



SECOND CORINTHIANS

The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People



Part 44 — “The Comfort of God for and Through His People” — 27 October 2024

Introduction: Speaking the Truth in Love

Paul took seriously his vocation as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus. He understood that it was Christ’s purpose for believers to continue to grow together towards maturity. For that to happen, he would need to rebuke and exhort the Corinthians (Eph. 4:11-16) and they would need to trust the Lord by trusting their apostle. This would involve dealing with the serious problems within their congregation that threatened to lead them away from the true Gospel.

Main Point: God has _____ us through Christ (*Messiah*) and we can now comfort one another by the work of the Holy Spirit both _____ and _____ us.

Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians

Letter #1: After spending over a year in Corinth establishing the church in Corinth, he felt it necessary at some point after he had gone on to Ephesus to write to them about their conduct.

1 Cor. 5:9— I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people

Letter #2 (1 Corinthians): Having received multiple communications from Corinth (both in writing and in person) he determined it was necessary to write to them once again to address various practical and theological matters the church was dealing with.

Letter #3 (The ‘Severe’ Letter): After a particularly concerning visit by Timothy and his own ‘painful visit,’ Paul felt it necessary to write to them a letter of rebuke regarding their refusals to exercise necessary church discipline and to support him in the face of criticism and opposition.

2 Cor. 2:1— For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you.

2 Cor. 7:8— For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it— though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.

Letter #4 (2 Corinthians): Paul’s reunion with Titus brought news that the Corinthians had responded well to the ‘severe’ letter and this brought great comfort to Paul. He sought to remind them that true apostles walk in both the victory and suffering of Messiah. The relieved tone of the first part of the letter (Ch. 1-9) gives way to a tone of desperation in the second half (Ch. 10-13) as he clearly felt the need to address seriousness of the threat that the false apostles in Corinth posed to the health of the church.

2 Cor. 7:5-6—⁵ For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn— fighting without and fear within. ⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

2 Cor. 13:10— For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

Key Point: Paul’s continued concerns for the Corinthian church and the work that the Lord seems to have done in their midst reminds us of the importance of continuing to _____ for and to _____ those we love with the truth.

Rom. 15:16— For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

Important Themes in 2 Corinthians

I. Believers are comforted by the fact that God has acted decisively in human history through the coming of _____.

2 Cor. 1:3— Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort

⇒ Because God is merciful and gracious (Exod. 34:5-6), He purposed to accomplish salvation for His people through Messiah in order that they might be comforted by the coming of their Shepherd (Isa. 40:1-2; 9-11).

Believers are recipients of the blessings of the New Covenant through Christ:

(1) It is through Him that the fulfillment of all of God’s promises in the OT is made possible.

2 Cor. 1:20— For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God...

(2) His work has made possible the full forgiveness of sin and spiritual regeneration anticipated in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33-34)

2 Cor. 5:18-19—¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them...

(3) His work makes it possible for believers to receive the promised Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:26-27)

1 Cor. 1:21-22—²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2. God's comfort in Christ allows believers to live with _____ in what remains unseen since in a fallen world His power is often displayed in _____.

2 Cor. 4:7—But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

2 Cor. 12:9—But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Cor. 5:6-10—⁶ So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

3. Believers who have been comforted by God's grace should _____ in accordance with it and extend that grace to others.

2 Cor. 7:1—Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

To the Repentant Sinner

2 Cor. 2:6-8—⁶ For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, ⁷ so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.

To the Needy

2 Cor. 9:6-8—⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

4. Believers should recognize that both the _____ and _____ of Christ are necessary for maintaining the health of the local church.

- (1) There are real threats in the world to believers as individuals and to the church as a whole.

2 Cor. 6:16a—What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God

2 Cor. 11:13-14—¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

- (2) At times, Christ's authority must be exercised for the purpose of discipline.

2 Cor. 13:2, 10—I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them...¹⁰ For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

- (3) The power of Christ is necessary for proper self-examination and for true repentance.

2 Cor. 13:5—Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

2 Cor. 7:9-10—⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death

Key Points: Since we have _____ with God in Christ, we can live in _____ with one another in the church!

2 Cor. 13:11-14—¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints greet you. ¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Concluding Thought

- God intends for His people to continually _____ upon Christ and His benefits and to _____ one another throughout all the seasons of life.

2 Cor. 1:4—[He] *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.

"comfort"—*παράκαλέω* (*parakaleō*)—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 call or exhort alongside."

"Remember, therefore, it is not your hold of Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not your joy in Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to your hand with which you are grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to your hope, but to Jesus, the source of your hope; look not to your faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul."—C.H. Spurgeon



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