

“The God Of All Comfort”
2 Corinthians 1:1

Introduction:

1. Please Turn In Your Bibles With Me:
 - To 2 Corinthians 1:
 - Where - As We Continue Our Series:
 - On And Eventually Through:
 - Paul’s Second Letter To The Corinthian Church:
 - We Read:
 - 1:1-4 - “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: / Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. / Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; / 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!”
 - Now - We Will Be Looking More Closely At These Verses Next Week!
 - But For This Morning:
 - I Would Like For Us To Focus Our Attention:
 - On That Special Description Of God:
 - In 1:3 - Where He Is Called:
 - “The God Of All Comfort!”
2. The Apostle Paul:
 - Was One Who Personally Experienced:
 - And Intimately Understood God:
 - In This Way!
 - As “The God Of All Comfort!”
 - And Especially So:
 - In His Turbulent Relationship With The People & The Church Of Corinth!
 - Which - As We Have Looked At For The Past 3 Weeks:
 - Began In Acts 18!
 - And So - This Morning:
 - We Are Going To Explore Together:
 - A Whirlwind Tour Of Paul’s Relationship:
 - With The Church In Corinth:
 - Which Should Help Us Understand 2 Corinthians Better, But Also The Comfort Of God In Our Own Lives!
3. Because - Like Paul:
 - There Are Many Times In Our Own Lives:
 - Where We Need A Special Display:
 - Of God’s Grace & Comfort!
 - As Individual Christians & As A Church As A Whole!

* So - To Begin - We Have Already Seen That God Comforts His Church:

1. *When It Is Planted!*

- This Is One Of The Primary Lessons:
 - Of The Beginnings / The Planting Of The Corinthian Church:
 - Back In Acts 18!
 - In Fact - Let’s Head Back There Together One More Time!
 - Because - Even Though On The Surface:
 - It Seems Like Paul Was Very Successful:
 - In Sharing The Gospel In Corinth:
 - Remember - There Were Some Rough Times For Paul During His 18 Month Stay!
- There Was Discouragement:
 - That Paul Faced!
 - Acts 18:1 - “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth!”
 - And When He First Arrived - He Was All Alone! His Close Friends & Companions -

Timothy & Silas - Were Sent Back To The Thessalonian Church Earlier!

- And Even Though:
 - There Were Some Jewish Tent-Makers:
 - Who Became Paul's Friends & Co-Laborers - Aquila & Priscilla:
 - Yet - Many If Not Most Of The Other Jews Rejected Him & The Gospel Message He Was Sharing!
- In 1 Thessalonians 3:7:
 - Which Was Written By Paul In Corinth During This Time:
 - He Describes His Stay In Corinth As A Time Of "Affliction And Distress!"
 - Paul Needed The Comfort & Encouragement Of The Lord!
 - Also:
- There Was Danger:
 - That Paul Faced!
 - When - In Acts 18:12-13 - The Unbelieving Jews Apprehended & Accused Paul Before Gallio - The Roman Official - "And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, / Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law!"
 - And Once Again - Paul Must Have Felt Very Much Alone!
 - Paul Needed The Comfort & Encouragement Of The Lord!
- And That Is Exactly What The Lord:
 - Provided To Paul!
 - Because - In Spite Of All The Discouragements & Dangers He Faced:
 - The Work Of The Lord Continued!
 - As We See In Acts 18:8 - "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized!"
 - And The Small Church Of Corinth Was Born!
 - What A Comfort To All Of God's People! God's Work Continues, No Matter What We Face!
 - Sometimes It May Feel Like We Are All Alone!
 - Sometimes It May Feel Like We Are Taking Steps Backwards Instead Of Forwards!
 - But God's Work Continues!
 - Because - Also:
 - The Word Of The Lord Continues!
 - Remember The Words Of Promise & Comfort:
 - Given To Paul By The Lord? 18:9-11 - "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: / For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. / And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them!"
 - We Can Take Comfort - Even As Paul Did:
 - That God Is Still Working Through His Word!
 - No Matter What!
 - Because - 1 Corinthians 3:7 - It Is "God that giveth the increase!"
 - God Comforts His Church - When It Is Planted!
 - Even When There Is Discouragement & Danger Along The Way!
 - Also See - God Comforts His Church:

2 ***When It Has Problems!***

- After 18 Months - Paul Left Corinth:
 - After Preparing & Equipping The New Christians There!
 - And It Seems That He Left On Good Terms:
 - And On A High Note!
 - He Had Even Made A Vow To The Lord - Likely A Vow Of Gratefulness To The Lord!
 - And Even When Paul Was Gone:
 - The Lord Was Still Graciously At Work:
 - There In Corinth!
 - Because In His Absence:
- We Meet A Man Named Apollos:

- Acts 18:24-28 - “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. / This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. / And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. / And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: / For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ!”
- Apollos Was A Jew Who Believed The Message Of John The Baptist!
 - And When He Met Priscilla & Aquila In Ephesus - They Told Them That Jesus Was The Messiah That John Was Preaching About!
 - And So - Apollos Believed In Jesus - And Became A Great Missionary For Christ!
 - He Was Also A Gifted Speaker & Skilled Orator!
- And He Went To Corinth To Continue The Work There!
 - Which Is Why Paul Writes In 1 Corinthians 3:5-6 - “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? / I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase!”
 - So - Paul & Apollos Were United In Their Desire To Keep The Corinthian Church Grounded & Growing In The Gospel!
 - And Everything Seemed To Be Going Well!
- But Over A Couple Of Years:
 - There Were Some New Questions & Concerns:
 - That The Corinthian Church Needed Help With!
 - One Of Those Concerns Was The Matter Of Fornication - Sexual Sin - Because In Corinth - Like It Is In Our Own Country - Sexual Sin Seemed To Be “No Big Deal!”
 - But It Was & Is A Big Deal!
 - And So - It Appears That Paul Wrote A Brief Letter, Which He Describes In:
 - 1 Corinthians 5:9 - “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators!”
 - Well - It Also Appears That This Letter Was Ignored By Many In The Corinthian Church - And Then Other Problems Surfaced!
 - In 1 Corinthians 1:11:
 - There Was A Report:
 - Given To Paul - “For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you!”
 - And In 1 Corinthians 7:1:
 - There Was A Letter:
 - Sent to Paul - “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me!”
 - And There Were Many Issues:
 - That Needed To Be Addressed!
 - Which Is Why Paul Wrote The Letter Of 1 Corinthians - And Sent It With Timothy - To See If They Would Receive It & Apply It To Their Lives!
 - And So - In 1 Corinthians:
 - We Read About The Issue Of Division - And Instead - A Call To Christian Unity:
 - 1:10 - “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment!”
 - We Read About The Issue Of Carnality & Worldliness In The Church - And Instead - A Call to Christian Spirituality:
 - 3:1 - “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ!”
 - We Read About The Issue Of Selfishness & Self-Centeredness - And Instead - A Call To Christian Service:
 - 12:25 - “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another!”
 - We Read About The Issue Of Lust - And Instead - A Call To Christian Love:
 - 13:13 - “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity!”
 - All These Issues & Concerns:

- Revealed Potential:
 - To Paul - To Address Them & To Encourage Them To Live For The Lord!
 - And So - Paul Sent Timothy:
 - With Great Hope - That They Would Receive His Admonition!
 - Telling Them - 4:17 - "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church!"
 - But - How Would The Corinthians Respond?
 - Well - It Appears That Instead Of Listening To The Lord Through Paul:
 - They Ignored & Rejected Paul's Message!
 - And So - This Letter:
- Resulted In Pain:
 - To Paul! Since He & Apollos Left:
 - There Seems To Have Risen New Prominent Leaders In The Church:
 - Who Questioned Paul's Authority As A Preacher & Even As An Apostle!
 - And So - Paul - Who Was Still Living & Serving:
 - In The City Of Ephesus - Just Across The Aegean Sea From Greece - Paul Had To Make An Emergency Visit To Corinth!
 - This Visit Is Often Described As Paul's "Painful Visit" To Corinth!
 - In 2 Corinthians 2:1 - "But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness!"
 - And In 2 Corinthians 12:14 - "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you!"
 - So - There Was A Second Visit:
 - Which Was A Painful Visit:
 - And His Visit Also Appears To Have Been Unsuccessful!
 - Which Is Why - When He Returned To Ephesus - He Wrote:
 - Another Letter:
 - Often Described As Paul's "Severe Letter!"
 - Which We Read About In:
 - 2 Corinthians 2:3-4 - "And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. / For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you!"
 - And In 2 Corinthians 7:8 - "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season!"
 - This Letter Of Rebuke:
 - Was Delivered By Titus:
 - And - Once Again - Paul Waited For The Response!
- How Would The Corinthians Respond This Time?
 - Well - It Was During This Time:
 - That The Events Of Acts 19 Took Place - The Uproar In The Theater Of Ephesus:
 - When The People Kept Shouting "Great Is Diana Of The Ephesians!" For 2 Hours!
 - And In Acts 20:1 - "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia!"
 - He Hadn't Yet Heard Back From Titus:
 - And He Couldn't Stay In Ephesus Any Longer - So He Hoped To Find Titus Along The Way - Along With News From Corinth!
- But Even Through All Of This:
 - We See How:
 - God Continues To Comfort His People / His Church:
 - Even When There Are Problems!
 - Because: Even Though Paul Did Not See It Yet!
 - Even Though Paul Did Not Know It Yet!
 - God Was Still Working Through His Word!
 - And We Can Take Comfort In This Truth - Because God Also Comforts His Church:

3. *When There Is Progress!*

- Eventually - Paul Met Up With Titus:
 - And We Find What Happened In 2 Corinthians 7:5-9 - “For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. [Events In Ephesus] / Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; / And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. / For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. / Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing!”
 - After All Those Months Of Waiting To Hear From Titus - He Finds Out That The Corinthians:
 - Over All:
- Responded To The Message:
 - Of Paul!
 - And That Caused His Heart To Rejoice!
 - Because They Also:
- Repented Of Their Sin:
 - And Wanted To Be Reconciled With The Lord:
 - And With Paul!
 - Again - What Joy & Comfort & Encouragement!
- And So - Paul Couldn't Wait:
 - To Write To Them Again:
 - And To Encourage Them To Continue Responding To The Lord And His Word!
 - And That Is When He Wrote The Letter Of 2 Corinthians!
- And In This Very Personal Letter:
 - Paul Wants To:
 - Thank The Lord & Them:
 - For Their Response!
 - 2 Corinthians 7:13 - “Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all!”
 - Paul Also Wanted To:
 - Prepare Them For Another Visit:
 - His Third Visit!
 - Paul Also Encouraged Them To:
 - Continue To Reject The False Leaders & Teachers:
 - That Were Questioning His Leadership & Authority As A True Apostle Of Jesus Christ!
- And With This Letter:
 - Paul Had An Even Greater Hope & Comfort:
 - That God Was Still Working Through His Word:
 - Even In That Struggling Corinthian Church!

Conclusion:

1. Paul's Third & Final Visit With The Corinthians:
 - Is Likely Recorded For Us In Acts 10:1-3:
 - Where He Stayed For “Three Months!”
 - It Is Also Where He Wrote The Book Of Romans!
 - And At The End Of That Letter:
 - We Find A “Who's Who” Of Members:
 - Of The Corinthian Church Sending Their Greetings To The Roman Church!
 - And Even A Greeting *To* Priscilla & Aquila, Who Had Returned To Rome By This Time!
 - But - He Also Writes About The Comfort:
 - That He Personally Experienced:
 - From The Work Of God - In His Own Life & In The Life Of The Corinthian Church:
 - In Romans 16:25-27 - “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world

began, / But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: / To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen!”

2. Paul Was Telling The Church In Rome:

- That God Is Able:

- To Work Through His Word!

- Just As He Had Done In Corinth!

- And Just As He Can Do Here!

- This Is One Of Our Greatest Comforts!

- God Is Still Able To Work Through His Word!

- Even When There Are Birth Pangs Or Growing Pains:

- This Is Our Comfort & This Is Our Hope!

3. Take Comfort Today:

- That No Matter What:

- When There Are Problems:

- Or When There Is Progress:

- God Is Still Working:

- Through His Powerful Word!

- What The Lord Did In Corinth:

- He Can Do Here:

- In Our Church - In Your Life - In Your Family:

- Even In Our Community!

- In 2 Corinthians 13:11 - “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you!”

- May We Heed These Words As Well!

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