

“INCOMPARABLE COMFORT” 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Theme: The Lord does not allow our affliction without assuring us of the comforting grace to encourage us through it.

I. The Incomparable Source of Comfort – 1:3

A. The Quality of Our Comfort – “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...*”

1. Having received word about the response of the Corinthians to Paul’s lamentable letter, Paul rejoices in the comfort God provided him through His work in their lives.
2. His discouragement had been very severe – to the point of depression – cp. *2 Corinthians 7:6*.
3. And Paul’s joy was full and now he desires to laud God for the grace and comfort He provides.
4. He declares, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...*”
5. “*Blessed*” [εὐλογητός] – refers to the act of speaking well of someone or to praise them – eulogy.
6. It speaks to the value of the One from whom our comfort comes – He is “*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” and thus, it is a paternal comfort.
7. Instead of being from a harsh pagan god who is lustful and unable to be satisfied, our God is a Father who gave to us “*our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

B. The Quantity of Our Comfort – “*... the Father of mercies and God of all comfort*”

1. Paul continues to emphasize this paternal tenderness by calling Him the “*Father of mercies*” – something the Old Testament declared to be new every morning – cp. *Lamentations 3:22-23*.
2. Additionally, he states that He is the “*God of all comfort*” - speaking to the fact that He monopolizes genuine comfort – if we will find comfort, it will come from Him.

II. The Incomparable Strength of Comfort – 1:4-5

A. The Scope of His Ability to Comfort – v. 4a

1. Paul further extols God's ability to comfort by stating that not only does **"all comfort"** from Him, the scope of His comfort is comprehensive – **"... who comfort us in all our affliction ..."**
2. The word being used for "comfort" in these verses is [παράκλησις] – meaning to come alongside another to console or "lift their spirit."
3. God's presence and consolation through the Holy Spirit is constant – even as He has promised to always be with us through any difficulty – **Hebrews 13:5**.
4. The comprehensiveness of his comfort extends to **"all our affliction"** [θλίψις] – a reference to afflictions, tribulations, or troubles.
5. Regardless of what we struggle with, or encounter, God is ready and able to console us so that we can be encouraged.
6. As long as we are willing to submit ourselves to His Spirit so that He is free to bless, we have unlimited resource to be built up and encouraged by God's comfort.

B. The Surplus in His Ability to Comfort – vv. 4b-5

1. Paul identifies for us yet another priority of God in His comfort of us – **"... so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."**
2. We live in a world of woe – a sin-wrecked globe, filled with the effects of the Fall producing heart break and suffering all around us.
3. Even as Paul was comforted by Titus' arrival, Paul desires to be a comfort to others – "paying it forward" as one who has been greatly helped by God's grace.
4. There is a richness to the comfort that someone who has experienced our struggle brings – over the efforts of someone who has never known the struggle – cp. **Luke 22:31-32**.
5. Paul talks about the overflow, or surplus, of God's work of comforting us, equipping us to comfort others – **"For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ."**
6. Paul here clarifies that the "abundance" of comfort is aligned with the "abundance" of suffering of Christ; we cannot expect God's supernatural comfort for suffering we encounter while defying Him

in rebellion and indulgence in sin – cp. [1 Peter 4:19](#).

III. The Incomparable Significance of Comfort – **1:6-7**

A. The Evidence of Comfort – v. 6

1. The Corinthians were suffering to varying degrees – some weren't suffering at all while others were truly paying a price for their faith.
2. Paul states, ***“But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation;”*** – indicating that the comfort so richly provided to Paul is extending to produce comfort in their lives and strengthening of their faith.
3. Likewise, ***“if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same suffering which we also suffer;”*** – the mutuality of their faith, trials, comfort is so real that they can be encouraged by what they see in the faithfulness of God to each of them.

B. The Encouragement through Comfort – v. 7

1. Paul provides testimony that his ability to see God's faithfulness in their lives encourages his faith – ***“... and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.”***
2. We must never allow the sufferings of other believers to be callously viewed but must see how we share in the suffering of others as well as the encouragement received by others – cp. [Romans 12:15](#).
3. In being willing to suffer for Christ, even as Paul did, was a great encouragement to Paul.

IV. The Incomparable Salvation in Comfort – **1:8-11**

A. The Force of the Struggles – vv. 8-9

1. As Paul seeks to underscore the comprehensive comfort God provides, he cites the severity of the struggles he has known – ***“For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.”***
2. We aren't sure of the specific situation to which Paul is referring, but it is likely the beating he received – [2 Corinthians 11:23-25](#).
3. “Since it happened in Asia, before he came to Macedonia (2:13), it

likely took place in Ephesus, the chief city of Asia – cp. 1 Corinthians 16:9.

4. It was so significant that Paul had concluded that he was not going to live through it – ***“Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;”*** – cp. ***Acts 14:19-20.***

B. The Faithfulness of the Savior – v. 10

1. However, Paul was delivered by the direct intervention by the Lord – ***“... who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope.”***
2. God seemed to have intervened on numerous occasions and assisted Paul when things looked otherwise hopeless – cp. ***2 Timothy 4:16-18.***
3. ***“And He will yet deliver us ...”*** – cp. ***2 Peter 2:9; Romans 5:3-5.***

C. The Favor through the Saints – v. 11

1. Paul also commends the Corinthians for the way in which they participated in supporting him through prayer – ***“... you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.”***
2. As they prayed and then observed God’s answers to their prayers, many people would have the occasion to rejoice and thank the Lord for His faithfulness.
3. We may not always know how prayer changes things, but the Bible assures us it does – cp. ***James 5:16b.***
4. Prayer is always for the purpose of the glory of God.