

COMMUNITY

Don't Do Life Alone

“Leaning INTO Comfort” | CommUNITY: Don't Do Life Alone

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Why church? I mean...what's the point?

When you are hurting, where do you lean?

Where do you go?

What do you do?

We all have moments in our lives, where we feel crushed. And it is where we turn in those moments that determine how those moments will shape the rest of our lives. We can rely on ourselves and “pull ourselves up by the bootstraps,” as they say. Or, we can lean in. Lean into what? We can lean into the church, by God design, to build our confidence in the only One who can TRULY rescue us from whatever it is that is crushing us. Most often, he uses the comfort we've received from Him to be generously extended to those around us.

Paul writes to a Christian community in Corinth, Greece and one of his emphases...is perseverance in the face of adversity, suffering, & persecution. This is a church that needs some comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-11: *3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 5 For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. 6 Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. 7 We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.*

9 In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.

10 And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. 11 And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.

We need comfort when we feel crushed.

- How does life crush us?

- **Financial Struggles:** Facing debt, unemployment can be incredibly stressful and overwhelming.
- **Relationship Issues:** Conflicts w/family members, friends, or romantic partners = heartbreak & despair.
- **Health Problems:** Dealing with chronic illness, sudden medical emergencies, or mental health issues.
- **Loss & Grief:** Coping with the death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or other significant losses.
- **Work/Academic:** Struggling with heavy workloads, job insecurity, academic stress, or career setbacks.
- **Trauma & Abuse:** Surviving trauma or experiencing abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual.
- **Existential Crisis:** Questioning the meaning and purpose of life or experiencing a loss of faith or identity.
- **Social Isolation:** Feeling disconnected from others can contribute to feelings of alienation and despair.
- **Natural Disasters:** Earthquakes, hurricanes, or wildfires, can lead to trauma, loss, and displacement.
- **Discrimination/Injustice:** Discrimination, prejudice, or injustice can lead to frustration, anger, depression.

- What was Paul's crushing?

- **Opposition from Jews:** Acts 13:45-50 Jews who were jealous of the crowds gathering to hear the preaching led to their expulsion from the region. → Acts 17:5-9 Jews incited a mob, forcing them out of Berea.

- **Opposition from Gentiles (pagan cults):** Acts 19:23-41 An idol maker named Demetrius in Ephesus incites a riot bc he feared Paul's presence would take away his business. → 1 Cor. 15:32 Paul's references fighting wild beasts in Ephesus to indicate the possibility of this kind of persecution/suffering.
- **Struggles w/in the Church:** 1 Cor. 1:11-13 Divisions due to church aligning themselves w/Paul, Apollos, & Cephas (Peter). → 2 Cor. 2:1-4 Paul's is distress over a situation connected to a disciplinary matter.
- **Personal Hardships: READ: 2 Cor. 11:23-27** Paul endured beatings, imprisonments, and dangers on land & sea. → 2 Cor. 12:7-10 Paul's "thorn in the flesh," a personal illness/affliction.

We can choose to LEARN to rely on God or we can choose to rely on ourselves.

- **Victor Frankl:** *"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."*
- **What does relying on ourselves look like?**
 - **We isolate/avoid:** Withdrawal can intensify feelings of loneliness & make it harder to find comfort.
 - **We analyze:** W/out perspective, navel-gazing can deepen feelings of inadequacy or despair.
 - **We exhaust ourselves:** Carrying the crush alone leads to physical, emotional, & spiritual exhaustion.
- **Here is the problem with relying on ourselves...we're too unreliable! → We choose to learn to rely on God.**
 - **We gather & face it:** We go to church & receive comfort & we give comfort.
 - **We listen:** We receive comfort through the wise counsel/prayers of wiser people than us.
 - **We renew:** Resurrection comes when what needs to die...DIES...and what needs to live is resurrected.

→TRANSITION: When we choose to LEARN to rely on God, we will experience His CARE...

When we feel God's care for us, our confidence in Him grows! → THANK YOU JESUS...we can trust you.

→ Lets LEAN INTO community by comforting one another.

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. Reflecting on the sermon introduction story of the man who stopped attending church. What does it mean?
2. Have you ever experienced a moment when you felt completely crushed or overwhelmed? How did you respond?
3. How can the church be a community of comfort for those walking through painful circumstances?
4. How can I LEAN INTO community by comforting others during this time of pastoral transition?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help me to be comforted by you and to comfort others as I LEAN IN to community."

QUOTES / SONGS:

- *"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."* - **Victor Frankl, Jewish Holocaust Survivor**

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **Romans 12:15 (NLT):** "Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep."
- **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT):** "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."
- **Galatians 6:2 (NLT):** "Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ."
- **2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NLT):** "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us."
- **2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (NLT):** 23 Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. 24 Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. 26 I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. 27 I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. 28 Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.
- **Peter 5:7 (NLT):** "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

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