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## Comfort Through Christ

9/13/17; Grace Church of Lockeford; Bible Study

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This passage challenges us to change our perspective on suffering and tribulation. There is a purpose for our pain and it isn't only personal growth. We endure suffering that we might be better able to comfort one another. Paul reveals two realities about suffering in this passage of Scripture. The first is that...

### When Suffering Abounds, So Does Comfort vv.3-5

Paul gives us a description of God in v. 3. This is how he begins his discussion of suffering. Who is God? He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to Scripture this makes Him the One who sent Jesus (*Jn. 5:30*), the One who planned the work of Christ (*Ac. 2:22-24*), as well as the One who raised Him from the dead (*Gal. 1:1*). Yet Scripture also reveals that They are One (*Jn. 10:30*). In His human incarnation Christ was subject to the Father and obedient to Him (*Phil. 2:5-11*).

Paul is offering praise to God the Father because of His mercy and comfort. The way Paul refers to the Lord here reveals that God the Father is the source of all mercy and comfort. "Mercy" is the idea of *compassion or deep sympathy for another's suffering*. "Comfort" is the idea of *encouragement or consolation. The act of giving relief or comfort in affliction*. All true mercy and comfort that exists has its source in God. He has compassion and sympathy for us in our suffering and he brings encouragement, relief, and comfort in our affliction! Having stated that that is Who God is in v. 3, Paul states that this is also what God does in v. 4.

God comforts us in all our tribulation. "Comforts" in v. 4 is a slightly different word than in v. 3. This word comfort literally means *to urge, implore, or exhort* with the idea being *to alleviate sorrow or distress and give strength to*. God doesn't just pat our hand and say "poor dear". He gives us the strength and help necessary to endure! Paul next gives a purpose statement. God does this so that we can do the same for others! God strengthens us in our distress and affliction and wants to use us to strengthen others! We are not to sit and pat a suffering person's hand. We are to strengthen and help them. Why? Look at v. 5.

The sufferings of Christ abound in us. If we are living as we have been called to live, we suffer affliction. Yet when that happens we are abundantly comforted through Jesus Christ! He gives relief and comfort in our affliction. Our suffering may be abundant, but so is God's comfort. Since we are abundantly comforted, we have the great joy of comforting others! This completely transforms our view of suffering. We endure suffering through the power and grace of God that we might encourage and strengthen others who suffer! When suffering abounds, so does comfort. **The second reality we are given here is that...**

### Those Who Face Suffering Will Receive Comfort 6-7

According to v. 6 the apostles were afflicted for the comfort and salvation of others. This helped them to endure the sufferings they faced. This knowledge, that we who suffer will have comfort and opportunity to lead others to Christ, is what enables us to endure suffering. If my affliction can bring lost ones to Christ, I will face and endure it gladly! I know that when I do, I will find comfort in Christ. The comfort the apostles then received from Christ also lead to the comfort and salvation of others. The bottom line here is that comfort in trials leads to salvation for others and affliction leads to salvation for others. There are no down sides! When we face suffering in the will of God the outcome is always positive!

Paul reflects this attitude in v. 7. "Hope" is a *reasonable and confident expectation*. The expectation of the apostles for the believers in Corinth is steadfast, it is firm and secure because of what they know. What do they know? Just as the church in Corinth partners in suffering with the apostles, so they will also of the comfort we have in Christ! As the expression goes, this is something we can take to the bank. We can take to the bank that whenever we suffer, we will receive comfort from the Lord. He will deliver us and will strengthen and help us to endure suffering as good soldiers of Jesus Christ! When we face suffering, we will receive comfort.

When suffering abounds, comfort abounds, when we face suffering we will received comfort! These are indisputable and unchanging facts! This changes our view of suffering. Suffering can be endured because we will be given comfort and strength to endure. As this takes place we are enabled to comfort and strengthen others who face suffering. This passage gives us a beautiful picture of God's activity in our suffering as well as a picture of how the body of Christ is to function when some of its members suffer. What glorious blessing is ours in Christ!

**CHALLENGE:** Receive comfort and give comfort to those who suffer.

#### V. 3

Blessed - εὐλογητός (eulogētos) *blessed; praised. Praiseworthy* ⇔ *blessed adj.* — *being praiseworthy; conceived of as being verbally blessed.* Predicate adjective, nominative, singular, masculine.

Mercies - οἰκτιρμός (oiktirmos) *mercy; compassion; pity. Compassion n.* — *a deep awareness of and sympathy for another's suffering.* Noun, genitive of source, plural, masculine.

Comfort - παράκλησις (paraklēsis) *comfort; encouragement. consolation n.* — *the act of giving relief or comfort in affliction.* Noun, genitive of source, singular, feminine.

“if we define a doxology as a formal ascription of praise, honor, glory, or blessing to God or Christ, 2 Cor. 1:3 may be included within this category.”<sup>1</sup>

#### V. 4

Comforts - παρακαλέω (parakaleō) *urge; implore; exhort. to comfort v.* — *to alleviate sorrow or distress; give emotional strength to.* Verb, present, active, attributive participle, singular, nominative.

Tribulation - θλίψις (thlipsis) *distress; affliction. distress (state) n.* — *an oppressive state of physical, mental, social, or economic adversity.* Noun (prepositional object), dative, singular, feminine.

The third comfort is the same as v. 3.

The rest of the repeated terms are the same words.

#### V. 5

Sufferings - πάθημα (pathēma) *suffering. affliction (state) n.* — *a state of great suffering and distress due to adversity.* Noun (subject), nominative, plural, neuter.

Abound - περισσεύω (perisseuō) *abound. to abound v.* — *to be abundant or plentiful; exist in large quantities.* Finite verb, present, active, indicative, third person, singular.

Consolation - same word translated “comfort” in v. 3.

#### V. 6

Afflicted - θλίβω (thlibō) *afflict; oppress. to be caused to be distressed v.* — *to be brought into difficulties or distress or suffering.* Finite verb, present, passive, indicative, first person, plural.

Consolation - same word translated “comfort” in v. 3.

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<sup>1</sup> Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 141.

Salvation - σωτηρία (sōtēria) *deliverance; salvation. salvation n. — the state of being delivered or preserved from harm (of judgment); especially as what that state entails, a safe haven in heaven.* Noun (prepositional object), genitive, singular, feminine.

Effective - ἐνεργέω (energeō) *work; be at work. to function v. — to do what something is used for; perform as expected when operating.* Verb, present, middle, attributive participle, singular, genitive, feminine.

Enduring - ὑπομονή (hypomonē) *steadfastness. steadfast endurance n. — the power to withstand hardship or stress; especially the inward fortitude necessary.* Noun (prepositional object), dative, singular, feminine.

Sufferings - same word as in v. 5.

Suffer - πάσχω (paschō) *suffer. to suffer (pain) v. — to experience harm or emotional pain.* Finite verb, present, active, indicative, first person, plural.

Comforted - same word translated “comforts” in v. 4.

## V. 7

Hope - ἐλπίς (elpis) *hope; expectation. hope n. — a reasonable and confident expectation of a future event.* Noun (subject), nominative, singular, feminine.

Steadfast - (bebaios) *firm; in force; valid. secure (established) adj. — not likely to fail or give way.* Predicate adjective, nominative, singular, feminine.

Partakers - κοινωνός (koinōnos) *partner; sharer. collaborator n. — an associate in an activity or endeavor or sphere of common interest; especially one in which the associates both participate in the profits or benefits.* Adjective, predicate nominative, plural, masculine.

Sufferings - same word as in v. 5.

Consolation - same word translated “comfort” in v. 3.