

The God of all Comfort; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

- I. A God Who Cares
 - A. Only in Christianity is God characterized as a loving caring God
 - B. The Greek and Roman gods were to be appeased and worshipped out of fear
 - C. In some religions the gods took on the forms of nature and were worshipped so that they would provide their benefits
 - D. But only in Christianity do we see a loving God that cares so much for His creation that even before He created it, He set a plan in motion to ensure we could be saved from ourselves
 - E. 2 Corinthians 1:3; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
 - F. There is only a year between his first letter to the Corinthian church (55AD) and this one (56AD)
 - G. If we remember Paul's first letter, it was filled with correction and rebuke
 - H. It seems that those corrections were taken to heart because Titus brought good news to Paul
 - I. 2 Corinthians 7:4–8; 4 I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. 5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.
 - J. The idea of comfort flows from this letter from beginning to end
 - K. Paul opens the letter with two descriptions of God
 1. Father of mercies
 - a) To feel or express a sense of mercy or compassion at another's condition
 - b) Colossians 3:12; Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
 - c) Colossians 3:12; Por lo tanto, como escogidos de Dios, santos y amados, revístanse de afecto entrañable y de bondad, humildad, amabilidad y paciencia,
 2. God of all comfort
 - a) To call alongside, often used in a judicial sense of an advocate who rendered legal aid, comfort, and guidance.
 - b) The act of giving relief or comfort in affliction
 - c) Luke 2:25; Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
 - L. The Father of Mercies, the God of all comfort comforts us
- II. Our Comfort
 - A. 2 Corinthians 1:4–5; 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.
 - B. In context, Paul is speaking about the afflictions suffered for being Christian
 1. In verses 8-11 he references his time in Asia (He was stoned in Lystra)

2. Even so, this concept of comforting in affliction goes beyond just suffering for Christ
 3. Verse four says, "so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction."
- C. I am always struck by the amount and level of suffering in our world
1. The bullies at school
 2. The scammers that take advantage of other's tragedy
 3. The people that fell absolutely nothing while they are hurting others
 4. How, and why, does God let them get away with it?
 5. What about those who have suffered tragedy but not at anyone else's hand
 6. Again, God has expectations of us, even in our affliction
 7. Why does God let this happen?
 8. John 9:1-3; 1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.
 9. This man was born blind simply for this moment in time; for Jesus to pass by him and heal of his blindness, glorifying God
- D. God's glory can be found in our afflictions
- E. God comforts us so that we can comfort others
1. The more I understand Godly love, the more I come to the conclusion that it is all about sacrificing ourselves for the Glory of God (for other people's benefit)
 2. We are afflicted and comforted so that we can comfort others who are afflicted
 3. Empathy - the ability to feel what others feel
 4. This is especially valuable when we have been through the same kind of affliction
 5. The very tragedy we suffered can be used to give God glory and honor by empathizing, by comforting others
 6. I know that almost makes us live through it all over again, I do understand that
 7. But I also understand that it is God's desire, His will, that we empathize, comfort others
- F. We have been given a road map for comforting others
- G. However we receive comfort from God, that is how we comfort others
1. Hymns and Scripture are how I am comforted
 2. At Elijah's memorial we sang around 10 hymns
 3. I turn to those great Scriptures in Jeremiah and Psalms
 4. Then that great question that we are always asking ourselves, "WHY?" comes very clear... for the Glory of God!
 5. My son, Elijah, lived for 32 days for the glory of God!
 6. And every time I hear about a sweet innocent newborn in trouble (stillborn and miscarriage), I know God expects me to relive my experience with my sons so that I can empathize and comfort the parents
 7. God's comfort in my afflictions has forever changed my life, so that I can comfort those in affliction the same way God comforts me
- H. That is the glory of God
- III. Comfort and Salvation
- A. 2 Corinthians 1:6; 6 If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.
 - B. We are afflicted so that we bring salvation to others
 - C. Paul may be referring to all his suffering and persecution just to bring the Gospel to Corinth

- D. But look at the comfort God gives him in the city of Corinth
 - E. Acts 18:9–11; 9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” 11 And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.
 - F. Our mission closely resembles Paul’s mission, to bring the Gospel to the world
 - G. But our best example is that of Jesus Himself
 1. Mark 6:34; When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.
 2. Luke 10:8–9; 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. 9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’
 3. 2 Timothy 2:1–3; 1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
 - H. Sometimes tragedy gets the best of us
 1. 2 Corinthians 1:8–9; 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.
 - I. Paul’s hope in Christ is unshaken
- IV. Unshaken
- A. 2 Corinthians 1:7; Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.
 - B. Steadfast, firmly grounded, confident
 - C. This is really the heart of the matter
 - D. Many people have let the tragedies in their lives overcome their faith
 - E. 1 Corinthians 15:58; Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
 - F. Instead of letting tragedy overcome us, we should be steadfast, using God’s comfort to comfort others for their salvation
- V. The God of All Comfort
- A. A God who cares for us
 - B. A God who comforts us in our affliction so that we can comfort others
 - C. A God who desires us to be partakers in salvation... to the end