



Encouragement in the Midst of Suffering

“You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.” ~ 2 Corinthians 1:5

In 2 Corinthians 1:1-14, Paul is encouraging the Corinthians in the midst of their suffering. His main point can be found in verse 5 (above), that as they share in Christ’s suffering, they will also most definitely share in Christ’s comfort! In verse 6, Paul also instructs them to comfort others in the same way. He shares with the Corinthians that God has allowed his own intense sufferings so that he and the other disciples ministering to them could be a comfort to the Corinthians in their present suffering. **“So when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be an encouragement to you”** (vs. 6).

This is the beauty of the Body of Christ, as God heals and touches each individual part, God works in and through each individual part to do the same for one another. Paul explains that when we embrace God’s comfort amidst our suffering, instead of shrinking back in our faith, God comforts us, grows us and uses us in his mighty work of redemption and transformation. How? Paul encourages the Corinthians to embrace three principles while they suffer for Christ:

1. Vs. 9 & 12: **“We learned not to rely on ourselves but on God who can raise the dead. . . . We have depended on God’s grace, not on our own earthly wisdom.”** When we go through trials, we must trust in God instead of ourselves. Lean on God’s timing, power and purposes instead of our own reasoning as to why we are enduring hardships and suffering.
2. Vs. 11: **“He will rescue us because you are helping by praying for us. As a result, many will give thanks to God...”** When we suffer and when we comfort others as they suffer, we are called to pray for our own situation as well as for others. This is a privilege. When we pray for others as they suffer, we share in Christ’s good work in their hearts and lives. In this way, the whole body of Christ is healthy, no matter the outside circumstances, and God’s power and goodness becomes evident in our lives.
3. Vs. 14: **“Then on the day when our Lord Jesus comes back again, you will be proud of us in the same way we are proud of you.”** As we endure hardships and tribulations with confidence that God is in control, God’s glory becomes evident in our lives no matter our circumstances. We become more than conquerors and we are encouragements of confidence and grace to one another!

The overall result of implementing these spiritual principles while we suffer is **Perseverance!** Paul encourages the Corinthians to understand and implement these truths to the end. As we wait in faith for Christ’s return, when all wrongs will be made right, we are called to be faithful to God as well as to one another. We are to embrace Christ’s comfort for ourselves as well as each other, as we also partake of his suffering. Just as Paul was confident that God would comfort the Corinthians in their sufferings as God had comforted him, we can also be assured that we will be generously comforted by the Holy Spirit as we endure suffering and hardship awaiting his return. Until then, may we comfort others with the same faith, hope and love God is faithful to abundantly afford unto us.