

# COMFORT IN SUFFERING

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” —2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4*

Why is there illness? Why is there loss, tragedy, abuse and pain? Why are there addictions people are locked into? Why are we gripped by besetting sins and failures we go back to again and again? Why do we grieve?

That’s a pretty grim picture, but the reality is that it’s part and parcel of the broken world we live in. None of us is exempt from pain and suffering, and because we have an instinct of self-preservation, we live with this sense of “what’s best for me?” That is natural and good, but when our understanding is that loving others overrides looking after ourselves, and that in our suffering, God comforts us so that we can comfort others, we begin to see our situations entirely differently.

One of the great privileges of life is to enrich other people, and when we bring God into our circumstances, He gives us the strength to deal with our struggles, which then equips us to be a source of blessing to others. That involves a reorienting of our lives from “what is best for me?” to “how does this equip me to benefit others?” Paul speaks of God as the Father of compassion who comforts us. David writes in Psalm 119:50, “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.” And in vs. 52, “I remember your ancient laws, O LORD, and I find comfort in them.” In other words, we take our direction from the word of God and allow it to feed our souls and comfort us.

Though everything around us may be falling apart, when we are locked into Jesus Christ, His presence in us is the fixed point and in focusing on Him, He becomes our comfort, our peace, refuge and security. That, in turn, will become a blessing to others as we comfort those with the same comfort we have received from God.

God will often equip us to become a blessing to people we have not yet met, and in hindsight, we will see how in our suffering, God has brought about good; not just for ourselves, but for the benefit of others. Paul says in Romans 8:38 that nothing separates us from the love of God, and nothing need separate us from the comfort of God. It is especially in our sufferings that we need to pray for the interest of Jesus Christ, and trust Him to bring about His purpose in them and He will.

***PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, that You are with me in my suffering, and I ask that it becomes a means of comforting others.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Have I been able to use the comfort I've received from God to comfort others?***