

More Than A Miracle

Intro:

2 cor 2:12-13

Paul is going to end up at Troas but I want to focus on his own soul for a moment...he is clearly anxious about Titus and the report about the Corinthians - that Titus would bring with him... but he did not show up in Troas - uh oh

Its why he stayed such a short time - only seven days in Troas...he needed to get to Macedonia to meet Titus - anxiety...

2 cor 7:5-9

But when he gets to Macedonia he had no rest - affliction, fear discouragement...and then Titus comes with a good report and he is better...but Paul was not comforted merely by this good report - he tells us where his constant comfort came from...

Problem:

2 cor 1:3-11

Paul, the one who tells us to rejoice always, faced real despair and discouragement in his life and ministry but notice the antidote...

"On Him we have set our hope" (2 cor 1:10)

Back in acts 18 I used this section to help outline my message

Blessed be the God of all comfort who comforts us with His provision, His presence, and His protection...I left one out however, one that our chapter makes explicit

Blessed be the God of all comfort who comforts us with His Word

Main Idea:

Everyone needs encouragement

Everyone needs more than a miracle

Implication:

This is exactly what we have been talking about in our apologetics class Tuesday nights. - and this passage drives it home - according to Horton:

"We keep looking for God in all the obvious places. Obvious, at least, to the natural eye. But God chooses to be present in saving blessing where he has promised, in the everyday means that are available to everyone and not just to the spiritual "storm trackers." We don't climb up into heaven or descend into the depths to find God. Christ is present where he has promised; that's the argument Paul makes in Romans 10. If our God is so keen to work in and through the ordinary, maybe we should rethink the way we confine him to the theatrical spectacles, whether the pageantry of the Mass or the carefully staged healing crusade. It takes no honor away from God that he uses ordinary — even physical — means to bring about extraordinary results. On the contrary, it underscores the comprehensive breadth of his sovereignty over, in, and within creation as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To be content with Christ's kingdom is to be satisfied also with his ordinary means of grace. This is a big one. We have trouble believing that weak things like a fellow sinner speaking in Christ's name, both judgment and forgiveness, could actually expand Christ's kingdom throughout the earth. Sure, there are sermons. We need good teachers. But surely a growing church needs something more impressive that will catch people's attention than the regular proclamation of and instruction in God's Word. After all, it's not by preaching the gospel but by living it that we draw people to Christ. Surely, doing more in our community will make a larger impact than weekly prayers, especially for the mundane concerns that are common to everyone. At the very least, we need to have sermons that focus on topics that our neighbors might find more helpful or interesting. And yet, our King tells us that "faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Through the lips of a fellow sinner, Christ judges, justifies, and renews us here and now. The verdict of the final judgment is actually rendered in the present through this speech."

Horton, Michael. Ordinary: Sustainable Faith in a Radical, Restless World (pp. 146-147). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Application:

Paul knew the power of the seemingly ordinary act of preaching and teaching the Word - he knew that what we needed was more than a miracle - we need the message - Jesus knew it and proved it after His resurrection - if only we would listen if only we would know it too

Articles for further study:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-encouragement.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/overcoming-discouragement.html>

<https://www.9marks.org/article/why-the-ordinary-means-of-grace-must-be-central-in-our-gatherings/>

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Text:

Everyone needs encouragement

Acts 20:1 ¶ After the uproar ceased, **Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell** and departed for Macedonia.

Acts 20:2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them **much encouragement**, he came to Greece.

Acts 20:3 There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews **as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.**

Acts 20:4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

Acts 20:5 These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas,

Acts 20:6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, **and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.**

eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-9; 1 thess 4:18; 5:11, 14 (encouragement was a big part of Pauls ministry but lets think for a second what encouragement really is...)

acts 14:22; 15:41; 18:23 (Paul strengthening the churches is nothing new but I would use the word encouragement as almost interchangeable - to be dis-couraged is to have you courage lost...to be encouraged is to have it put back...that what he was doing...the question is how? The next section shows us...)

Everyone needs more than a miracle

Acts 20:7 ¶ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, **Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.**

Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.

Acts 20:9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as **Paul talked still longer**. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story **and was taken up dead**.

Acts 20:10 But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, **"Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."**

Acts 20:11 And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, **he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak**, and so departed.

Acts 20:12 **And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.**

acts 9:35-42 (this is only the second time someone raised from the dead in acts but in this case it is not even a main feature but almost incidental - an interruption...what is Luke doing here?)

1 kings 17:17-24 (Paul, like Elijah could raise the dead...but Paul had something more important to do...what could be more important than raising the dead? Preaching a sermon... conversing and fellowshiping with the church!! they didn't take him away until daybreak after a long while of conversing and teaching...and when they took him away they were comforted... but notice the source of their comfort...it wasn't the miracle it was the message)

Matt 14:10-13, 22-23 (Jesus certainly felt discouraged in this moment - he just wanted to be alone - what do you think He prayed?)

ps 42 (the psalmist knew how to be encouraged and so he fixed his gaze upon the Lord - remembering His promises and provision - Jesus was like us - he suffered like us - He needed to keep His gaze fixed upon the Lord like us...only He did it perfectly unlike us...)

Matt 14:24-33 (After getting His own, He then encourages the disciples...But notice its source...its not the miracle He wants them to focus on - for Peter in the midst of a miracle still finds himself sinking and in fear focused on his own inadequate resources - He didn't want them to focus on the miracle - neither did Paul - it almost incidental in comparison to the one doing it...the church in Troas, Peter, you and I need to get our eyes off the wind and the waves - we need to see the One who is in control who loves us, the One who is standing right here...if only there was a way to see Him truly...)

lk 24:13-48 (implication/application)