



Sermon Title: 2 Corinthians – Our Comfort part 1

Sermon Title: God of All Comfort

Date: March 13, 2022

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Big Idea: Your trial may be a doorway to greater intimacy with God.
But you'll need a couple of reminders.

REMINDER #1. GOD PROMISES TO SUSTAIN YOU

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

If you know the Lord, you never suffer alone. Here's an uncomfortable truth: **Your afflictions have a divinely-ordained purpose for the glory of God.** We certainly see that in Paul's life. Close on the heels of Paul's conversion, the Lord directs a believer named Ananias to go to Paul. **Acts 9:15-16**

Paul's suffering throughout his ministry wasn't random; it was sovereignly ordered (**Romans 5:3**). The suffering you experience is not accidental. God uses it for his glory and to temper our character.

That doesn't mean that our suffering suddenly becomes pleasant. Paul struggled with the physical and emotional strain of it. **2 Corinthians 1:8–9**

He refers in **2 Timothy 3:10-11** to a sampling of his sufferings in places where he'd preached the good news of Jesus. Paul had been hounded by opponents, beaten, stoned, and left for dead, but he continued to do what God called him to do - and God sustained him.

As Pastor John Piper has written, "Suffering can be a call to trust God, and not the life-sustaining props of this world."

And through it all, God promises to sustain you, and also to use your pain to comfort others in pain, just as Paul writes. Countless people testify that God shaped them in the furnace of affliction, but sustained them through it.

REMINDER 2. GOD PROMISES TO DELIVER YOU

2 Corinthians 1:10–11

Who hasn't fretted about premature death?! But realize this: *God will continue to deliver you from death until His will for you is accomplished.* You will not enter glory a second too soon. And to suffer... with Christ... is a vastly superior life to never suffering without Christ.

Paul's comfort in the midst of his suffering was energized by the certainty of future glory. Hope of future glory energizes comfort in present afflictions. After all, barring the imminent return of Christ for His Church, every believer must face the final enemy, death. Let us therefore train our minds to see even that dreadful eventuality as the event that ushers us into an eternity we can barely imagine. **2 Corinthians 4:16–18**

Application: What, then, should we think, say, do, and affirm when we find ourselves in affliction?

What to think. Think Biblically. Remind yourself that, even at your lowest point, God has not forsaken you. He sees you. **Proverbs 5:21**

What to say. **Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)** *God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

What to Do. Ask others to pray for you. Paul repeatedly solicited the prayers of fellow-believers. **2 Cor 1:11a**

What to affirm. Recognize that He is working out His plan in your life. **Philippians 1:6**

The church would do well to abandon “snack food theology,” and rediscover the depth that characterized earlier periods in church history.

God uses suffering to move us to depend on his grace, to bind believers together, to transform our character, and to make us long for eternity. And when we step into His presence, we will reflect on this life and see that all our suffering has been worth it. **2 Corinthians 4:18**

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- How is suffering different from those are followers of Christ and those who are not followers of Christ?
- Speaking of Paul, God said: “*I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.*” Why would God actively bring these challenges upon Paul? Would Paul’s ministry be more effective without being distracted by suffering? Explain.
- Can our trials draw others close to God? Explain
- Describe a time when you or someone close to you was going through a trial and it drew you closer to God
- God will continue to deliver you from death until His will for you is accomplished. Does this truth bring you comfort or distress? Explain.