

Christ's Power Displayed in Our Weakness

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

January 22, 2023

OVERVIEW Paul's mutual concern and love with the believers in Corinth has been shaken. Paul begins by pointing them to the reality of suffering *and* the reality of God's comfort. He focuses on who God is and what He has done—for both Paul and the church. Trouble, suffering, despair, burdens, even death itself does not mean that God has abandoned you.

1) We praise our God “*who-comforts-us*” (1:3-7)

Paul uses the word “comfort” **10** X in only seven verses!

- The Father-heart of God is towards, not **against**, us
- God's comfort is total “*all comfort . . . in all our troubles*”
- God's comfort is **matched** to our sufferings “*just as*”
- God's comfort overflows / goes over, above and beyond
- God's comfort is for Christ's persecuted **body**
- God's comfort in suffering produces **endurance**
- God's comfort is **sharable**

2) We rely on our God who delivers us (1:8-10)

- Ignorance hinders **mutuality**
- Pressure** builds and burdens pile on
- Severe depression may be life-threatening
- Why does God allow his servants to suffer?
- Our God “*who-raises-the-dead*” **God's** got this!
- God delivers us (past, near future, far future)

3) We give thanks to our God who answers prayer (1:11)

- Informed prayer is **mutually** strengthening
 - See also Romans 15:30
- Answered prayer **multiplies** thanksgiving

On Your Own (better with others)

- How have you personally experienced God's comfort?
- There are several misconceptions about suffering. Check one of the following that you've heard (and maybe thought is true), then discuss as a group why it is a misconception.
 - Those who suffer are more spiritual than others who don't.
 - Not suffering means you are not following God's will.
 - If you aren't currently suffering, watch out! You're overdue.
 - If suffering can be avoided by compromising, that's ok.
- READ Psalm 94:16 and Isaiah 49:13. From your experience, list ten ways that God encourages and comforts His children.
- agree/disagree*
God will never give you more than you can handle.
- Paul does not hide his weakness, discouragement, and depression so as to appear 'spiritual' to the church. Do you?
Think of a time when you needed prayer but were reluctant to ask for it. How can others in your small group, or friends pray?
- What encouragement and comfort can you take from the trials, sufferings and tribulations of other Christians?
- Are you familiar with the name of Amy Carmichael? Check this <https://www.radiusinternational.org/amy-carmichael-1867-1951-scottish-missionary-to-india/>