

Paradox - Comfort Through Suffering

Ice-Breaker: Name one coach/teacher that had a profound impact on you? List some qualities they possessed that made that impact?

Open your Bibles and read 2 Corinthians 1:1-2. Keep them open for the study below.

- **Praise: God is the source of unlimited mercies and comfort** – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort...” (2 Cor. 1:3)

¶ **Comfort** – “*paraklesis*” – **console, exhort, implore** – Craig defined the word comfort as the Corinthians would have understood it. He said it was like a halftime, motivating lockerroom talk from a coach to a struggling team. They would come back out on the field motivated and encouraged. Who is that type of coach to you today? To whom are you a coach to someone?

- **Paradox: God’s comfort comes “in” our troubles not “out” of them** – “...who comforts us in all our troubles...” (2 Cor. 1:4a)

God brings us His comfort through...

- **His Word** – “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.” (Psalm 119:50)
- **His Spirit** – “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.” (John 14:16-17a)
- **His people** – “But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him.” (2 Cor, 7:6-7a)

Identify a trouble you may be facing right now. How could you better implement one or more of the ways in the grey box above? How could you help someone by implementing one or more of those ways above? What might that look like specifically? Come up with ideas as a group

☛ **Temptation: seeking comfort in the wrong places** – “Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.” (Prov. 31:6-7) – When you are in pain, what/where is your temptation to seek comfort in wrong places?

The principles behind the suffering in the paradox...

- **My pain equips me to serve you** – “...so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Cor. 1:4b)
- **Comfort comes in measure with the trouble** – “For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.” (2 Cor. 1:5)

How have you seen any of the two bullets above played out in your own life or the lives of others?

¶ **As you stand up for the Lord, the Lord is standing up for you** – “‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’” (Acts 7:56)

- **None of it is wasted in God’s economy** – “If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.” (2 Cor. 1:6-7)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matt. 5:4)

Pray as a group to allow yourself to receive the comfort of God as listed in this study but also to see/notice the needs of others who need God’s comfort.