

The source of mercy and comfort

Paul introduces 2 Corinthians with 2 things. First, his apostleship and second someone who is walking in the will of God.

How many are certain of your call? How many are certain of what God's will is?

Ephesians 5:15–17 (ESV)¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- Abiding with God helps us to know God's will. Fulfilling your call causes one to abide.
- Another thing that Paul addresses is that the letter is to Corinth, and to people beyond Corinth in Achaia. (Despite the challenges, the gospel was reaching out from Corinth)
- Here is another thing, **being in God's will does not mean things are going wonderfully...**
- Church of God at Corinth- this is not the name of a denomination; it is what every true local New Testament church is-God's church.

The next thing that Paul does is talk about **mercy and comfort**, which tells us that he is talking to them about what God does in times where things are not at their best.

- Let's face it, our health, finances, circumstances are not always good. (Right?)

2 Corinthians 1:3 (ESV)

God of All Comfort

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

1. How to praise in difficult times- (Let's be honest, this is where many let go of God) Peter told Jesus, "Where else could we go, and that He has the Words of Life"!
 - a.) Praises God for His mercy, and His comfort. (He will never leave or forsake us)
 - b.) Ultimately, we will overcome everything because of Jesus, but He is always with us now!
 - c.) We are God's children because of Jesus, so we truly have God to help us daily, despite the way this world is.

John 17:1–3 (ESV)

The High Priestly Prayer

17 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Colossians 1:12–14 (ESV)

¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

This is ultimately what he has done, and He is with us to bring us home.

- d.) Father of mercy- (Where does mercy come from? God the originator of mercy.) Favor from compassion.
- e.) And of comfort- (When I go to the dentist, painkiller) But this is more than that. It means that He comes alongside of us through our trials. (The Holy Spirit comforts us.)
 - This is something that a child of God has because of Jesus Christ. (Let's be honest, no one avoids times where comfort would be a welcome thing.)
- 2. Challenging times are used to strengthen- (I know, this is not what we want to hear!)
 - Honestly, we are fallen creatures in a fallen existence. (But for a short while!)

2 Corinthians 1:4–11 (ESV)

⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ⁶ If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

- Understand, there are people on tv and in some books that lie and tell you this is not so. (Tell that to Paul, Peter, and the gang!)
- a. We suffer because of our humanity, and we sometimes suffer because we are Christians.

Can anyone control it? No, but some can be brought through it and become stronger even.

- b. God wants us to walk with Him and rely upon Him. (Crutch? Yep. Everyone faces times but not everyone has Help!)

Here is a peculiar verse to consider-

2 Corinthians 12:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Look at Luke 7:18-23, and 28 John needed assurance. (God provides it!)

- Look again at verse 10. (God delivers us from trials in some cases and other times from the trial.) We need to trust, either way.
- We want to glorify God in our life.

- Prayer is the key to these times especially. (We must cry out for strength, and deliverance. Then we trust, while God gives us the needed support.
 - Sometimes we suffer due to sin, other times we suffer to prevent sin.
 - Other times it may be to strengthen us.
 - Ultimately, we will be delivered from it.
 - Consider also Hebrews 12:1-12
 - Maturity and faith are excellent tools that God gives us.
- 2 Corinthians 1:22 (ESV)
²²and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Finish with John 14:15-21