

12/4/12

### Comfort For Sufferings

**2Cor. 1:3-7**

Human relationships are one of the most difficult things in life, due to the fact that all of us are sinners and self-centered.

If that is not enough there is the chance of being misunderstood or judged wrong due to having partial information, not to mention the difficulty of communication when there are strained relations and people are feeding you false information.

The suffering and pain that can be experience, both mentally and emotionally in relationships can be devastating.

\* Such had been the case of Paul with the Corinthians.

Paul the apostle in his first letter came down hard on the Corinthians for their carnal life-style, which had resulted in an unholy and unhealthy example to both Christian and non Christian.

1. He rebuked them sharply for their lack of spiritual maturity, their party splits, pride, boasting and compromise of sexual sin to go on in the church.

2. He equally answered particular questions they had asked Paul regarding marriage, meats and sacrifices, the gifts and the resurrection.

The nature of his first letter was corrective and instructional.

Paul wrote it with many tears, due to much affliction and anguish of heart because he loved them and it had also caused pain and anguish to the Corinthians. 2Cor. 2:3-4

The nature of the Second letter was reconciliatory, that of an elated father filled with emotions of love laying his heart bear before his children and warning those who still were rebellious.

1. Paul had left Ephesus after the uproar over the craft of the silversmith Demetrius. Acts 19
2. Titus had gone ahead to Corinth and Paul was to meet him at Troas, but he did not show up. 2Cor. 2:12
3. Paul being anxious then proceeded on to Macedonia, where he met Titus, who told Paul that the majority of the Corinthians had responded in repentance, yet there was a minority who were still opposing and attacking the apostleship of Paul. 2Cor. 2:13, 7:5-7
4. This minority seems to have been related to the party of Peter, of the Jewish persuasion who thought themselves to be above others. 2Cor. 2:15, 3:1, 11:22-23, 13:3

In view of all that had happened between Paul and the Corinthians, he opened up his letter revealing the faithfulness of God to comfort him and his co-laborers through their spiritual and physical sufferings that affected their emotions.

We want to look at Paul's admiration of God's comfort, which is characterized by three ways:

- I. The proclamation regarding comfort. vs. 3-4
- II. The explanation regarding comfort. vs. 5-6
- III. The exhortation regarding comfort. vs. 7

#### I. The proclamation regarding comfort. vs. 3-4

A. The apostle Paul declared the identity of the One who provides the comfort. vs. 3

1. Paul calls Him the God and Father of Jesus. vs. 3a

\* "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

- a. The Greek has one article "the God and Father", making them a unit not two separate individuals.
- b. The phrase is found throughout Paul's epistles. Rom. 15:6, 2Cor. 11:31, Eph. 1:3, 1Pet. 1:3
- c. This does not mean that Jesus is not God or less than God. (Linskie)

- 1) For Jesus in His human nature, God is his God and in His deity, God is His Father.
- 2) The Father is His God since the Incarnation and His Father from all eternity.
- 3) Jesus calls His Father God and God the Father calls Jesus God because they are two of the three persons of the Trinity.
  - a) "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "**My God, My God**, why have You forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:46
  - b) "But to the Son *He says*: "Your **throne**, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your Kingdom." Heb. 1:8
- d. The Lord Jesus Christ ties the Father to the redemptive work of salvation, you can not separate them.
  - 1) The comfort spoken about is to those who are heirs of salvation.
  - 2) The word salvation appears twice in verse six.

2. Paul calls Him a tender loving Father. vs. 3b

\* "the Father of mercies."

- a. The picture is one who has given life to one, through conception and moved with passionate lover for his child.
  - 1) The word for mercies “oiktirmos”, means compassion, pity, bowels in which compassion resides, a heart of compassion with emotions and longings to manifest pity in a tangible way.
  - 2) The word is in the plural, describing the sufficiency to meet the need at hand.
- b. The Psalmist’s repeated the phrase in Psalm 118 is “His mercy endures forever”.
  - 1) And the LORD passed before Moses and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, **merciful** and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.” Ex. 34:6
  - 2) “Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His **mercies.**” La 3:32
  - 3) “God’s **mercies** are **new** every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.” Lam. 3:23  
\* This is the reason why Jonah did not want to go to Ninevah. Jo. 4:2

- 3. Paul calls Him the all proficient God. vs. 3b  
\* “and God of all comfort.”
  - a. The word comfort appears ten times from verse three to seven in two different forms.
    - 1) Six time by “paraklesis” and four times “parakaleo” meaning to come along side or summon one.
    - 2) The context is related to the afflictions and suffering of the believer.
    - 3) The same root is used for the Holy Spirit in John’s gospel. Jn. 14-16
  - b. There is no comfort that does not come from God.
    - 1) This comfort is sourced in His mercies, if you are a Christian.
    - 2) The word “all” means anything and everything!
- 4. Paul calls for high praise of the God and Father of Jesus for His resourcefulness of compassion and all comfort.
  - a. The word blessed “eulogeo”, means to speak well of someone and is a Semitic formula and expression.
  - b. The word eulogy is derived from it, which is when an individual speaks well of the deceased person at a funeral.

**B.** The apostle Paul declared the extent and purpose of the comfort. vs. 4a

1. Paul stated the extent to be all encompassing, the God of all mercies comforts us in every difficulty.
  - \* “who comforts us in all our tribulation.”
  - a. Don’t confuse the all sufficiency of God’s mercies and comfort, which is the source, with the extent of the comfort mentioned here, “in all our tribulation”.
    - 1) The word tribulation “thlipsis” means a pressing together, pressure causing affliction, pain or discomfort, effecting our emotions.
    - 2) The word appears three times in verses four and six, translated tribulation, trouble and afflicted.
    - 3) One of the discomforts that Paul and others were going through was due to the carnal way the Corinthians were conducting themselves towards Paul.
  - b. The extent of this comfort had been experience by them.
    - 1) The pronoun “us” refers to Paul and Timothy, as God comforted them.
    - 2) The comfort provided by God in their distress that caused pain, yet

it was sufficient, as He came along side them to not be carried away by their emotions.

- 3) The comfort had been there for every distress, no exception.
2. Paul stated the purpose behind the comfort of God in all our tribulation was for the sake of others. vs. 4b-c
  - \* “that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”
  - a. The personal reception of comfort from God brings personal responsibility and accountability.
    - 1) We who have been comforted by God by personal experience.
    - 2) We will be able to comfort other in any trouble “pas” any, every and all.
  - b. The measure is to be in the same comfort they had received, knowing the kind of pressure and affliction, thereby being merciful as their God.
    - 1) Recognizing the human weakness.
    - 2) Yielding to the Divine empowerment.
  - c. The two things are tied together throughout the passage.
    - 1) The tribulation and comfort.

2) The comfort received and the comfort given.

**Illustration**

An anonymous author has expressed it this way:

“He knows the bitter, weary way;  
He knows the endless striving day by day;  
He knows how hard the fight has been;  
The clouds that come our lives between,  
The wounds the world hath never seen,  
He knows.  
He knows! O thought so full of bliss!  
For though our joys on earth we miss,  
We still can bear it, feeling this,  
HE KNOWS!” #5850

**Application**

1. Comfort does not always mean altering or doing away with the situation, Jesus told Peter that when he was old he was going to be taken a be crucified. Jn. 21:18

- a. Some times God removes the difficulty.
- b. Other times God has us resist and be victorious through the difficulty.
- c. Still at other times God has us go through the difficulty by heavy warfare, to make us more like Him.

2. The comfort that has been experience is certainly helpful to be effective in that you have imparted what you have made your own. 2Tim. 2:6

- a. But there is a real caution needed at this point, we don't have to experience everything or the same experience to be able to comfort other!
  - b. No person will ever experience all things, that every person goes through.
  - c. No person experiences the same thing in the same way, nor responds in the same.
  - d. If a person is taught that they are qualified only if they are experience in the problem of the person they are counseling, then they have no confidence or sense of authority.
  - e. This is the problem with Quote “Christian psychological counseling”, it is depending on “professional training”, rather than the all sufficiency of the word of God for sinners.
  - f. Such teaching undermines the Inerrant word of God, the pulpit and will do a disservice to person seeking help.
4. The only and ultimate qualification is that we direct the person to abide in Christ. Jn. 15:5
- a. By obedience to the Scriptures.
  - b. By total dependency on the Holy Spirit.
  - c. By reckoning the Old man to be dead.
    - \* I am not the comforter, God is, yet I may by used to comfort someone!
5. The believer is to put on tender mercies towards other and present his body a living sacrifice to God by the mercies of God. Rom. 12:1, Col. 3:12

6. When there are strained relationships between people we need to be comforting with God's comfort, not with words that will only make the situation worse, provoking to love and good works. Heb. 10:24

*The proclamation regarding comfort reveals it is for the sake of other believers!*

## II. The explanation regarding comfort. vs. 5-6

- A. The apostle Paul declared that the sufferings that are experienced are related to Christ. vs. 5a  
 \* "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us."  
 1. The sufferings of Christ abounded in them directly, due to their preaching of Christ.  
 a. The word abound "perisseuo", means to exceed a fixed number of measure or overflow.  
 b. They had been beat, imprisoned and chased out of towns.  
 2. These sufferings of Christ do not refer to personal sufferings to complete or continue expiation for the work of redemption.  
 a. Catholicism teaches personal penitence for one's sins, unbiblical.

- b. Jesus settled it at the cross when Jesus said, "It is finished". Jn. 19:30  
 3. The sufferings of Christ are those suffered for His name sake.  
 a. Those which are brought about for being a Christian and reproached. 1Pet. 4:14  
 b. Those which are inflicted under persecution, not being ashamed and glorifying God. 1Pet. 4:16  
 c. Those incurred because Jesus is no longer present on earth, but his saints are. Col. 1:24
- B. The apostle Paul declared that the comfort is equally related to Christ. vs. 5b  
 \* "so our consolation also abounds through Christ."  
 1. Paul stated the promise that the saint will receive from God all comfort needed in proportion to the sufferings of Christ.  
 a. He is the God of all comfort.  
 b. He is the God who comforts in all tribulations.  
 2. Paul stated the way this comfort is imparted is through Christ, the Messiah.  
 a. He is the mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. 1Tim. 2:5  
 b. He is the faithful High Priest that can be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses having been tempted in

all points as we are yet without sin.  
Heb. 2:18, 4:14-16

\* Do you see the connection through the passage the Father comforted Jesus in His suffering for the work of salvation and now He comforts us therefore we comfort others.

c. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that He would not leave them as orphans, but sent them the Holy Spirit, One just like Him to come along side. Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:7 Acts 1:8

1) He the Holy Spirit would come in Jesus name. Jn. 14:26

2) He the Holy Spirit would guide, comfort and filled them with power to be witnesses unto Him. Lk. 24:49

C. The apostle Paul declared that God allows and uses personal afflictions for the benefit of others. vs. 6a-b

\* “Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.”

1. Paul told the Corinthians that all the afflictions they went through was for their benefit to be comforted by them.
  - a. Being merciful and comforting like their heavenly Father.
  - b. Having received mercy and comfort.

2. Paul told the Corinthians that this comfort was in view of their salvation.

- a. We have been saved.
- b. We are being saved.
- c. We shall be saved.

D. The apostle Paul declared that the comfort they received would be as adequate for their difficulties, to works in the endurance of afflictions for salvation. vs. 6c-e

\* “which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.”

1. Paul stated that the comfort is effective in it’s purpose to increase their endurance.
  - a. The word effective “energeo”, means to be operative to meet the need.;
  - b. The word enduring “hupomone”, means steadfastness and constancy.
  - c. Paul is not implying that this comfort works endurance, but that it strengthens their endurance and increases it. (Linski)
2. Paul stated that the Corinthians could go through the same sufferings, as Paul and his companions.
  - a. The same Divine empowerment was available to them.

- b. The same human weakness in the Corinthians was in Paul and his companions.
- 3. Paul stated that the Corinthians would equally receive the same measure of comfort, in the process of salvation, just as he and his companion.
  - a. Trusting God.
  - b. Looking to God.
  - c. Yielding to God.

### Illustration

Adoiran Judson, the renowned missionary to Burma, endured untold hardships trying to reach the lost for Christ. For 7 heartbreaking years he suffered hunger and privation. During this time he was thrown into Ava Prison, and for 17 months was subjected to almost incredible mistreatment. As a result, for the rest of his life he carried the ugly marks made by the chains and iron shackles which had cruelly bound him, Undaunted, upon his release he asked for permission to enter another province there he might resume preaching the gospel. The godless ruler indignantly denied his request, saying, "My people are not fools enough to listen to anything a missionary might SAY, but I fear they might be impressed by your SCARS and turn to your religion!" Henry C. Bosch #6152

### Application

1. The sufferings of believer's for Jesus abound and are diverse. Jn. 16:33  
 \* Jesus declared, "In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world".
  - a. Some Christians are rejected by their unsaved husband or wife for having become a Christian.
  - b. Others are persecuted, even to the point of death.
  - c. While others are ostracized by their families.
    - 1) "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and **mother**, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Lk. 14:26
    - 2) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or **mother** or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." Matt. 19:29
2. The encouragement and strength for endurance through afflictions by the example of others in their sufferings, is one of the ways God uses for others to trust, rejoice and give glory to God. 1Tim. 4:12  
 \* "Let no one despise your youth, but be an **example** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
3. The purpose of being strengthened by God is not just concerned with your mere enduring in your



situation, but He desires to make it effectual to transform you and I into the image of Jesus Christ.

- a. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:1-2
  - b. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2Cor. 3:18
4. Some of the lessons God wants us to learn.
- a. To recognize the comfort and receive it.
  - b. To learn, grow, develop and mature from it.
  - c. To use our experience to benefit others.
  - d. To sympathize and empathize with the sufferings and hurts of individuals.
- \* "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one

will be blessed in what he does." Ja. 1:23-25

*The explanation regarding comfort reveals God is faithful to every believer!*

### III. The exhortation regarding comfort. vs. 7

- A. The apostle Paul expressed their confidence regarding the Corinthians. vs. 7a
  - \* "And our hope for you *is* steadfast."
1. Paul had hope for the Corinthians.
  - a. He included his companions by the word "our".
    - 1) Paul.
    - 2) Timothy.
  - b. Hope is a key word in the Bible.
    - 1) Hope speaks of present optimism.
    - 2) Hope speaks of encouragement.
    - 3) Hope speaks of their repentance.
    - 4) Hope speaks of their reconciliation to Paul.
2. Paul described their hope for the Corinthians as steadfast.
  - a. The word steadfast "bebaios", means stable, sure or firm.
  - b. The word reflects the work of God.
3. Paul's hope is in God, not the Corinthians.
  - a. Paul spoke well of God, not the Corinthians regarding the comfort.

- b. Paul expressed the extent as the potential in God, not the Corinthians.
  - c. Paul declared the mercies of God to use people, to come along side to be the instruments of comfort, yet not to be confused with the comforter.
- B.** The apostle Paul expressed the reason for their confidence, it is two-fold. vs. 7b-c
1. Paul and his companions knew they would experience sufferings from time to time. vs. 7b
    - \* “because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings.”
    - a. They were part of the church of God. 2Cor. 1:1c
    - b. They were saints of God. 2Cor. 1:1d
      - \* They were believers in Christ and would enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation. Acts 14:22
  2. Paul and his companions knew they would share the comfort also. vs. 7c
    - \* “so also *you will partake* of the consolation.”
    - a. Because God is One who has an impeccable character and reputation, who can only be spoken well of.
      - 1) He is Omnipotent, all powerful.
      - 2) He is Omniscient, all knowing.
      - 3) He is Omnipresent, all present.

- b. Because God is the Father of mercies.
  - 1) Meeting the need of mercy, pitying or having compassion on one who is unable to help himself.
  - 2) Meeting out mercy that we might be afflicted less than we deserve, not what we deserve.
- c. Because God is able to comfort in all their tribulations.
  - 1) This implies that God is not the author of confusion. 1Cor. 14:33
  - 2) This means that God will not allow us to be tested more than we are able to endure. 1Cor. 10:13
  - 3) This means that God has given to me all things pertaining to life and godliness. 2Pet. 1:3-4
    - a) Life means anything and everything from my new birth to my physical death.
    - b) Godliness means how I can and am suppose to respond.

### Illustration

It has been said, “It is easier to suffer in silence if you are sure someone is watching.” -Warren #6153

### Application

1. Peter exhorts us not to think it strange concerning the fiery trials, which are to try you, as

though some strange thing happened to us. 1Pet. 4:12

2. Peter tell us rather to rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 1Pet. 4:13

3. Peter tells us that If we are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are we, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us. On their part He is blasphemed, but on our part He is glorified. 1Pet. 4:14

4. Peter tells us that none of us are to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 1Pet. 4:15-16

5 Peter tells us, therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. 1Pet. 4:19

*The exhortation regarding comfort reveals confidence in God, not the believer!*

### **Conclusion**

This is Paul's admiration of God's comfort:

- I. The proclamation regarding comfort reveals it is for the sake of other believers!
- II. The explanation regarding comfort reveals God is faithful to every believer!

- III. The exhortation regarding comfort reveals confidence in God, not the believer!