

A Study in II Corinthians

Strength in Weakness

Chapter One - Lesson Two

The God of All Comfort (1-11): Up to the point of writing the 2 Corinthians epistle Paul had suffered greatly for preaching the Gospel. Though he had experienced great fruit at Ephesus, it was not without a cost. One only needs to read over 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 to understand the great persecution Paul had endured up to this point. It is with this background that Paul writes 2 Corinthians, and more specifically these verses concerning the God of all comfort.

Paul blesses God the Father, the God of all comfort. It was this comfort from God that Paul needed given the present sufferings he was enduring for Christ. According to verse eight Paul was “pressed without measure, above strength” insomuch that he “despaired even of life” having the sentence of death upon him. All these sufferings pertain to the time Paul spent in Asia, specifically at Ephesus (vs. 8 cf. Acts 19:10).

However, even with all this Paul praises the God and the comfort that he and his companions had received of the Lord. It is this comforting aspect of God, given by the Holy Spirit of God, that Paul brings out in verses 3-7. Note three truths concerning the comfort from God:

God comforts us in all our tribulation.

God’s comforting is for the benefit for others also.

God’s comfort is in proportion to our suffering.

Paul’s boldness to endure such sufferings hinged on his total confidence in the resurrection (9). Paul acted upon the assurance of the resurrection. His boldness in the face of such trials also rested in past deliverances of the Lord (10). Notice in verse 10 how this assurance in the deliverance of God is communicated:

Who delivered us from so great a death, and **doth deliver:** in whom we trust that he **will yet deliver us;** (2 Corinthians 1:10)

This is the past, present and future confidence Paul had in the Lord.

Lastly, importance is placed on the prayers of others on our behalf. Paul considers the prayers of others a help, and gives them credit for helping him and those with him.

Intercessory prayer is no small matter in the life of the believer. It is a help to us and therefore we should ask for prayer continually, especially in a time of trials.

Paul's Desire to Return to Corinth (12-20): Paul had desired to return to Corinth a third time (2 Cor. 12:14). This desire was communicated to the Corinthians by Titus who brought the epistle of 2 Corinthians. Paul sought to come to Corinth on his way to Jerusalem when he would bring the offering for the poor saints there.

The "yea and nay" of verses 17-19 is Paul basically stating, "I meant what I said," referring to what he had said in the epistle of I Corinthians: "our word toward you was not yea and nay ... but in him (Silvanus and Timotheus) was yea" (18-20). Paul's first letter to them was received with mixed emotion, for it was received "in part" (14). Paul therefore put emphasis on what he wrote to them, urging their complete obedience. Not all those at Corinth acknowledged Paul as having a God-given apostleship, which Paul deals with not only in his first letter (I Cor. 9:2) but also in this epistle (2 Cor. 3:1-3).

God's Anointed Apostle (21-24): Paul underscores here that it is by no means of his own self will that he is the apostle of Jesus Christ, but rather it is God that established him and those with him, sealing them with the Holy Spirit of God. Paul was in no way dominating their faith but rather his desire was to come along and be a help in their joy, for it is by faith they stand.