



SECOND CORINTHIANS

The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People



Part 4 —“God’s Comfort in Affliction” (2 Cor. 1:3-7) — I October 2023

Introduction: Where do we find comfort?

In the pagan world in which the Corinthians lived, worship of the gods was not a source of comfort. Although thanks and offerings could be rendered to them for good fortune and prosperity, in the end, death was the only real comfort.

Main Point: Since we as believers share in both the _____ and _____ of Christ, we are enabled by God to comfort one another in the in the midst of suffering.

Benediction - 1:3-7

2 Cor. 1:3-7—³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ⁶ If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

- Paul gave praise to God for His comfort both _____ and _____ His people (1:3-4)

Observations:

- God has comforted His people by the coming of _____ (Isa. 40:1-11) and continues to comfort them by the gift of the _____ (Ezek. 36:27)

“comfort” (n.) παράκλησις (*paraklēsis*)—The act of emboldening another (encouragement, exhortation, comfort, consolation)

(v.) παρακαλέω (*parakaleō*)—To call to one’s side; to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage; to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up.

* A combination of two words, *para* (beside, in the presence of, alongside) and *kaleo* (to call, name, invite, or call to oneself). The term literally means “to _____.”

John 14:26-27—²⁶ But the Helper (*paraklētos*), 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 have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

- Paul has personally experienced God’s comfort in the midst of “affliction” or “_____.”

“affliction” (n.) θλίψις (*thlipsis*)—trouble that inflicts distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation

(v.) θλίβω (*thlibō*)—Lit. to press, crowd, or constrict; fig. to cause to be troubled, oppress, afflict

* While these terms can refer generally to affliction associated with life in a fallen world (Acts 7:11), they are often associated with _____ (Acts 11:19; Heb. 11:37)

“These [troubles] included the physical hardships, dangers, persecutions and anxieties he experienced as he carried out his apostolic commission.” —Colin Kruse

- God’s comfort for His people _____ them to comfort others.

“so that we may be able” →

- The comfort that believers offer to one another in affliction originates with _____.

Key Point: Having received the Spirit of God, we experience God’s comfort in knowing and appropriating the _____ of His Word and in the sharing of our _____.

“One human being cannot effect divine deliverance from troubles for another, but it is possible to share with another sufferer the encouragement received in the midst of one’s own troubles. The testimony of God’s grace in one’s life is a forceful reminder to others of God’s ability and willingness to provide the grace and strength they need.” —Colin Kruse

- Paul then explained why divine comfort and worldly affliction are often experienced by believers _____ (1:5)

Observations:

- Because of their union with Messiah, believers share in His “_____.”

“suffering” (n.) πάθημα (*pathēma*)—that which is suffered or endured, suffering, misfortune.

(v.) πάσχω (*paschō*)—to endure or undergo suffering.

* These terms are often associated specifically with sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11; Mark 8:31)

⇒ Messiah's suffering differs from that of His people in that its culmination on the cross was both vicarious and redemptive. However, His people experience the hardships of life in a fallen world as He did. They will also undergo times of rejection, conflict, and persecution because of their identification with Him (John 15:18).

2. While the sufferings of Messiah abound to His people, so too do His comforts.

(1) *Forgiveness of _____ and the indwelling _____* (Jer. 31:33-34 → Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:21-22)

(2) *Being delivered and _____ by Him* (Ezek. 34:22-23 → 1 Pet. 2:25)

(3) *The hope of the resurrection and everlasting _____* (Dan. 12:2 → Rom. 6:5)

Key Point: As real as the sufferings that we experience in a fallen world are, so are the comforts of Christ that we can experience both _____ and _____ as His people.

"...this comfort can take the form of either deliverance *out* of affliction or encouragement *in the midst* of affliction which enables one to endure. This comfort can be mediated providentially through fellow believers, as was the case with Paul when Titus met him in Macedonia (7:6-7)." —Colin Kruse

• Paul then spoke of his own experience of these things in light of his _____ with the Corinthian believers (1:6-7)

Observations:

1. Paul understood that what he and his ministry partners experienced was _____ for the good of the Corinthians.

His Affliction → *Their Comfort & Salvation*

2. He expected that the Corinthians would find God to be faithful in their own experiences of suffering.

His Comfort → *Their Comfort*

3. Paul associated the experience of God's comfort with the patient _____ of suffering.

"endure"

"[These sufferings were possibly] the conflicts among families and relatives, the painful problems and everyday vexations that living out the gospel would give rise to in the midst of a town submerged in paganism and licentiousness..." —Colin Kruse

4. Paul had hope for the Corinthians because he knew the believers there were fellow _____ of all that is in Christ.

"unshaken"

"He seeks to dispel mistrust by naming them partners in his suffering. Partners in suffering become partners in comfort. If they do not share his sufferings, then they will not share his consolation. They should not, then, look upon his suffering [negatively]." —David Garland

Key Point: That believers are sharers together in these things emphasizes to us the importance of meaningful _____ in one another's lives in the body of Christ.

Concluding Thought

• In times of suffering, will we become _____ or _____?

"In times of suffering, most of us are prone to think only of ourselves and to forget others. We become cisterns instead of channels. Yet one reason for trials is so that you and I might learn to be channels of blessing to comfort and encourage others. Because God has encouraged us, we can encourage them." —Warren Wiersbe

To be a channel means allowing others to bear our _____ along with us !

Gal. 6:2—Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

To be a channel means _____ for and with one another!

Eph. 6:18—praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

To be a channel means _____ one another in brotherly love!

1 Pet. 1:22—Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly...

To be a channel means _____ regularly to worship alongside and encourage one another!

Heb. 10:24-25—²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.



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