

## Comfort in Tribulation

2 Corinthians 1: 3-5

Of all the churches Paul was affiliated with, the church in Corinth was the most troubled and difficult. She was situated within a city that was very popular in that day. It was one of the most celebrated cities in Greece, boasting magnificent buildings with the latest in architectural design. The temple of Venus was there, maintaining 1,000 temple prostitutes. Such wealth, influence, and an environment that promoted immorality brought multitudes of visitors and immigrants to the city.

It is within this environment that the church found herself struggling to maintain purity and survive the onslaught of turmoil and opposition. The practices within society were being introduced within the church and those who sought to stand for truth and right suffered persecution. Not only did Paul sense the need to address the problems within the church brought about by compromise, he also desired to equip and encourage those who genuinely sought to serve the Lord. As you can imagine, the ministry at Corinth was difficult.

In our text today, Paul seeks to provide comfort for those facing difficulty and tribulation. While our society isn't as bad as Corinth yet, there are many similarities. The struggles present in Corinth have found their way into American society, and they are having an impact on the church. As our struggles and opposition increases, we too need to find comfort in the Lord. Let's examine the [exhortations](#) Paul gives as we consider: [Comfort in Tribulation](#).

**I. The Affirmation of Comfort** (3) – [Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort](#). Paul affirms the availability of comfort for those in need. Consider:

**A. The Source** (3a) – [Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ](#). Bear in mind the great difficulty the church faced. Everywhere they looked, they saw indulgence and immorality. The majority of society had a different perspective on life and didn't share their faith. The church was viewed as out of touch and marginalized. Other than a few close friends, most likely felt they were all alone in the journey without any means of help. Paul reminded them that God was aware of their needs and He was the God of comfort. While they may not have enjoyed a majority status within society, they could rest in the Lord.

- We now find ourselves in the minority. Most within society do not share our faith or understand our commitment to the Lord. Many view us as out of touch and a hindrance to progress and modern points of view. When faced with difficulties in life, we too can rest knowing our Lord knows our situation and cares for us!

**B. The Sympathy (3b) – the Father of mercies.** Paul also reminded the church that our Lord is the Father of mercies. This has the idea of “*pity and compassion shown for the suffering of others.*” It is interesting to note that Paul didn’t refer to the Lord as the God of mercies, but the Father of mercies. This reveals his loving, tender care for His children. Not only was the Lord aware of their suffering and pain, He was moved to act on their behalf. They were loved of the Father and cared for as one of the family.

- As I read this I was reminded of the prodigal son. The father knew the son was making a mistake, and yet he allowed him to live his life. After a season of indulgence and utter ruin, the son decided to make his way home. Rather than an angry, unforgiving father, we find a man who daily scanned the horizon in hopes his son would return. He ran to meet him and welcomed him back into the family. Our Father does not condone or encourage sin, but He is ever mindful of the suffering we face, even if caused by bad decisions, and is ready to welcome us home!

**C. The Supply (3c) – the God of all comfort.** This is a simple statement, and yet it speaks volumes. He isn’t the God of some comfort, or even the God of ample comfort. He is the God of all comfort. The church would never face a situation or need that God couldn’t supply the grace and comfort needed to endure. He has a vast supply that is never in danger of running short!

- The comfort of the Lord means to “*be by the side of another; to relieve and support; to give solace, consolation, and encouragement.*” There is the idea of “*strength, an enablement, a confidence.*” It consoles and relieves a person, but it strengthens him at the same time. <sup>i</sup> No doubt this is available through the Holy Spirit that abides within. In fact, the word comfort is translated from the same word that is used for the Holy Spirit.

**II. The Edification through Comfort (4) – Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.** Now Paul speaks of the opportunity to use our comfort in order to comfort others. Notice he speaks of:

**A. Our Security (4a) – Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.** While facing great difficulty, we are comforted in the midst of all our tribulation. Not only is He the God of all comfort, He also is able to comfort in every situation of life. Tribulation means “*to be weighed down exceedingly; to face intense pressure, even being crushed under its weight.*” Isn’t it good to know we have One who is able and willing to come alongside and strengthen us as we face the pressures of life?

- There is nothing we face that God isn't able to provide the necessary strength to endure. There will be seasons when it appears all hope is lost, and we will never survive, but God is able to provide the strength we need to endure whatever we face!

**B. Our Sensitivity** (4b) – [that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble](#). The comfort afforded by God is a tremendous blessing to us, but we must understand it isn't given for our benefit alone. We are comforted by the Lord in the midst of great adversity in order to be able to offer comfort to others as they face similar situations. I never like to hear anyone say, "I know exactly how you feel." In reality we may have faced similar circumstances, but we never know how someone actually feels when facing a given trial. However, it is comforting to find encouragement from those who have faced similar circumstances. They understand the situation better than others because they too have faced a similar trial.

- As I considered this obligation to one another, I was reminded of the great comfort available in Christ. Surely we have all felt at some point that no one knows how we feel. I can assure you Jesus knows how you feel. [Heb.4:15-16 – For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.](#) <sup>[16]</sup> [Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.](#) He faced the rejection and persecution of evil men. He bore our sin on the cross of Calvary, enduring being forsaken of the Father. The wrath of God in judgment was poured out upon Him as the atonement for sin. What could we possibly face that Jesus doesn't understand?

**C. Our Strength** (4c) – [by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God](#). I fear we often underestimate our abilities in Christ. I am aware that we can do nothing apart from Him, but through Him we can do all things according to His will. As we face and endure trials and adversity, overcoming them through the help and comfort of the Lord, we are enabled and equipped to provide strength and comfort to others who face similar trials in life.

- This serves as another challenge to learn from our trials. None of us enjoy adversity, but it is in the trials of life that we grow and mature. Those who have never experienced adversity have no way of assisting others in the midst of difficulty. On the other hand, as we go through storms in life, we gain valuable wisdom and faith that will prove beneficial to us and others later in life. Rather than immediately seeking God to remove the trial, strive to learn through it. We are not there by accident. God has allowed it and He has a plan and purpose for it.

**III. The Appropriation in Comfort (5)** – For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. Regardless of the sufferings we face, God is able to provide the comfort and grace necessary to endure. Consider:

**A. The Scope (5a)** – For the sufferings of Christ...The suffering we face is viewed in a different perspective than the sufferings of the world. The world suffers under the curse of sin, but Paul speaks of the sufferings of Christ. Everyone faces adversity and pain due to our fallen nature, but not everyone identifies with the sufferings of Christ. This is reserved for those who have received Him as Savior and are part of His body.

- Paul knew the Corinthian believers faced suffering for their faith, just as Christ did as He proclaimed His deity and purpose. If you belong to Christ, you can expect to identify with His sufferings.

**B. The Significance (5a)** – For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us. The longer we serve the Lord, we become more like Him and less like the world. The world doesn't embrace those who reject the ideals it promotes. The stronger we grow in our faith, the more suffering we can expect. They rejected our Lord and Master, and we must not expect any different. The trials and persecutions will increase as society continues to deteriorate, but we can overcome in Christ.

**C. The Satisfaction (5b)** – For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. Here is the great blessing in our suffering for Christ. As the sufferings and difficulties increase, so does our consolation and comfort in the Lord. The more we become like Him, the more we suffer from the world. The more we suffer from the world, the more we are comforted by the Lord. While the flesh will never enjoy persecution and suffering, we can rejoice and find peace and comfort in the Lord. In fact, Paul was assured the more he suffered for Christ, the richer his spiritual life became. 2 Cor.12:9-10 – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>[10]</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. As we face difficulties, may we lean on the Lord, drawing from His strength and comfort, while learning from our experience to be more like our Lord and a comfort to those who face similar trials!

**Conclusion:** Difficulties and tribulations are a part of life. We live in a fallen world filled with fallen people. Even now, the saved battle the fallen nature within. However, we can find strength and comfort in our trials. His grace is sufficient for whatever we may face. As we endure personal

trials, we gain valuable insight and wisdom to comfort others. Let us share our comfort with those in need.

If you are struggling today and feel as if you can't go on, come to the Lord and find the comfort and help you need. If you are unsaved, you do not know the comfort found in Christ. You don't have the guidance and help of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. If the Lord has spoken to you in regard to salvation, respond to His call and be saved today!

---

<sup>i</sup> Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Corinthians.