

# 2 Corinthians Ch1v3-11 - God's Good In Our Troubles

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[ 0 : 00 ] Do you want a drink? Good morning everyone, nice to see you.

! Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians. To help us in our studies, this new series, there's a little booklet, 2 Corinthians, and the big theme is, weakness is our strength. We tend to think that weakness is our weakness. Weakness is our strength. So please do take your copy of that, it will help you know some of the themes and some of the big ideas as we go along. We're going to read this morning our text, which is chapter 1, verse 3, down to verse 11. 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 3 to verse 11.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

[ 1 : 52 ] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

If we are distressed. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm. Because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

[ 2 : 57 ] Indeed, we felt we had received a sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God, who raises the dead.

He has delivered us from such deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers.

Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many. Well, this ancient letter written by Paul to a church in Corinth is also a word for us today.

So we're going to pray and ask for God's help, and we'll look at it together. Father, thank you for the privilege of gathering together today to hear your word, your wisdom, your truth.

Father, thank you for the privilege of having us.

[ 4 : 44 ] Father, thank you for the privilege of having us. That we are. That we are. That we are. That we are. And that we will learn much together. And that we will be blessed as a church family.

So be our teacher through me as I speak. And bring glory to your name.

Amen. Amen. Well, Corinth was the church of big dreams and great hopes. It was the kind of church you just might want to go to.

Their speakers were very impressive. Their ministries were attractive. They prized success and they praised the influential.

It was a church of the movers and shakers. No room for weak and fragile people.

[ 5 : 48 ] Corinth was the church of no troubles. Sounds great, doesn't it? We might even secretly want to be part of a church like that.

Could you imagine a church of no troubles? However, there's something they've forgotten. The Christian life and Christian service is full of troubles.

But don't panic. Don't run out the door. Because what we'll discover is God uses our troubles to achieve good purposes in our lives.

And in the lives of others. So as we look at the text together. Let's see first that our troubles will be many.

Look at verse 4. The God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles.

[7:02] So that we can comfort those in any trouble. 17 times if you were to count. There is a reference in this text to our troubles.

Sometimes it's described as suffering. Distress. Pressure. Despair. Death. Deadly peril.

It's telling us that our troubles will come to each one of us. In all kinds of shapes and sizes. It could be a physical illness.

It could be a broken relationship. Or family opposition. It might be worries for your children. Or fears about the future.

But whatever our trouble. We can't hide from them. And we can't avoid them. In fact. Look at verse 8.

[8:04] We are to face their reality. Verse 8. We do not want you to be uninformed brothers and sisters. About the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

I want you to know about them. Let's talk about them. Let's share about them. Now for many of you. This is deeply personal.

It's not that you anticipate sufferings to come. But you are in the depths of trouble. The depths of trouble right now. Some of you I know are living with affliction.

There are thorns in your life. There are thorns in your life. That have not yet been removed. And it's painful. Our troubles are many.

The second thing we want to learn is. Our troubles are not wasted. Most of the time we can't see any good in our troubles.

[9:13] We complain and we give off. There's something to pray away as quickly as possible. Lord remove this suffering. End this distress.

Stop the pressure. Just take it away. Yet so often. The troubles remain.

And that raises all kinds of questions for us. Doesn't it? Not least. Why does God allow all these troubles?

Well that's a big question. And I'm happy to try and explore it with you afterwards. Our text doesn't give a direct answer to that question. But it does give us purposes.

That the reason why. We go through these troubles. Is God has a purpose. And here it is. In the hands of God.

[10:14] Our troubles produce good. In others. Growth in us. And glory. To God.

In other words. With God. Our troubles are never. Wasted. In the hands of God. Our troubles produce. Good in others.

Growth in us. And glory to God. God has good purposes. In them. And through them. So let's look. At some of the purposes. Of God's. Allowing troubles. In our life. Here's the first. Our troubles lead us.

To experience. The comfort of God. First we experience. Comfort. Verse three. Praise be to the God.

[11:14] And father. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. The father. Of compassion. And the God. Of all. All. Comfort.

Who comforts us. In. All. Our troubles. God is not immune. To our sufferings.

He cares for us. He cares for you. God might not always. Remove the trouble. But we are guaranteed. And assured.

He comforts us. In. Our trouble. He brings peace. In the storm. Light. In the darkness. Joy. In the hurts.

And hopes. In the fears. God. Our comforter. Is our. Rock. And our refuge. And our redeemer.

[12:10] If you're. Facing. Trouble today. If you're. In that moment. Right now. Let me. Reassure you. That God. Is your. Comfort.

Listen. To these words. From Isaiah. 49. Verse 13. Shout. For joy. You heavens.

Rejoice. You earth. Burst into song. You mountains. Why? For the Lord. For the Lord. Comforts. His people. And will have compassion.

On his afflicted ones. God. Our father. Is our comforter. He sees our hopelessness.

And our helplessness. and he comforts. But we also comfort each other, don't we? Verse 4.

[13:09] Or let's pick it up at the end of verse 3. The God of all comfort who comforts us in all of our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

That's the purpose of our troubles. The comforted now become comforters.

We've experienced compassion so that we can be compassionate to others. We receive the comfort of God so that we can comfort one another, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now this helps us to see our troubles from God's perspective, with God's eyes. So we experience trouble for the comfort of others.

Look at verse 5. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

[14:26] You see, Christ's death on the cross was not empty or meaningless. There was a purpose, wasn't there, for Christ's sufferings.

A purpose for taking on our sin on himself and bearing the judgment of God. The purpose of Christ dying on the cross was to bring us comfort.

Through the sufferings of Christ, we receive forgiveness of sins, peace with God, the assurance of eternal life. The purpose of Christ's sufferings leads directly to our comfort.

So, verse 5, just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, just as we follow him and suffer, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

In other words, whatever the trouble is, it will be matched by comfort. In fact, the greater the trouble, the greater the comfort of God.

[15:35] We're given an example in verse 6. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation.

If we are comforted, it is for your comfort. Now, we get the second part of that, don't we? If I'm comforted, well, I can comfort you, and vice versa.

We get that. But look how it starts. If we are distressed, it's for your comfort. If I go through a trouble, or a hardship, or a distress, there's a purpose for it.

It's so that I can comfort others when they go through their suffering. In fact, as comforters of one another, look what we do for one another.

Do you see what it says in verse 6? It is for your comfort and salvation. The comfort we receive produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

[16:53] Do you realize how beneficial your comfort is to one another? brother, your comfort, your comfort to another brother and sister, not only comforts them, it leads and guarantees their full and final salvation.

it leads to their patient endurance in their troubles. troubles. Because let's face it, when we go through a trouble, what do we do?

We want to give up. I can't go through this anymore. But someone coming alongside, comforting you, will help you to keep looking to Christ so that they don't fall away.

And the comfort will ensure that you will patiently endure and keep walking by faith step by step until you receive and enjoy God's salvation in all its fullness.

So what will this comfort look like? How do we comfort one another with the comfort of God?

[18:08] Well, let me suggest three things. They're not on the overhead, but here they are. Three Ps. Here we go. First, presence. What we need is the presence of a brother or sister in Christ.

Have a look at chapter 7, verse 5. If we are going to bring the comfort of God to one another, here's how.

Chapter 7, verse 5. Paul is reminding them. He says, When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn.

Conflicts on the outside, fears within. Now that's trouble, right? Conflicts on the outside, fears within.

But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us. How? By the coming of Titus.

[19:14] Thank you, God, for bringing Titus to comfort us. You see, knowing that we are not alone, that some brother or sister can listen and sit with us.

Not send an emoji, but sit with us. That someone cares. That someone matters.

So first, the presence of being with someone. Second, as we are present with them, we bring the promises of God.

Look at chapter 4, verse 16. We comfort one another by reminding one another of God's amazing promises.

So in the midst of our suffering and trouble, verse 16, therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, physically we may be getting old and things are going wrong.

[ 20 : 20 ] But yet inwardly, we are being renewed day by day. God is doing a work in our life. So we can say, verse 17, that our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Our troubles may feel weighty and heavy and burdensome right now, but in the line of eternity, they're just a speck, a blink of an eye.

And they are achieving for us. God is working in them and through them to bring us to eternal glory. what a wonderful promise to bring to one another.

Not only as we're present do we bring the promises of his word, but we pray for each other. We comfort each other as we pray for God's grace and help.

Go back to chapter 1, the end of verse 10. Paul says, on Christ we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us as you help us by your prayers.

[ 21 : 43 ] The significance and the importance of physically being with somebody, speaking the words of God's promise and praying for them that they would experience and know the grace and help of God.

You see, our troubles in the hands of God are never wasted. Picture a waterfall, Niagara Falls if you like, and at the base is this huge deep pool and flowing from it, overflowing, it goes into a series of other pools and rivers.

Well, the comfort of God is like this enormous waterfall flowing down, filling us with comfort through Christ so that we in turn can fill each other with the comfort of God.

Our troubles lead us to experience God's comfort. second, our troubles lead us to trust the deliverance of God.

Let's go to verse eight. We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

[ 23 : 14 ] We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure so that we despaired of life itself.

Now, I know that some of you have faced days like that, days of great darkness. The weight of suffering is so much it's overwhelming and we just long for life to be over.

Have you ever felt like that? We cry out, God, make it stop. Well, in God's mysterious ways, he uses those very troubles to grow our trust.

look at verse 9. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead. There's the purpose for our troubles, so that we would not trust in our own ability, but in our utter weakness, trust the one who can raise the dead.

[ 24 : 45 ] You see, when you and I are overwhelmed by life, when we have no strength left, when we are in despair of life itself, who are we going to trust? Am I going to put my hope in the weak, despairing, broken Johnny Grant?

am I going to depend on myself and say, come on Johnny, do better, pull yourself up? Or am I going to rest and fall into the arms of God who has the power to raise the dead?

You see, the purpose of our troubles is to tear us from self-trust to trust in God. You know what Velcro is like?

You know that ripping sound as you pull it apart? Our troubles pull us from trust in self to stick, to be glued to God.

And so we experience trouble, we rely on God and we are assured of deliverance.

[ 26 : 03 ] Paul and his co-workers had experienced life-threatening trouble, but he was confident that God would see him through, verse 10. he could declare very clearly he has delivered us from such a deadly peril and he will deliver us again.

He has seen us through in the past, he's going to help us in the future, therefore, look at the rest of verse 10, on him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.

But how do I know? How can you be sure that whatever trouble we go through God is going to deliver us? What if the troubles are so great?

What if they are so overwhelming and I can't even pray? Will God deliver me then? Yes and a thousand times yes.

And here's how. Remember the time we live in. We live in a time after the first coming of Christ and we live at a time before the return of Christ.

[ 27 : 26 ] Christ has come and Christ will come and we're somewhere along that line. Now look at the next, look at the text in verse 10.

he has delivered us from such deadly peril. Through the death of Christ he has delivered us from the greatest of all deadly perils.

Christ delivered us from judgment and hell as he died on the cross and he's freed us from an eternal suffering. And verse 10 he will deliver us again.

Christ has promised to come in the future. We don't know when but when he does he will deliver us from this broken world so that we will enjoy life in his eternal kingdom.

Think of it this way. What's the worst thing our troubles could ever do to us? well it's that we could die.

[ 28 : 37 ] In fact we all will die. All our troubles that we live through in this life one day the trouble will come that will lead us to the grave.

But just as Christ was raised so we who are in Christ will also be raised. You see Christ entered into the deadliest trouble for us a trouble so great that saw him die forsaken by the father and as Christ was raised from the dead he is with us now forever by his holy spirit therefore he will bring us through all our troubles even death itself.

Christ has dealt with the past Christ has secured our future death. Therefore we live with the sure and certain hope today.

Look at the end of verse 10. With confidence we now can say on him on Christ we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.

Whatever trouble we may face remember he has defeated sin and death and therefore he will deliver us in all our troubles even death itself.

[ 30 : 07 ] So third and this sums up all that we've been looking at our troubles lead us to praise the grace of God.

You see the troubles we face in this life are never easy. We experience distress and discomfort. We experience suffering and struggles but not one of them are meaningless. Our sufferings are not wasted. In the hands of God they bring good to others as we give comfort.

They bring growth to us as we trust in God's deliverance. But ultimately our troubles bring glory to God. They cause us to praise his grace.

Look at how the text starts in verse three. Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles.

[ 31 : 19 ] Our troubles cause us to praise God to praise God for his comfort in our life and in the life of others.

But not just that. Look again at verse nine. We felt we had received a sentence of death but this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

verse 11 then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Our troubles cause us to be comforted and to rest in God which will result in the praise and giving thanks of others to God.

Who thought that we would ever praise God and thank God for troubles. You see without God our troubles are meaningless.

[ 32 : 30 ] We suffer and the world says suck it up. That's life. Get on with it. What a hopeless way to live. It's utterly empty.

But with God our troubles are not wasted. There are good purposes as we go through life in all its struggles. We will experience God's comfort and compassion day after day like a waterfall overflowing.

We will be filled with compassion and comfort. But get this. A day is going to come when God will say to us today your troubles are over love love because today you will be with me.

I will raise you up and deliver you from this broken world and you will share eternal glory with me. and all the hurts will be gone and all the tears will be gone and we will enjoy the comfort and deliverance of God in all its fullness forever.

So all the praise and all the glory to him for his gracious favour to people like us.

[ 34 : 03 ] Praise God. Let's pray. Father, we recognise that we are dealing and talking about something that's very real, very difficult and very personal.

We pray for anyone here today who is struggling.

Father, fill them with your comfort. Fill them with your peace. Reassure them that they are loved by you and cared for by you.

Remind them that their life are in your hands and just as you have been with them in the past, you will be with them in the future and nothing will ever separate them from your love.

Not any trouble. Not even death itself. Father, Father, would you fill us with your comfort and compassion afresh so that we may be those who are comforters of others.

[ 35 : 45 ] give us your Holy Spirit that we may be present with people filling them with the promises of God and praying for them in their hurts that they may know your grace and help.

thank you for one another. Thank you for this church. Thank you for the comfort and help that we receive from one another.

To you, we give all the glory and all the praise for the works that you are doing in us and through us. keep us faithful keep us trusting you.

Amen.