all the time above what you are capable of it so that you do not rely on your own strength and have to depend on Him.

e. The better perspective is "God will not allow more than what He can handle." Living the Christian life has never been supposed to be of your own abilities but depending on God!

##### B. The trouble that pushed Paul to rely on God, v. 9.

(9) But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

1. These troubles were beyond what Paul and others could handle
2. He had the sentence of death within himself. God allowed this for Paul to depend on Him.
3. One of God's purposes for our trials is that we will learn not to trust ourselves.

The most important thing about our affliction is not what it is but what it produces. Paul developed a stronger faith in God because he saw how God worked in his afflictions.

#### C. God's threefold work in salvation, v. 10.

(10) Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

1. Who delivered us from so great death (past) – sin's penalty. This was the cross.  
The Gospel we preach – Christ died, was buried and rose again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.
2. Who doth deliver (present) – sin's power
3. In whom we trust will yet deliver (future) – sin's presence.
4. This is the kind of God we have on our side. You can surely trust Him.

### **Application**

God as the God of all comfort holds significance in our lives. No other person understands suffering more than Jesus Christ Himself. As our High Priest, He sympathizes with our weakness and we can approach Him with confidence. God allowed suffering and brought divine comfort—so that the Corinthians might have the empathy to enter another person's sorrow and comfort them. When we suffer, remember that God will bring comfort to us through His Word, by the Holy Spirit, and through fellow believers. God does not comfort us so that we will be comfortable; we are comforted by God so that we might be comforters. Jesus is no

stranger to our sufferings, He once suffered for sins. He knows betrayal, emotional and physical pain like no other. No other understands it all better than Jesus. If you don't know Him as Savior, I urge you to consider what He did for you and why. **(Explanation)**

When the troubles in life hit you what will you do? It is evident many people turn to anything but God. Life hits them hard, and many leave the church and even will blame God or others for it. A lot of the times, never to be back. Will you let this be you? Or will you cling to God and take comfort in what He gives and learn to lean on your church. You have His Word, His promises, and His church. Allow Him to comfort you and also be a comfort to others.