

The **Power** of God's Comfort in the  
**Weakness** of our Affliction and Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 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.

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 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.

Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again...

You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

- 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

## **The Power of God's Comfort**

1. Why we need it
2. How it comes about
3. What it results in

## **The Power of God's Comfort**

### **1. Why we need it:**

*No one is immune from affliction and suffering, and it can be very hard.*

a. The 0.0001% (Kathy Keller)

b. The Corinthians

c. The Apostle Paul

Paul's honesty regarding his own affliction and suffering:

*Verses 8-9a: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death."*

Application:

1. If you are a Christian, don't think you are immune or less immune to suffering and affliction because of your faith.

Application:

2. Watch out for bad theology to creep in.

*"God is punishing me!"*

*"God shouldn't be punishing me!"*

Application

3. Over against bad theology, how to make sense of God's power in weakness?

Paul's theology

**The Inbreaking of God's Kingdom**

The Coming of Christ  
The Resurrection of Christ  
Outpouring of the Spirit

**Christ's Return**

**Age to come**  
All things new

***The already not yet***  
Power in Weakness

**The current age**

To those in affliction...

The Power of God's Comfort:

- a. Deliverance from affliction
- b. Encouragement in affliction

To those not in affliction...

Proverbs 1:27-28: When calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you...(you) will call to me but I will not answer; (you) will look for me but will not find me.

Kathy Keller: *"It's too late to start training for the marathon after the starting gun has gone off. It's too late to take a course on sailing when a storm has just swept over you. You already need to have a seaworthy boat and knowledge of sailing."*

*"And it's too late, once the inevitable sorrows of life come out of nowhere and knock you to your knees for you to say, 'Well, now I guess I'd better be close to God in order to get through this.' One doesn't whip up a deep relationship with God out of thin air in a moment of crisis."...*

*"He's not a bellman who comes when you ring for him, but your loving Creator, who wants you to make him the center of your life, so when the fringes start to crumble, the center will hold. If God isn't the thing you want most, if there is something else, when that thing is threatened, you will go to pieces." - Kathy Keller*

## **The Power of God's Comfort**

1. Why we need it

**2. How it comes about**

1. A shift in reliance must take place in you, from self-reliance to God reliance.

Verse 9: Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. *But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*



This shift in reliance happens through the **weakness of affliction**.

Verses 8-9: For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so **utterly burdened** beyond our strength that we **despaired of life itself**. Indeed, we felt that we had received the **sentence of death**.

Colin Kruse: *“Reliance upon God rather than upon one’s own native ability is of fundamental importance in the Christian life, yet such an attitude does not come naturally.”...*

*“Very often, as in the case of even the apostle Paul, the facing of impossible situations is necessary to make us rely not on ourselves but on God. Paul perceived that one of the divine purposes involved when Christians are plunged into afflictions is to teach dependence on God.”*

- Colin Kruse

2. You are convicted by the supernatural power of prayer, and you get people to really pray for you.

Verse 11: You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the **prayers of many**.

3. The truths of the gospel become sweet like honey to your soul.

a. Christ’s Death

b. Christ’s Resurrection

**Christ’s death:** (verse 5) “For as we share abundantly in **Christ’s sufferings...**”

a. John 3:16: For God so loved the world...

b. F.B.Meyer: *“The love of God toward you is like the Amazon River flowing down to water a single daisy.”*

**Christ's Resurrection:** (verse 9): But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on **God who raises the dead.**

a. Revelation 21:5: "Behold, I am making all things new."

b. God will redeem all that is broken.

### The Power of God's Comfort

1. Why we need it
2. How it comes about
- 3. What it results in**

When you experience God's comfort, you can comfort others in their affliction.

Verses 3-4: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 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.**

Wrapping things up



Eugene Peterson: "I often found myself preferring the company of people outside my congregation, men and women who did not follow Jesus. Or worse, preferring the company of my sovereign self. But soon I found that my preferences were honored by neither Scripture nor Jesus. I didn't come to the conviction easily, but finally there was no getting around it:"...


"...there can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life apart from immersion and embrace of community. I am not myself by myself. Community, not the highly vaunted individualism of our culture, is the setting in which Christ is at play." - Eugene Peterson



Cathy Loerzel: "A 'priest' will get into trouble if she has ignored the needs of her own internal orphan (not receiving healing and comfort from God). She will likely give all she has to help others with little regard for her own needs, and others will inadvertently reward her for being the one who needs the least and is needed the most."...

"A 'priest's' tendency is to give until there's nothing left and then get angry at those who have taken from her. A 'priest' needs to be careful of this propensity to dismiss her own needs and feel powerful because she has the capacity to tend to others without being tended to herself. Such a pattern often leads to martyrdom, burnout, or contempt."





*CS Lewis: "They are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited."*