

Glory Through Weakness

Westview Church | 2 Corinthians 1:1-7 | Pastor Brett Toney | January 18, 2026

“Kintsugi”

I think all of the dishes that we use at home are from Ikea. I know for sure the mugs are that we set out when we’re hosting. We have no qualms about a three-year-old using a mug. If it breaks, it cost like sixty-three cents when we bought it ten years ago. If one gets dropped and shattered, we don’t glue it back together—in the trash it goes. But that’s not the story for all mugs. There is a Japanese art form called “kintsugi” (KEEN-tzu-ghee). The artist takes broken pottery and reassembles it with a lacquer mixed with gold or silver. The result is a restored bowl or mug that is now adorned with glorious lines where the fractures once were. What was the means of brokenness is now the feature of splendor. It is glory through weakness. And that is a key theme that we will see as we go through Paul’s letter known to us as 2 Corinthians—glory through weakness.

This theme is on display in these first seven verses. There is glory as Paul praises God for firm hope that was established by weakness, by comforted sufferers comforting others. He is saying that as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us—weakness—we are preserved by the comfort that overflows to us through him as well—glory! So, friend, what is apparent from these verses for *you* is that one purpose of God in your suffering is to experience his comfort so that you can comfort others. Like a “*kintsugi*” artist, God intends to bring about glory and splendor by restoring what was broken. This is on display in three forms: divine comfort, v.1-4 (most of our time this morning will be spent here); overflowing fortitude, v.5-6; and resolute hope, v.7.

Divine Comfort (2 Corinthians 1:1-4)

Now, before we look at the form glory through weakness takes in divine comfort, you need to see something here in v.3. You need to behold something that reframes all suffering, all

conflict, all relational tensions, all affliction. In v.3, who is God? We want to jump to his fatherhood, his manifold mercy, or his abundance of comfort. All those are gloriously secondary. Before those means of divine comfort, behold that God is blessed. As one sent to represent Jesus with authority not by his own will, nor the will of man, but by the will of *God* (v.1), Paul first declares the uniqueness of God. He alone is *the* Blessed One. None are like him. He alone is worthy of all favor and benefit. Beholding this God, we are blown away that *he* would regard *us* as sons and daughters—that *he* would extend mercy to *us*—that *he* would abound in comfort toward *us*. Or v.1, that *we* might be numbered among that holy assembly called “the church” that he has formed?! Our Father, along with his coeternal Son, would grant *us* grace and peace?! O that we would have eyes to see in all our affliction who God *is* and not only what he *does* for us.

It makes it all the more remarkable that he extends divine comfort. The scales are not even. All the glory on his side. All the weakness on ours. Yet glory moves toward weakness by providing comfort “in *all* our affliction.” Divine comfort is provided in two ways: direct comfort and mediated comfort. God himself comforts Paul directly. God does this chiefly by his Spirit. God is “the God of all Comfort.” This is so true, it is just about the name of the Third Person of the Trinity. In John 14-16, Jesus repeatedly promises the sending of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. It’s the word “*paraclete*” that get’s used ten times here. This is where we get the name for our Anselm Institute’s Paraclete Fellowship. God is so thoroughly the God of comfort that his comfort is breathed out as Comfort himself. Our experience of this comfort may look like the “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding [guarding our hearts and minds] in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). We directly experience the comfort by our participation in the Spirit.

Yet God purposed this direct comfort to bring about mediated comfort. God comforts Paul, he comforts you, Christian, by his indwelling Spirit, “*so that* we may be able to comfort

those who are in any affliction.” This is glory in weakness. God redeems our weakness by his comfort to deploy our received comfort for the benefit of others. But the comfort we provide to others is not merely a consoling presence. It’s not foremost a MealTrain. It’s not, “Ugh, you broke your arm? I broke my arm once.” Those common grace means of comfort don’t require the direct comfort from the God of all comfort. Non-Christians can comfort like that. What sets this comfort apart is its divine source. It’s a comfort that imparts the promises of God. It’s a comfort that is self-sacrificing like Jesus. It’s a comfort that embodies the Spirit’s presence. What makes Christian comfort distinct is that it is *God’s* comfort that we provide.

What glory that God would use you, brothers and sisters, in all your weakness to comfort others! And that you need no permission, no application process, no volunteer schedule to do so. Through God’s direct comfort of you and mediated comfort provided to you by others, you have been equipped by the Most Blessed God to extend divine comfort to others. You are released as emissaries of Christ to so serve one another, to serve your neighbors, your coworkers, the stranger and foreigner. If you have been strengthened, encouraged, assisted by God or his people in any affliction, one of God’s sovereign purposes in that was to deploy you to provide the same to others. So, move to comfort your neighbor, whether immigrant or officer, divorcee or newlywed, rich or poor. In all that the Lord has done for you, how can you fulfill his purpose for you in communicating his promises and presence to others?

Overflowing Fortitude (2 Corinthians 1:5-6)

The second form glory through weakness takes is in v.5-6, overflowing fortitude. Verse 5 is a pretty strong declarative statement. Here’s an alternate translation, “Just as the sufferings of Christ overflow toward us, so also our comfort through Christ overflows” (NET). Jesus promised that if he was persecuted, his followers would be as well, John 15:20. By our union with Christ,

we participate in the same kinds of sufferings he experienced. But that same union guarantees the overflowing comfort of Christ. “As Jesus went through weakness to glory, so it is with us and with you”—that’s what Paul is saying. That’s why he can say in v.6 that his affliction is for the Corinthians’ comfort and salvation. It’s similar to how he says in Colossians 1:24 that he is “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s affliction.” Paul’s sufferings make visible the sufferings of Christ as he labors to make the death and resurrection of Jesus known.

And the evidence of the effectiveness of all this overflowing suffering and overflowing comfort is overflowing fortitude. The experience of the Corinthians is on display, v.6, as they “patiently endure the same sufferings.” Their fortitude in the faith despite much affliction testifies that they are partakers of both Christ’s suffering and Christ’s comfort. James 1:2-4 is being born out here—the testing of your faith through various trials produces steadfastness. And if you let steadfastness have its full effect, you will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Or, there is glory through weakness.

Resolute Hope (2 Corinthians 1:7)

The third form of glory through weakness is in v.7, “resolute hope.” Reflecting on the praiseworthiness of God for all the comfort he provides in all affliction—both direct and mediated comfort—the result is unshakeable hope. The testimony Paul has heard of the Corinthians’ overflowing fortitude leads to hope amidst suffering. He is fully confident of God’s effective grace and peace in the Corinthians. God most assuredly is to be praised because of them. Paul and the Corinthians and you and me are hopeful partakers of glory here and now because we have shared not only in Christ’s sufferings but in Christ’s comfort. Comfort that extends beyond a consoling presence or timely meal. Comfort that is in the gospel. Comfort that is in this Table.

Here we eat and drink together as a testimony that we do share in his sufferings. We are bound together with our Savior. We are in rich and supernatural communion with him *forever*. His death was our death. His cross is our cross. His scorn is our scorn. And yet his death was the cosmic “*kintsugi*.” It is by the death of Christ that we are redeemed, that we are restored. What was broken and the means of destruction has been made new in splendor, in glory, in hope. All because brokenness, suffering, and affliction did not get the final word. But Christ rose victorious over death to seal our deliverance from all such things. He rose that we might share in his comfort. Church, it’s glory through weakness. That is the gospel way. So join with the Apostle and the saints throughout time and place to “praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” What glory through weakness!