

## The Twofold Outcome of Experiencing God's Comfort

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2Co 1:3 ...the God of all comfort;

2Co 1:4 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.

### I. Thoughts concerning the development of this sermon

Last Friday, Saturday and Sunday—Mom had three hard cancer-fighting days  
We were headed to another radiation treatment on Monday  
She confessed that she had never prayed hard enough for people with cancer  
She said that she had not realized what they were going through  
We briefly talked about 2 Corinthians Chapter 1  
God had watered a previously planted seed in a preacher's mind  
God had first planted the seed several days earlier  
Ken Still had sent me a text message (in the text he explained that he was unable to talk)  
His son, Josiah, had been severely injured in a motorcycle accident  
Josiah's fiancée, Elizabeth, had been killed in the accident  
On the day Josiah got out of the hospital Ken's son, David, had committed suicide  
At the time of the text they had just gotten home from spreading Elizabeth's ashes  
In one of the text messages Ken told me that he had found comfort from 2 Cor 1:5  
We rather extensively discussed the 2 Corinthians passage through text messaging  
I suggested that God was putting Ken through graduate-level training on comfort  
(I hope what I meant by that will come out shortly in this sermon)  
On this past Tuesday as I was studying for this sermon Ken called me  
He was doing some better—Josiah was physically okay—but spiritually struggling  
Concerning David—I assured Ken that he would see David again  
'He cannot come to you, but you shall go to him'  
He asked if it would be okay if he ask me a question  
Then he asked, "What do we do in heaven?"  
It sounded more like a question from a child than from a preacher—  
But I could tell by his tone that it was a real question  
He further said, "What I mean is: What do we do before the resurrection?"  
As I sensed his concern, I began by telling him that there is no such thing as soul sleep  
The spirits in heaven are awake, conscious, and enjoying the presence of Jesus  
The Spirit flooded my mind with verses and passages  
'Absent from the body, and present with the Lord'  
'For I am in a strait betwixt two...'  
'Send Lazarus to my five brothers'  
'Today you will be with me in paradise'  
As I continued 'preaching'—I realized that Ken was repeating the word—"paradise"  
He said it several times and then began to weep—I listened to him cry for a long time  
He somewhat regained his composure and said we would talk again  
My study returned to the now twice talked about 2 Corinthians Chapter 1  
On this past Friday I dropped my sermon study in order to take Mom to her treatment  
Her radiation therapist paused to tell me that she had just learned a lesson in empathy  
She told of taking a medicine that had caused her to have severe nausea  
She said that she could now better relate to what her patients were experiencing

I thought about the sermon preparation I had dropped just a few minutes before  
God had just handed me another real-life confirmation of 2 Corinthians Chapter 1  
So are the experiences of a preacher and his preaching

## II. Blessed be the God of all comfort

**2Co 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;**

### A. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies

Eph 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

### B. The God of all comfort

#### 1. Comfort—from the Greek *parakaleo* (or *paraklesis*)

*Parah* (near or beside)—*Kaleo* (to call) —to call near—or to call to one's side

#### 2. Comfort that God directly gives His children

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

#### 3. Comfort in the story of Jesus

Isa 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Isa 40:2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isa 40:4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Isa 40:6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the goodliness thereof *is* as the flower of the field:

Isa 40:7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people *is* grass.

Isa 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Isa 40:9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Isa 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

Isa 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

## III. The two-fold benefit of receiving God's comfort

**2Co 1:4 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.**

### A. God comforting us that we may be comforted

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

### B. God equipping us that we may be able to comfort others

Psa 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Psa 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

Psa 51:13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Luk 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

Luk 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Heb 12:12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

### C. The virtue of empathy

Heb 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Gen 40:14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

Gen 40:23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

### IV. Principles of suffering and deliverance

**2Co 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.**

#### A. As our sufferings abound

2Co 11:23 ...in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

2Co 11:24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one.

2Co 11:25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

#### B. Even so Christ's comforts to us abound

2Co 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

2Co 12:8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

2Co 12:9 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.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

### V. A Christ-like life is not lived for self—but for others

**2Co 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.**

#### A. Our receiving afflictions is the effective means for equipping us to comfort others

Col 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

#### B. Our receiving comfort is so that we can be equipped to comfort and deliver others

2Co 4:15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

2Co 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

2Co 4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

### VI. Paul's hope for them—as God has equipped me—so will God equip you

**2Co 1:7 And our hope of you *is* steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation.**

1Pe 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

1Pe 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

1Pe 1:8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Jas 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Jas 1:3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Jas 1:4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Mat 5:4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

### VII. The God of providence who delivers from death

**2Co 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:**

**2Co 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:**

**2Co 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;**

### A. A possible explanation of Paul's recent deliverance

1Co 15:32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus...

2Ti 4:17 ...I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

2Ti 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### B. The God of providence—past—present—future

1Sa 17:37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine...

Psa 34:19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

2Ti 4:16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

2Ti 4:17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

2Ti 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### C. From earthly providence to eternal preservation

#### 1. What if providence was all there was?

1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

#### 2. In the past tense—we were delivered from the second death at Jesus' cross

1Th 1:10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

#### 3. In the present tense—we are now delivered from spiritual death

Eph 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

#### 4. In the future tense we will be delivered from death

1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

1Co 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.

1Co 15:21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

1Co 15:24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

1Co 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

1Co 15:26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.