

DOES GOD ALLOW ON US MORE THAN WE CAN BEAR?

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

- “Many of us aren’t experiencing the freedom and the enjoyment found in Christ because we don’t engage our brokenness. Many of us aren’t experiencing freedom because we try to medicate ourselves into believing our brokenness doesn’t exist...If we can’t be honest with what we need, we can’t receive what we need.” – Dr. E. Mason
- “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

GOD IS THE ALL-SUFFICIENT COMFORTER

- “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:3)
- **God is worthy of our praise because of who He is and how He loves us.**
- **The very character and nature of God overflows with love and compassion towards His children.**

AS WE ARE COMFORTED BY GOD, WE SHOULD COMFORT OTHERS

- “He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- **God does not waste our pain; He comforts us so we can become conduits of comfort for others.**
- **As Christians, we are part of something larger than ourselves; we are a part of the family of God.**

FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS WILL SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST AND THE COMFORT OF GOD

- Church, the Bible gives us zero examples of painless Christianity. Every single believer who stood faithful to Jesus suffered for it. But here is the beautiful truth: every single one

of them also experienced the overwhelming, lavish comfort of God.

- **You will never face a season of suffering for Christ where His comfort does not overflow to meet you.**
- “For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will also share in the comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:5-7)
- **Faithfulness to Christ always brings suffering, but it always brings God's overflowing comfort, too.**

GOD ALLOWS US TO EXPERIENCE MORE THAN WE CAN BEAR SO THAT WE WILL TRUST IN HIM RATHER THAN OURSELVES

- “We don’t want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction that took place in Asia. We were completely overwhelmed—beyond our strength—so that we even despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a terrible death, and He will deliver us. We have put our hope in Him that He will deliver us again 11 while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many.” (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)
- **Misplaced hope and the idea of self-sufficiency have robbed many Christians of the comfort that is available to them from the Lord.**
- **Genuine prayers for others are an essential part of demonstrating that we are following Jesus and love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Additional Notes

Observation:

- According to verses 3-4, what titles does Paul use to describe God, and what does God do for His people in times of affliction?
- According to verses 5-7, what relationship does Paul describe between suffering for Christ and experiencing God's comfort?
- In verses 8-10, how does Paul describe the severity of the suffering he and his companions experienced, and what did that suffering teach them?
- According to verse 11, what role did the prayers of other believers play in Paul's ministry and deliverance?

Understanding

- Why is it important to remember God's character before trying to understand our circumstances?
- Can you think of a time when someone who had experienced a similar struggle encouraged you in a meaningful way?
- How might God be preparing you to minister to others through your own experiences?
- One of the biggest misconceptions among Christians is that faithful believers should avoid suffering. How does this passage challenge that idea?
- Paul admitted that he was "completely overwhelmed, "beyond our strength." How does Paul's honesty encourage us to be honest about our own struggles?
- What dangers come from pretending we are always "fine" when we are actually struggling?
- How is what we learned in this passage of Scripture different from the common saying, "God will never give you more than you can handle"?
- How can our Connect Group become more intentional about carrying one another's burdens through prayer?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

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