

**"The God of all Comfort"**

**Part 3**

**2 Corinthians 1:1-11**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians we looked at 1:3-4. As we started into this section, we looked at the definitions of 2 words which are very important. The word "**tribulation**" in these verses means "**pressure**". It is referring to the times when Paul was in situations which he had absolutely no control over and they were situations in which he felt great pressure.

These would be the situations in our lives which we lose sleep over. They are situations in which we are unable to control what is happening and they are situations which place us under great pressure. These are situations in which we desire to lock ourselves in a closet and never come out because we do not want to face the pressure.

The other word which we looked at was the word "**comfort**". When Paul speaks of comfort in this text, he is not referring to ease of the absence from trouble. The word means "to strengthen". Therefore the idea in this passage is that Paul was telling the Corinthians that God was strengthening him in the midst of the high pressure situations. This was the opposite of what the critics were saying about Paul. They were attacking him and his apostleship, and they were claiming that the suffering he was facing was because of sin in his life. This was a direct attack against the Word of God because God had inspired these letters, and, therefore, they were the Word of God. So to attack Paul and his apostleship was an attempt to discredit his writings. But in this section Paul makes it clear that God was not disciplining him but He was strengthening him.

**I. The Source of Comfort**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 1:3**

Here we see that God is the SOURCE of all comfort. This is a great encouragement for you and me because it is God who knows exactly what we are facing and feeling in every high pressure situation which we face.

**Isaiah 53:4a**

<sup>4</sup> *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:*

The word "griefs" means "sickness and disease", which are the physical effects of sin. The word "sorrows" refers to the emotional effects of sin. When Jesus took our sins, He also took the physical and the emotional effects of our sin. So, therefore, He knows exactly what we feel as we face the high pressure situations of this life.

**Hebrews 4:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

<sup>15</sup> *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

<sup>16</sup> *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

**Notice 2 Corinthians 1:4a**

Here is an amazing statement which we need to cling to. Paul makes it very clear that God comforts/strengthens us in ALL of the high pressure situations. There is not a storm or trial which we face in which God does not strengthen us. Paul tells us that He comforts us in ALL our tribulation. This means that there is not one situation that we face in which we do not have the strength to face it head on.

**Isaiah 51:12**

<sup>12</sup> *I, even **I, am he that comforteth you**: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass:*

**Isaiah 66:13**

<sup>13</sup> *As one whom his mother comforteth, **so will I comfort you**; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*

**Psalms 23:4**

<sup>4</sup> *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

**Matthew 5:4**

<sup>4</sup> *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> *It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

<sup>23</sup> *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

## II. The Purpose of Comfort

### Notice 2 Corinthians 1:4

We are given comfort from God so that we can then comfort others who face the same storms which we face. We looked at this last week, and we were able to see that we are stewards of the comfort which God gives to us. It is not given to us only to help us, but it is given so that we can pass it on to others.

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

## III. The Measure of Comfort

### Notice 2 Corinthians 1:5

We need to look at this verse in 2 parts.

***"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us..."***

This first part of the verse tells us that suffering which we face in this life are the "sufferings of Christ". This raises a question in my mind, "What does Paul mean by this?"

Let me start out by saying this is so very important for us to grasp because it will really help us in times of pressure. The sufferings that we face as we pass through this life are considered to be the suffering of Jesus Christ because we are His body. That which we face as the body is also known by the Head. We are one with Jesus Christ, and, therefore, what we go through we can be sure that our Savior is fully aware of. Let me show you what Jesus said to Paul on the Damascus Road.

### Acts 9:1-5

*And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,*

<sup>2</sup> *And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

<sup>3</sup> *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:*

<sup>4</sup> *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

<sup>5</sup> *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: Paul was persecuting the church, but Jesus said Paul was persecuting Him. This is because the church is ONE with Jesus Christ. So we can be sure He knows exactly what we are going through. But there is more. Let me show you what Paul recorded in Colossians.*

**Colossians 1:24**

<sup>24</sup> *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

Paul says here that his sufferings for the Colossians were "to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ". This does NOT mean that Paul had to suffer in order to complete the work of Jesus upon the cross. Jesus' work on the cross was completed when He cried, "It is finished". The idea here is that as Paul suffered in his life for the cause of Christ that through those sufferings the Holy Spirit was manifesting the life of Jesus Christ through him. In other words, as he was strengthened in the midst of the sufferings, he was responding to the sufferings just as Jesus would if He had been in the place of Paul.

**Application:**

This is also true in our lives as well. The sufferings which we go through are considered to be the "sufferings of Christ". Notice what Jesus said to His disciples.

**Matthew 20:23a**

<sup>23</sup> *And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with:*

Along with the sufferings we too are given the strength to face the sufferings for the purpose of manifesting Christ to those who are around us. This is done as we are surrendered over to the Holy Spirit and we allow Him to control our lives. Let me show you another verse that will help us with this thought.

**John 14:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

<sup>17</sup> *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit who would be the "**Comforter**" or the "ONE WHO STRENGTHENS". One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to strengthen us in the midst of the sufferings.

Let us not forget what else Jesus said about the Spirit.

**John 15:26**

<sup>26</sup> *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me:***

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would testify of Him. So we know that the Holy Spirit has been given to us and one of His ministries is to strengthen us, and we also know that He will testify of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can be sure that He gives us strength so that Christ will be seen in our lives in the midst of the high pressure situations. So our sufferings are called the sufferings of Christ because we are one with Him and because He is to be seen in us as we suffer. You see when we apply the strength the Holy Spirit gives to us in the midst of the storms, it is then that others see Jesus Christ in us. We then should not shrink from the sufferings of this life.

**Hebrews 13:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*

<sup>13</sup> *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, **bearing his reproach.***

**Notice 2 Corinthians 1:5 again.**

*Now we need to look at the second part of the verse.*

**"so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ".**

When we first look at this, we can clearly see that our comfort comes from our Lord. It is very important to notice that just as our sufferings are HIS sufferings, so then our comfort and strength comes also from Him, but there is another idea here. The comfort and strength which is given to us is given in proportion to the suffering which we face. Notice what Adam Clarke says about this verse.

*"We can stand as well, as firmly, and as easily, in the heaviest trial, as in the lightest; because the consolation is always proportioned to the trial and difficulty. Hence we learn, that he who is upheld in a slight trial need not fear a great one; for if He be faithful, His consolation shall abound, as His sufferings abound."*

This means that no matter how deep the valley we are in, no matter how dark the storm which we face, and no matter how painful the hurt, God's comfort and strength is given to match the sufferings. We are never in a valley so deep that there is not enough strength and comfort. Let me show you 2 verses we looked at in the introduction.

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> *It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

<sup>23</sup> *They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

Now I think it is also important to understand that this comfort and strength are not given to God's people when they walk outside the will of God. In other words this comfort and strength are not given when a believer is living in sin.

**1 Peter 4:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

<sup>13</sup> *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

<sup>14</sup> *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

<sup>15</sup> *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.*

<sup>16</sup> *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

Here was a group of believers who were suffering, and Peter tells them they too are partakers of Christ's sufferings. They were to rejoice in the fact that they were suffering for Christ's sake. But they were to be sure they did not suffer because of sin. In their sufferings as Christians, they were to glorify God. This would be done as they stood in the comfort and the strength given to them by the Holy Spirit and as Christ was seen in them.

**Conclusion:**

Let me remind you that the sufferings of this life are always matched with comfort and strength from the Lord. We can never suffer above God's comfort and strength. We can never exhaust God's comfort and strength. Let me leave you with a verse from Romans.

**Romans 8:32**

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<sup>32</sup> *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

You and I can rest in the Truth that God will give us everything we need, including comfort and strength in the midst of the storms and the valleys.

**Psalm 23:1**

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*