

2 Corinthians #2¹

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Suffering, Saints, and God – 1:1-11

Quick reminder: this church is not on good terms with Paul

1. Apostle = two meanings
 - a. A generic term for a messenger
 - b. A specific term for the 12(13) –
 - i. Who sent directly by Jesus Christ – v.1
 - ii. Who had the ability to work miracles – 12:12
 - iii. Who had seen Jesus after His resurrection – 1 Cor. 1:9; 15:5
 - iv. Therefore, to reject Paul was to reject Jesus

Reasons to praise God in the midst of Suffering – vv. 3-7

1. He is the God of all comfort – v. 3
 - a. This is not the absence of struggle . . .
 - b. It is the reality of God in the midst of the struggle
2. He is actually comforting us now – v. 4a
3. He is going to use us to comfort others – v. 4b
4. The suffering reminds us and leads us to Jesus – v. 5a
5. No matter the suffering, it will never deplete God's supply of comfort – v. 5b

6. Our emotional comfort does not reside within us . . . it resides in God's commitment to sustain and save His people, no matter what
7. Reality: Paul and his group were suffering greatly – v. 8
 - a. It was beyond their ability to cope, either physically or emotionally
 - b. Apparently, he had been sentenced to death as a criminal (he doesn't tell us the details) – Acts 9
 - c. They despaired of life (they wanted to go to heaven)
 - d. Suffering is reality in his life (but he doesn't wallow in it)
8. But God delivered them from the danger, so he would learn to rely on God and not on himself – v. 9-10
 - a. And if God raised Jesus from the dead . . .
 - b. Then we have nothing to worry about
9. And the church had helped by praying for Paul in his situation – v. 11

Suffering itself does not teach us faith . . . but it is a tool that God uses to display His resurrection power in our lives and to teach us that He is all we will ever need

The goal of Paul's life (and ministry) was to bring glory to Jesus Christ – and that, by definition, included suffering

from the Heidelberg Catechism – Question #1 what is your only comfort, in life and in death?

That I belong – body and soul, in life and in death – not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of His own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me

¹Scott Hafemann, *The NIV Application Commentary* and Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*

from the dominion of the devil; that He protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven, not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit His purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.