

***“The Consolation Of Christians”***  
***2 Corinthians 7:5-7***

**Introduction:**

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
  - To 2 Corinthians 7:
    - Where The Apostle Paul:
      - Has Been Sharing His Heart & His Feelings:
        - For The Corinthian Church!
    - Back In 7:3:
      - He Even Wrote:
        - “Ye Are In Our Hearts – To Die And Live With You!”
  - But It Seemed To Paul - At First:
    - That The Corinthian's Heart & Feelings:
      - Had Grown Very Distant From Him!
      - And Very Cold!
2. But Then - Something Happened!
  - Starting In 7:5 - Paul Writes:
    - “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. / 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!”
  - What We Find In 7:5 - Is That Paul:
    - Picks Up His Train Of Thought:
      - From 2:12-13 - Where He Wrote - “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, / I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia!”
    - So - What Happened?
3. It Seems That After Paul's Adventures:
  - In The City Of Ephesus:
    - Which You Can Read About In Acts 19:
      - He Was Filled With Grief & Sorrow Over The Direction Of The Corinthian Church Since He Had Left!
        - And So - He Wrote A Sorrowful Letter - Which He Sent To Them By One Of His Faithful Co-Laborers - Titus!
  - And His Plan Was To Meet Back Up With Titus:
    - In The City Of Troas - To Hear How They Responded:
      - To His Letter!
        - But When He Arrived In Troas - He Didn't Find Titus!
          - And Even Though A Great Door Of Opportunity Was Opened To Him There, According To 2:13 - He “Had No Rest In [His] Spirit, Because [He] Found Not Titus [His] Brother!”
  - And So - He Left The City Of Troas:
    - And Headed Into The Province Of Macedonia:
      - Probably Along The Ancient Roman Roads That Would Eventually Lead Him To Greece!
        - Because He Longed To See & Hear From Titus!
4. But Even When He Was In Macedonia:
  - Probably Visiting Some Of The Churches:
    - He Helped Establish Along The Way:
      - According To 7:5 - He Still Struggled!
        - “For, When We Were Come Into Macedonia, Our Flesh Had No Rest!”
  - **IE:** Normally, When You Take A Trip, If It's Not A Business Trip, It Is So That You Can Rest! Well, The Trip That Paul Took From Troas To Macedonia Was No Vacation! Even Though That Area Of The World Today Has Some Of The Most Beautiful Resorts Of The Mediterranean! His Trip Was A Mission Trip! To Find Out What Was Going On In The Corinthian Church! And According To 2:13 - There Was “No Rest” In His Spirit! And Here, According To 7:5 - There Was “No Rest” In His Flesh! Instead - The First Thing We See From 7:5 Is That:

1. ***There Was A Great Need Of Consolation!***

- And A Great Need Of Comfort & Rest:
  - For The Apostle Paul And His Traveling Companions!
    - As He Traveled Along Those Ancient Roman Roads, Hoping To Find Titus On The Way:
      - Listen To What He Experienced!
      - He Experienced:
  - Exhaustion! Physical Exhaustion!
    - Again - 7:5 - "Our Flesh Had No Rest!"
      - After All Those Miles - Paul Was Worn Out & Tired!
        - Perhaps He Was Still Being Chased By Some Of Those Rioters From The City Of Ephesus!
    - But - There Was A Great Need In Paul's Life:
      - For Comfort And Rest!
      - He Also Experienced:
  - Opposition! Spiritual Opposition!
    - Paul Continues In 7:5 - "But We Were Troubled On Every Side!"
      - No Matter Where Paul Went!
      - No Matter What Paul Did!
      - No Matter When Paul Worked!
    - It Seems That He Was:
      - Constantly & Continuously:
        - Harassed And Troubled!
          - By People Outside The Church & Even By People Inside The Church! False Leaders & Teachers, Like Those Who Had Infiltrated The Corinthian Church!
    - And - There Was A Great Need In Paul's Life:
      - For Comfort And Rest!
      - Even As He Was Serving In The Work Of The Lord!
      - He Also Experienced:
  - Apprehension! Emotional Apprehension!
    - 7:5 - "Without Were Fightings, Within Were Fears!"
      - Not Only Were Paul's Troubles:
        - Taking An Outward Toll:
          - On His Flesh & On His Body!
        - They Were Also Taking An Inward Toll:
          - In His Spirit & In His Soul!
      - The Grind Of The Ministry:
        - Was Wearing Him Out!
          - And There Was No Rest & No Relief In Sight!
            - And Part Of This Was His Longing To Hear About The Corinthian Church From Titus!
        - So - Things Could Not Get Or Feel Any Worse:
          - For Paul! His Heart Was Truly Overwhelmed!
            - There Was A Great Need:
              - For Comfort And Rest!
      - And Doesn't Your Life As A Christian:
        - Sometimes Feel Like This As Well?
          - Where You Are Completely Overwhelmed!
            - As If You Are Completely Underwater And Feel Like You Are About To Drown! It Seems Like It Is The Darkest Night For Your Soul!
          - As The Hymn Asks:
            - "O Soul, Are You Weary And Troubled? No Light In The Darkness You See?"
              - These Are Common Feelings:
                - Not Just As A Person, But Even & Especially As A Christian!
            - Physical Exhaustion!
              - Spiritual Opposition!
                - Emotional Apprehension!
                  - There Is Still Today A Great Need For Consolation In Our Lives As Christians!
              - Now - This May Be What You Are Experiencing & Feeling Today!
                - But - Think About What *Others* May Be Experiencing & Feeling Today!
                  - In Your Own Church! In Your Own Family!

- Where Can We Find This Great Consolation & Comfort We Need?
- Leads Us To 7:6:

## 2. ***There Is A Great Source Of Consolation!***

- 7:6 - "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us!"
  - Again - As The Hymn Reminds Us:
    - "O Soul, Are You Weary And Troubled? No Light In The Darkness You See? There's Light For A Look At The Savior, And Life More Abundant And Free!"
  - So - How Does The Chorus Go?
    - "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus! Look Full In His Wonderful Face! And The Things Of Earth Will Grow Strangely Dim, In The Light Of His Glory And Grace!"
  - The Great Source Of Consolation & Comfort:
    - For Paul! For Me! For You!
      - Is God! And Our Savior Jesus Christ!
      - In Fact - We Can See From Paul's Statement Here That:
- Comfort Is One Of God's:
  - Primary Attributes!
    - He Is Known As The One Who:
      - "Comforteth Those That Are Cast Down!"
  - And Paul Was "Cast Down!"
    - As We Read Earlier!
      - He Had Been Humbled!
      - He Was Humiliated!
      - He Was Hurting!
  - But God - Through "His Glory & Grace":
    - Was Able To Console & Comfort:
      - And Then Encourage & Strengthen:
        - The Heart & The Hands Of Paul!
  - And He Promises To Do The Same:
    - For All His Children!
      - For You & For Me!
  - Remember Isaiah 40:29-31? - "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. / Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: / But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint!"
    - ***This Is God's Nature:***
      - ***Toward Those In Need!***
- Comfort & Consolation Is One Of God's:
  - Primary Attributes! But Also:
- Comfort Is One Of God's:
  - Primary Activities!
    - For Paul - God's Comfort Was Not Just:
      - A Theory Or Some Nebulous Theological Truth!
      - No - It Was A Very Personal & Practical Experience!
  - God Himself Actually & Actively:
    - Comforted Paul:
      - When He Needed It Most!
  - Perhaps This Is What Paul Had In Mind:
    - When He Began This Letter:
      - And Wrote In 1:3-5 - "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. / For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ!"
- God Was The Source:
  - Of All Paul's Comfort & Consolation!
    - He Could Praise God - "From Whom All Blessings Flow!"
    - And This Is Still The Truth For Us Today!
- God Is The Source:

- Of All The Comfort & Consolation:
  - And All The Encouragement & Strength:
    - That You Need Today!
- Remember This!
  - Comfort Is One Of God's:
    - Primary Attributes & Primary Activities:
      - For His People!
- But How Does He Comfort Us?
  - Sometimes He Uses:
    - Extraordinary Means To Do So!
      - Remember Elijah - When He Was Discouraged - God Comforted Him By Sending Ravens With Food For Him! Extraordinary!
  - But Most Of The Time:
    - God Uses Ordinary Means:
      - To Bring Us The Comfort & Consolation We Need As Christians!
- How Did God Encourage & Comfort Paul?
  - Look At The End Of 7:6 - "By The Coming Of Titus!"
    - And We See From This:

### 3. ***There Is A Great Means Of Consolation!***

- One Of God's Primary Avenues:
  - For Providing His Comfort To His People:
    - ***Is His Own People!***
      - Even Though We Might Consider This "Ordinary" - It Really Is Quite "Extraordinary" When You Think About It!
- Again - How Did God Encourage & Comfort Paul?
  - End Of 7:6 - "By The Coming Of Titus!"
    - When Paul Was In Ephesus & Heard About What Was Going In The Church At Corinth - He Sent Titus With His "Sorrowful Letter!" He Sent Titus & Then Waited For Titus! When Titus Did Not Meet Him At Troas - He Looked For Titus - Traveling All The Way Into Macedonia! And As Days Turned Into Weeks - He Longed To See His Brother & To Hear The News From His Brother!
      - But Then - Titus Came & Met Paul! Not Sure How It Happened! Perhaps As They Were On The Same Road - Spotted In The Distance - Ran To Meet Each Other! Or Perhaps In A Town - There Was A Knock At The Door!
        - But As Soon As Paul Saw Titus, His Heart Was Lifted Up With Joy!
  - This Is A Living Illustration Of The Proverb:
    - That Says - "As Cold Waters To A Thirsty Soul, So Is Good News From A Far Country!" (Proverbs 25:25)
      - Paul's Soul Was Thirsty!
        - And He Couldn't Wait To Hear Some Good News From Titus!
  - And Even Though This Seems Like Such An Ordinary Thing - Was It Really So Ordinary?
    - No! Because God Was In It!
      - 7:6 - "God - Paul Says - It Was ***God*** Who Comforted Us By The Coming Of Titus!"
    - God - In His Providence:
      - Used The Coming Of Titus:
        - To Comfort Paul In His Great Need!
    - This Was No Accident!
      - It Was A Divine Appointment!
        - It Was Just The Right Person, In Just The Right Place, And At Just The Right Time!
  - And How Often Does God Do This For Us?
    - **IE:** Got A Text Last Week From A Good Friend - Just Happened To Be In Greenfield - Right Person, Right Place, Right Time! I Was Encouraged!
      - It May Seem So Ordinary!
        - But In Truth - It Is Extraordinary!
          - And It Is God Who Deserves The Credit & The Praise!
  - But How Else Did God Comfort Paul?
    - 7:7 - "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!"

- It Wasn't Just The "Coming Of Titus" That God Used:
  - To Encourage Paul - It Was Also:
- A Good Reception:
  - That Titus Experienced When He Arrived In Corinth:
    - With Paul's Letter!
      - See - Titus Was Probably Just As Apprehensive As Paul When He Went To The Corinthian Church! Perhaps Even More!
      - Titus Was The One Who Was Personally Confronting The Sins In That Congregation!
  - On The Way To Corinth:
    - His Trip Probably Felt Like A Crawl!
    - He Didn't Know How They Would Respond To Him!
    - But When He Finally Got There:
  - 7:7 - "He Was Comforted In You!"
    - The Corinthians Received Titus:
      - And Responded To Titus:
        - In The Right Way!
        - And That Encouraged Titus' Heart!
    - And Then - Paul Wrote That:
      - Titus' Comfort & Encouragement:
        - Became His Comfort & Encouragement!
  - Is This What Goes On In Our Own Church?
    - And In Our Own Services?
      - As Christians - We Ought To Be Able To Derive Joy And Comfort And Encouragement From What Our Brothers & Sisters In Christ Are Experiencing!
    - 1 Corinthians 12:26 - "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it!"
      - Paul Was Encouraged:
        - Because Titus Was Encouraged!
        - But Even More:
  - Even Though Paul Was *Joyful* When Titus *Came!*
    - He Was *Over-Joyed* With What Titus *Said!* It Was:
- A Good Report:
  - From Titus - 7:7 - "When He Told Us Your Earnest Desire, Your Mourning, Your Fervent Mind Toward Me!"
    - This Is What Paul Was Wanting & Waiting To Hear!
      - They Responded The Right Way To Paul's Letter!
  - I Can Imagine Titus Giving Paul His Report!
    - With Excitement & With Joy!
      - Sharing Every Little Detail Of How God Was Working In The Corinthian Church!
      - It Was All Good News!
  - The Corinthians Had:
    - A Fresh Desire For Paul!
      - It Was An "Earnest Desire!"
        - To See Him & To Hear Him & To Be With Him Once Again!
  - The Corinthians Had:
    - A Fresh Distress:
      - Over Their Sin!
        - They Mourned Over & Repented From Their Sin & Strife With Paul!
  - The Corinthians Had:
    - A Fresh Devotion:
      - To Paul!
        - They Had A "Fervent Mind" And Heart - To Embrace Paul As Their Pastor Once Again!
  - The Heart Of The Corinthians:
    - Had Truly Changed Toward Paul:
      - And Toward The Lord!
- This Is One Of The Greatest Ways:
  - That You Can Be An Encouragement To Each Other:

- As A Church!
  - To Respond To The Work & The Will Of God Properly!
- John - 3 John 4 - "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth!"
  - And We See This In The Life Of Paul As Well!

**4. *There Is A Great Result Of Consolation!***

- 7:7 - "So That I Rejoiced The More!"
  - Paul Rejoiced:
    - When He Saw Titus:
      - After All Those Days & Weeks & Perhaps Even Months!
  - But Paul "Rejoiced The More!"
    - When He Heard What Titus Had To Say!
      - About Their Response To Him & To The Lord!

**Conclusion:**

1. I Want You To Think About:
  - Just How Much God Can Use You:
    - To Be His Means / His Tool:
      - To Comfort & Encourage:
        - His Church & His People!
    - Because - There Is Still Today:
      - A Great Need For Consolation & Comfort!
        - We Still Experience:
          - Physical Exhaustion!
          - Spiritual Opposition!
          - And Emotional Apprehension!
2. And God Still Uses:
  - His People - You And Me:
    - As A Means Of His Comfort & Encouragement!
      - To Others!
        - So - See How God Can Use You:
          - To Comfort & Encourage Someone In Need Today!
  - Perhaps In:
    - Your Reception:
      - Of Someone!
        - To Be There For Them! To Be There With Them!
          - They Need To Know That You Love & Care For Them!
  - Perhaps In:
    - Your Report:
      - To Someone!
        - To Share With Them Some Good News! Even As Titus Did!
          - And The Best News Of All Is The Good News Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
  - Perhaps In:
    - Your Response:
      - To The Lord And His Word!
        - One Of The Best Ways To Encourage Other Christians Is To Show Them How God Is Working In Your Life!
3. And When This Happens In Our Church:
  - Like Paul - We Can Rejoice Together - More & More!

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