

The Chain of Comfort 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Open –

1. God's NAME is Comfort

(vv. 1-3)

- God has lots of names, but Paul wants us to know His compassion and comfort
- NOT - "The sovereign Father who ought to prevent suffering"
- Examples of Jesus' suffering
- When it comes to suffering, bad theology is at both extremes

Affliction is a given, our God is a God of compassion and comfort

2. God's PLAN is Comfort

(vv. 4-8)

- We receive comfort from God, we pass on comfort to others
- Sufferings of Christ flow over
- Distress during ministry "Despaired even of life" vs. "Do not be anxious"
- God gave Paul the Corinthians for comfort – the Church plan

God fills the church with people who have suffered so we can be a church that comforts

3. God's PROCESS of Comfort

(vv. 9-11)

- God allows distress & adversity (even feeling "a death sentence" in our hearts)
- This increases our dependence on Him (the one who can raise the dead)
- Which results in hope and prayers for deliverance
- Which results in prayers of thanksgiving and praise

The more we suffer and are comforted, the more we give thankful praise

How has God comforted you?

Who does God want you to comfort?

How does His Holy Spirit affect all of this? (The Great Comforter)

Questions for reflection, study, and small groups:

- 1) When has God comforted you? How did He do that?
- 2) What causes anxiety and distress in your heart?
- 3) Take a moment to encourage and comfort someone in the group.
- 4) Paul's distress came from doing ministry. Is there a difference between normal, everyday problems and ministry-related distress? If so, what?
- 5) Paul starts his letter by sharing his struggles. Who would you call if you needed to do the same?
- 6) Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you be comforted today and to share comfort with someone else this week.