

The Book of 2 Corinthians #2

I. What Does Paul Tell us of God's Comfort for the Saints? (v. 4-7)

- A. God is not the God who keeps us from all discomfort
 - 1. But to flee God to flee discomfort won't work
 - a. Only separates us from the source of our comfort
- B. Can't make the mistake that passage isn't relevant to us today
 - 1. Though not persecuted as early church – we have own afflictions
 - a. We are always afflicted by the temptations to sin, and of world
- C. Part of our reason for being comforted is so we can comfort others (v.4)
 - 1. True of every spiritual grace – to be shared – Matthew 10:8 (v. 6)
- D. There are three main means that God uses to comfort us
 - 1. Gives us something to alleviate suffering (often other people)
 - a. 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7; Philemon 1:10, 11; Romans 12:15
 - 2. Give us inner reasonings that will help us to be comforted
 - a. Psalm 73:12-22; 42:5; 23:4; Romans 8:28 – 32
 - 3. Gives us a special sense of His presence with us (Dan. 3:24, 25)

II. What Particular Affliction is Paul Referring to? (Vv. 8-10)

- A. V. 5- Paul is not speaking of the glorified Christ suffering
 - 1. But we partake of same kind of sufferings- same purpose
- B. V. 8 – Trouble that happened took place in Asia – Asia Minor
- C. What happened to Paul in Asia that he could be referring to?
 - 1. Some think his stoning at Lystra (Acts 14:19) – quite a bit earlier
 - 2. Others think plot in Acts 20:2, 3 as he prepared to sail to Syria
 - 3. Majority think it refers to Acts 19:23 – 41- Over goddess Diana
 - a. But doesn't appear that Paul faced death at this time
 - 4. Others think reference to I Corinthians 15:32- Fought with wild beasts
 - 5. Could be whole chain of events– or some unknown event (sickness?)
- D. Paul uses very intense language to describe this affliction (vv. 8-10)
 - 1. Verse 8 – “Weighted Down” – expression to denote great intensity
 - a. Above measure so that he despaired even of life – 2 Cor. 11:23
 - 2. Verse 9 – Had a “Sentence of death” – verdict of death was assigned
 - a. Situation so desperate that he could not “trust in ourselves”
 - b. Only hope is God “Who raises the dead” – Death seems certain
- E. Even though stoning in Lystra might not be affliction – can imagine it so
 - 1. Acts 14:19, 20 – Division on whether he was actually dead- but close

III. What Role does the Prayer of the Saints Play in This? (V. 10, 11)

- A. There is no contradiction between God ordaining all- an praying
 - 1. Same God who ordains the ends– also ordains the means- Ez. 36:37
 - 2. Jesus knew God ordains all, but spends night in prayer–Luke 6:12
- C. If could behold the final reward of our prayers – we would pray more
 - 1. There is value in even mentioning of name to God in prayer
 - a. Ephesians 1:16; I Thessalonians 1:2; Philemon 4; Romans 1:9
- D. The very fact of just going to God in prayer gives Him glory
 - 1. Acknowledges attributes, Omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence

Conclusion: Prayer is great equalizer – All have different gifts

Some can't speak, or give, or understand – But all are able to pray