

2 Corinthians 1:1-11 - The God of All Comfort

I. (1-2) Intro

In 1 Corinthians 16:5-7 while at Ephesus Paul promised to see the Corinthians after his trip through Macedonia. He changed his plans and decided to see them first on his way to Macedonia and then promised to see them again on his way back, to give them a **second benefit** (2 Corinthians 1:15-16).

Paul made the first visit on the way to Macedonia, but it was painful for both him and the Corinthians because it was full of confrontation (2 Corinthians 2:1).

Because the first visit was so unpleasant and sensing no benefit in a second visit, Paul abandoned his plan to see them on the way back from Macedonia.

Titus was sent from Ephesus to Corinth with the “severe letter”. Titus was also there to collect the contribution for the church in Judea, but the Corinthians didn’t give as they should have. So Paul left Ephesus and suffered his “affliction in Asia.” Later from Macedonia, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians when he heard of more problems at Corinth.

II. (3-11) Paul’s sufferings & God’s Comfort.

“Paul opens this letter by praising the God who gives so much mercy and comfort to the apostle and all believers. We get the feeling that Paul knows the mercy and comfort of God on a first-hand basis.”

“The idea behind this word for **comfort** in the New Testament is always more than soothing sympathy. It has the idea of strengthening, of helping, of making strong.”

“One great purpose of God in comforting us is to enable us to bring comfort to others. God’s comfort can be given and received through others.”

i. Whenever we suffer (loss, pain, grief), God comforts us, that we may be able to comfort others.

Paul suffered *wounds, prisons, beatings, shipwrecks, risks of waters, robbers, persecution from his countrymen & gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, among false teachers, exhaustion, sleeplessness, hunger and thirst* –

“Whatever the problem was, it was bad. Because of this problem, Paul lived with the awareness that he might die at any time.”

Jesus Christ is our comforter because He knows pain...

Isaiah 53:3 - *He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

Luke 22:44 - *And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground*

“As the hotter the day, the greater the dew at night; so the hotter the time of trouble, the greater the dews of refreshing from God.” (Trapp)

Psalms 88:15 - *I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught.*

Philippians 1:29 - *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

Philippians 2:1-2 - *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

ii. **Through every suffering God wants us to trust in Him.**

Jeremiah 31:13 - *“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together; For I will turn their mourning to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow.*

John 16:33 - *In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Someone asked C.S. Lewis, "Why do the righteous suffer?" "Why not?" he replied. "They're the only ones who can take it."

Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my experience, has been through affliction and not through happiness. Malcolm Muggeridge

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 - *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*