

Small Groups: Engage in Care

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning again and welcome to faith. We're so glad that you're here together today. And those of you who've been going through our quiet time daily, how's that been going?

Going great. All right. Through with Proverbs, or at least where we stopped in Proverbs. And for those of you who are following along with the correct date, where did we start this morning? 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And where are we going to be this morning during today's message? If you just looked up there a little while ago, 2 Corinthians chapter 1.

So that was not planned, by the way. This message had been planned out. And then I realized this morning, the message today is on this morning's quiet time, or this evening's quiet time, if you haven't gotten to it yet today.

So you can be taking your Bibles and looking at 2 Corinthians. We'll be starting with chapter number 1 and verse number 3. We started last week talking about connecting with others in community.

[1 : 06] And in the local church, there should never be anyone who says, I just really don't feel a part of the church. I've been here a year, and I still feel like an outsider.

It should never be incumbent upon the new believer or the new member to reach out into the already established crowd.

It should be the whole body of Christ that is working together and enjoying our fellowship together. But it does sometimes happen. And I call it the curse of current community.

People are kind of used to their little orbits that they go in. What I mean by that is a core group that has been established over years, enjoy being together.

They're comfortable with their current family and friends, connections, and they don't really feel any need for more connections. I kind of liken this to molecules and atoms, you know, how they work.

[2 : 12] Atoms get molecules, and atoms kind of go around, and they bind together and form larger molecules. And sometimes what happens is there are atoms, and it even goes down to the smaller level when you have protons and electrons and neutrons.

And they're going around, they're trying to bind with another, with an atom or atoms with an electron or with a molecule. And the molecule or the atom is full. They can't accept anymore.

And so what the protons and electrons do is, and I'm definitely not into chemistry and physics, but what they'll do is they'll go looking for another atom to bind to.

And that happens in churches. They just can't seem to bind into one local church, and they go move to another church where they can feel that connection and sometimes actually get connected. So how can we be there for one another?

How can we as the body of Christ, just like the body, the hands connected to the arm, and as long as the arm and the brain and the heart and the lungs and every, all the organs are taking care of all the members of our body, it's healthy.

[3 : 23] But when our body is not taking care of one of our members or one of its members, the body is in trouble. And so therefore, we have to take care for each other.

And so those that God has placed in our midst, how do we take care of them? God has designed His body to rally around its members who are hurting for whatever reason.

And that brings us to the subject of today's text. If we look in 2 Corinthians, and if we read the book of 2 Corinthians, we realize that the letter, the second letter, or the letter that we have called the second letter to the Corinthian church is a different letter than the first letter.

God's comfort to the body for those who are hurting. And as we look at the New Testament, the word comfort appears 60 times in the New Testament, where God talks about comfort.

And what I find very interesting is that 30 of those occurrences are in the letter to 2 Corinthians. God talks about comfort 60 times in the New Testament.

[4 : 44] But the Apostle Paul uses that word 30 times in that one simple letter. And then again, interestingly enough, 10 of those occurrences in 2 Corinthians are in verses 3 through 7 right here.

So we're going to be looking at comfort. Let's begin by reading 2 Corinthians 1. Quite a few verses that we will be looking at. Verses 3 through 11.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now, if you haven't already done so, what you can be doing, you can even go back to verse number 3, take your pen or highlighter or marker, whatever it is, and circle or whatever you want to do every time you see the word comfort.

As a matter of fact, if we go back, we'll see those 10 times there. Comfort, for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation.

[6 : 10] Same word for comfort. It's interesting that when you look it up in the Greek, Paul used the same word for comfort all throughout. But the English translators, for whatever reason, thought it might have been too monotonous.

So they said comfort, consolation, comfort, consolation. But it's still comfort, comfort, comfort, comfort, same Greek word all the way throughout. So here again, another place to circle.

Verse 6, now if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort, your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.

Or if we are, there you go again, comforted, it is for your comfort. It is for your consolation, same word, and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the comfort.

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

[7 : 17] Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raised the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us, in whom we trust, that he will still deliver us.

You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf, for the gift granted to us through many.

Let us pray. Lord, use this time today. Encourage us. Convict us. And help us, Lord, to be able to understand the purpose of suffering, the purpose of suffering in Christ, and how you comfort us, so that we may be able to comfort those around us.

So, Father, we pray that you would use this time for your honor and for your glory. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, we ask ourselves the question, as we're talking about small groups, Sunday school, Bible study, getting together throughout the week in community, praying together, learning God's Word together, what does that have to do with 2 Corinthians, and what Paul is talking about?

Well, what I want us to see is, as Paul lays out the beginning, this introduction in 2 Corinthians 1, especially verses 3-11, what Paul is talking about here, I believe we see some truths emerge.

[8 : 55] We see a few truths that we're going to look at this morning, and we'll begin a little bit of the background of 2 Corinthians, as we look at why did Paul write 2 Corinthians.

Well, you go back to his first letter to the Corinthians. Paul, on his second missionary journey, spent 18 months in Corinth, which was a major center in Greece, the very, very wicked area, a lot of things going on.

And so, for 18 months, he's building, he's planted, and he's building the church. He's teaching them. And the problem was, it was hard to keep Corinth out of the church.

And so they had issues of immorality, they had issues of abusing the Lord's Supper, and they had a lot of issues. And so what Paul does, a little while later, a few years later, he sends Timothy to Corinth, and says, Timothy, I want you to check things out.

Timothy comes back and says, Paul, they're messed up. And so what Paul does, in his own words, in one of his letters, he writes that he had to send them a very severe letter.

[10:13] Well, that is a letter that is not in the Bible. So for whatever reason, the Holy Spirit chose not to allow the second letter to the Corinthians in the finished canon of Scripture.

And so what he does is, he sends Titus with this letter to Corinth. And what was happening was, there were false teachers that had come in, and they had kind of degraded Paul's status. And so there were many of the Christians in Corinth that were thinking, well, you know what, Paul? You know, you're just not much. And you're unimpressive. And you know what? We just don't like your teaching. And so Paul writes this very severe letter that's not in Scripture. And so literally, the second Corinthians is third Corinthians, but because it's the only two letters we have recorded, it's second Corinthians.

And so here we have the Apostle Paul writing a letter when he hears that things have been getting better. First Corinthians deals with a lot of issues.

[11:24] Second Corinthians, we see the heart of Paul. Paul just kind of lays himself bare before the Corinthians. He talks about his issues. He talks about his life.

He talks about how, you know, we think Paul was this great strong guy. Well, Paul at one point thought, you know what? This is the end. We're going to die. And he says we feared, even for our lives.

So this is kind of the background of second Corinthians that we are coming into. As we go into the next portion, we look at the first truth that I think that we see in this beginning portion of second Corinthians.

and it's relating to our suffering. And suffering, still all of this within the context of our smaller groups where we gather together as a body of Christ. The first thing I believe that we see is, the truth is, we experience suffering in God.

If you are in Christ, if you are a Christian, you will suffer. Now there are different kinds of suffering. You know, when we do something stupid, we typically what?

[12:34] We suffer for it. And when we do something idiotic, when we do something that's really crazy, that was ill-advised, you end up sometimes in the emergency room, sometimes you end up paying for it.

But that's not the suffering Paul's talking about. The suffering Paul's talking about here is the sufferings in God. The sufferings that come, because what did Jesus tell us?

If you follow me, you will what? You will suffer. You will have tribulation. People will abuse you. People will talk bad about you. People will, you will suffer for being a Christian.

And the more active we are following Christ, the more we will probably see that in our lives. And we will feel the effects of following Christ when we're dealing with the outside world.

And so, understand this, that in Christ, we will suffer just simply because of our relationship with Him. We're not immune to suffering, even though we are part of the family of God.

[13:37] We saw comfort repeated ten times in those first few verses. What's interesting is Paul places just as much emphasis on what? Suffering.

Because it's suffering, comfort. Suffering, comfort. Suffering, comfort. Kind of parallel. Let's look back to verse number four where Paul says, who comforts us in all of our tribulation.

That we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble or tribulation or problem with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now, if we are afflicted, all these different words, five different Greek words, Paul uses for tribulation or suffering or problems.

it is for your consolation and salvation which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or, if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

[14:47] And our hope for you is steadfast because we know that as you are partakers of the suffering, that word again, you will be partakers of the consolation. And then verse eight, for we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, and here it is, so that we despaired even of life.

We were afraid that we were going to die. See, we see quite a bit of suffering here, even suffering for living for Christ.

And I want to see how the Apostle Paul shows us a picture of God from the very beginning and how God is involved in our suffering and in light of our suffering.

Let's look at some of the characteristics of God in our suffering because remember, the first point is we experience suffering in God. What we see, first of all, through the Apostle Paul in verse number three is this, and this ought to come as a comfort to you.

God is sovereign over all suffering. Don't ever think, oh, woe is me, how did this happen to me? You know what?

[16:09] God was directly involved. Well, He may not have caused that problem in your life, but understand this, before Satan, before anything can happen to you, it has to receive what?

God's permission. Look at Job. God is a sovereign God and God is sovereign over our suffering. Now, understand this, we suffer primarily because of what?

Sin. Not necessarily always our sin, but the consequences of sin. The consequences of what Adam and Eve did in the garden, you and I are experiencing suffering today just simply because of sin as a whole.

Because we live in a sin-cursed world, people get sick, people die, people hurt each other, people are just downright mean, and that's why we suffer because of sin.

But God is sovereign. He starts out, verse 3, by talking about, it's a picture of the one who is in control. This is God who is over all suffering.

[17:21] Because back in verse 3, excuse me, we see verse 3, blessed be the God and Father. So God is in control.

The second thing we see is God is familiar with all our suffering. Do you realize Jesus Christ took upon himself human flesh?

He knows what it's like to be hungry. He knows what it's like to be rejected. He knows what it's like to suffer pain. Literally, Jesus suffered for us and we do not have a comforter who is up in heaven who is not fully acquainted with all of our griefs, with all of our sorrows, and with all of our pain. He was mocked, he was beaten, he was nailed to a cross, and he endured physical pain, emotional pain. He knows what loneliness is. He knows all of that because of who he is.

Because he is the source of all compassion. He is the source of all compassion. Look at verse number three. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is the Father of mercies and the God of all what?

[18:38] The God of comfort. Anytime the Bible uses that phraseology, the God of comfort, the God of consolation, the Father of mercies, in a biblical way of looking at things, what Paul is saying is God is the originator of comfort.

All comfort comes from him. Mercy originates in God. God is a God of love, meaning God is the originator of love. So what we see here and what Paul is saying is God is the source of all compassion because all compassion comes from him.

All comfort comes from him. It overflows into our lives and we experience it in our deepest point of need.

When you're hurting at your worst, God is able to come in and however he chooses to provide it, he's able to provide that comfort. Sometimes it's just simply through an experience of his presence. Sometimes it's through someone else that comes into your life and encourages you. But God is a source of all that comfort. Next, we see he is sufficient for all comfort.

[19:59] Paul uses that word comfort 30 times in the book of 2 Corinthians. It literally means to come alongside and help.

The word that the Apostle Paul uses here for comfort is the same word that Jesus used for the Holy Spirit. Remember that? Where Jesus said, I will send you the comforter?

Paraclete right there. It's paraclete on here. Same root word. So 30 times Paul says, God will provide.

God will come alongside you and help you. Jesus describes the Holy Spirit this way. The one who comes along and helps.

Now here's the thing that we have to remember. Remember what we saw about God? God is sovereign over all of our sufferings. He is familiar with all of our sufferings. He is the source of all suffering and he is sufficient.

[20:57] The source of all compassion and he is sufficient for all comfort. Here's the thing. Your suffering and my suffering will never outweigh the comfort of God.

Think about that. Your and my suffering will never outweigh the comfort of God. Look at the very worst, most horrible, horrific, egregious thing that could ever happen to you or your family and

God's comfort is always greater.

Doesn't that blow your mind? No matter how bad things get, God is powerful enough, is compassionate enough, and is sufficient enough to provide comfort sufficient for the problem. And this is what we see, the Apostle Paul, and he's even going to expand on that even further as we go along. The next point is, the first thing is we experience suffering in God.

Just get used to it, get to know it, because it'll be there. If you're breathing, chances are you might be suffering. If not right now, maybe tomorrow.

[22 : 07] But it's part of the human condition. So we experience suffering in God. The second thing is, what we see here, is we extend comfort from God.

Paul is talking about the comfort he's received, and he's talking about the reason, the purpose, for that comfort. What Paul is saying is that when we suffer, we receive comfort from God, and then we are able to provide that comfort to those around us, to those who are hurting, to those who are in need.

Do you realize that it can give purpose to our pain? If you think about it, why am I suffering like this? And if God comes into your life and provides you comfort, and you're able to realize, wow, God can use me now to comfort someone else who has gone through or is going through something similar. Do you realize that can give purpose to your pain? Well, why am I going through this? Why is my family going through this? Well, the purpose might be so that God, working through you, through his comfort he provides through you, might want to use you as a source of comfort to a neighbor, to a friend, to another person within the body of Christ.

And see, that's the way it works. We experience comfort. The result is we are equipped to extend that comfort to those who are in pain because of the comfort we receive from God.

[23 : 37] So the purpose of God's comfort doesn't just center around us. This is kind of a theme that we've been going through. It's not about us.

Life's not even about us. It's about God. And God, the mission God has us on. So when God comforts us, it's not for you.

That's not his end goal. His end goal is to comfort you so that you can what? You can comfort someone else. It's never supposed to stop with us. God saved you so that we could go do what? Go tell someone else. God comforts you so you can go comfort someone else. God provides for you all throughout the New Testament we see so that we can in turn provide for someone else. On Sunday nights we're talking about when Paul, when he's talking to the church in Galatia, he went back to Jerusalem to talk to Peter and James, John and the other guys who were there.

[24 : 44] And they said, yeah, we agree with you. Salvation is by grace alone. The only thing we want you to do is do what? You remember from last Sunday night? Continue taking care of the poor.

So when God blesses you with money, he wants you to do what? In turn, bless someone else. So it's not about us. And that's what Paul is talking about here in these first few verses.

It's intended for others. So here's what he is saying. We are comforted for each other's sake. We are comforted for each other's sake.

Let me show you this. Look at verse 4 and we'll look at verse 4, 5, and 6. Back to back to back. And this is a reminder. This is the crux of disciple making. We live for each other's sake.

Listen to what Paul says. We have in the Greek what's called a Hina clause that, so we might read this, who comforts us in all of our tribulation so that, so the purpose of our comfort from God is so that, in order that, here's the purpose clause, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

[26 : 04] Do you see it? The purpose of our comfort is to enable us to comfort others. Verse 5, just as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolation also abounds through Christ.

Our comfort overflows. Our comfort overflows to whom? Verse 6, now if we are afflicted, it is for, Paul says, if we, if I suffer, if we suffer, if I suffer, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.

Or if you are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. If we're distressed, it's for your comfort. If we go through problems, it's for your help, it's for your salvation.

Here's the picture. We exist for others' sake. And why is that? What we see next. So that we might care for each other's hurts.

Literally what Paul is saying here is, I'm able to care for you because I have been through so many horrible things that God has used those horrible things so I can help you.

[27 : 25] You know, sometimes life is just bad, just horrible. Sometimes life is, and you insert your own word there, life is just horrible, bad, terrible.

But Paul says, that stuff happened to me so that I can in turn help you by comforting you with the same comfort I received from God.

And not just care for each other's hurts. Literally, God has designed it so we might help carry each other's burdens.

Listen to verse 11. He says that so that we might carry each other's burdens. And I'm going to show you what Paul is saying here. He says, you also, helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given, by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted through many.

Now, I want us to have a little Greek lesson here. Not just for fun, because the word help here does not carry the beauty and complete imagery of the original Greek word, help.

[28 : 42] What does help mean? Well, it's very picture, the Greek word is very picturesque. It's not just one word. It's a long word made up of three smaller Greek words. So when Paul says, you, helping together with us, the first word is with.

The second word, it's a compound word. The second word is under. The third word is work. So, with, under, work.

So what Paul is saying, you, working with us under the problems of this life, I think it's an incredible picture of the church.

What he's talking about is the help that we receive. It's talking about people, believers, who walk with you under the problems of their life.

Walking together, helping you along the journey, walking with you under the problems of this life, as we accomplish this same mission.

[29 : 49] That's why in Galatians 6, 2, Paul's able to say, carry each other's burdens. Carry each other's burdens. And he said, you so fulfill the law of Christ.

He says, help each other. If you see someone carrying a load. Catherine this morning was talking about an elderly couple this week, this weekend, whenever it was that the older gentleman had decided not to actually use the exit out of the gas station, but decided to go over the curb and into the street and got his car stuck.

And apparently there were some younger folks that got out and tried to help them, literally help them with their burden. Help push the car, pull the car, do whatever, help the older lady from falling into the street.

So, literally is they stepped into their problem and helped them through their problem. That's a picture of the church.

You have a brother or sister in need, you have a brother or sister who are hurting in Christ, and we come along, work with them under their load, and help them carry their load.

[30 : 58] Galatians 6, 2, Paul says, carry one another's burdens. And that's what we do. You will fulfill the law of Christ. Then, next, what we see is, based on everything we've seen so far, that we are a fellowship of the broken.

We are a fellowship of the broken. Because when you come to verse 7, look at what it says. Our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are, what's that word?

Partakers of the sufferings. The Greek word there is koinonia. Koinonia. For those of you who've been in church for a while, koinonia is the word that's used elsewhere in the book of Acts, elsewhere in the New Testament, for fellowship.

And literally, what Paul is saying is, because we know that we have fellowship together because we're all broken. We all suffer. You know, some of us try to put up the front.

Some of us try to put on a mask that we've got everything under control and covered. But you know what? Down deep, we all have the same issues.

[32 : 11] We hurt. We have pain. There are things that we have fears. We have shortcomings. We fail. We're a fellowship of the broken. And so when we come together in community, we're here for one another to help carry one another's burdens.

And we share life together. If we do things the way God has planned, we are helping one another, comforting others with the same comfort that we have received.

The thing about it is, it doesn't happen on Sunday mornings in a group like this. Because how can you help carry each other's burdens looking at the back of their head? Here's where we're taught. Here's where we're encouraged. Here's where we are challenged. But true community, true help, true fellowship happens when we meet each other face to face and are open with one another and say, hey, can you help me?

Can you pray with me about this? Sure. And then we walk with them under their burden as we go through life. This is a picture of the church. We need to embrace it because we're here for one another.

[33 : 24] This is what takes place Sunday mornings in Sunday school, Sunday evenings in Bible study. When you choose to get together during the week when the families get together or the younger families get together and join with a time together, that's when stuff like that can happen.

And then the third thing, we experience suffering in God. We extend the comfort of God to others. And then this last point, as we're going to quickly go through, we exult in the glory of God.

We exult in the glory of God. When Paul gets to verses 8 through 11, he starts talking about some of the difficult times that he has been through. Probably physical pain.

As a matter of fact, if any of you are having a bad day, I encourage you to go to 2 Corinthians 11, verses 23 to 28, 23 to 27, and read what Paul went through.

It's going to make you feel better. You're going to say, Wow. I thought I had it bad. Paul really went through some bad stuff. And so he is going to open himself up here and talk about everything he's been through.

[34 : 31] He says, I despaired even of life itself. He was at an all-time low. Listen for his conclusion in the middle of verse 9. But we see in verse 8, For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but God who raised the dead. What we see is, he says, This happened.

All of these sufferings, beatings, most likely imprisonment, all of these things happened so that we wouldn't rely on ourselves, but rather on the God who raised Jesus from the dead.

What a great sentence. God allowed these things in my life so that we would not rely on ourselves, but rather rely on God.

I know what Paul is saying here is very counter-cultural. We should be strong enough to pick ourselves up, buy our bootstraps, and just go on and be tough, right?

[35 : 44] No, Paul says, stuff happens so that it'll totally bring us to the point where we have absolutely no strength left whatsoever, no hope left, so that our hope can be in God, the only one who can provide all of that.

At his lowest point, he knew God was, as we go through these, that he was his victory. God is our victory. The power that raised Christ from the dead is the power that comforted Paul in the middle of all these troubles, and God was his victory.

Not only was he Paul's victory, but he was also Paul's deliverer. Here's the thing. God will not always deliver you from your problems. Just like Joseph.

Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Sometimes he will deliver you from your problems, but sometimes he will just deliver you as you're going through it. He will not take them away. He will provide you the comfort to go through it.

He goes on in verse 10 and says, who delivered us from so great a death and does deliver us, in whom we trust that he will still deliver us.

[36 : 50] He continues to go on. So he is our victory. He is our deliverer. He's also our hope. Not a maybe.

Not I hope so. But he's that confidence. Remember what Paul said? In whom he delivered us. We believe he's going to deliver us today. We believe he's going to deliver us tomorrow.

It was a sure thing. What's the hope? What we see is suffering come full circle. The hope is that God uses suffering for our sake.

Because God, because our relationship with God is a personal thing. When you suffer, God comforts you. When I suffer, God can comfort me.

Now this is never easy that God uses suffering for our sake. We think, well God, what's the purpose of this? Why am I suffering? I want you to listen to a writer, a British writer from a number of years

ago, Malcolm Muggeridge.

[37 : 51] And this is what he writes. He says, contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful.

I look back on those experiences with particular satisfaction. Mr. Muggeridge, what are you talking about? You look on the worst times of your life with satisfaction.

But listen to what he says. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my 75 years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness.

He learned the greatest lessons through his afflictions than when times were great and times were fun. Aren't you thankful that we have a God that can use the lowest point of our life and so come into them and infuse them with comfort that they can become some of our best memories of the comfort that we received when we were at our lowest?

Yes, it was a horrible time. But don't we remember how big God came through and he provided that comfort for us? He turns, as Muggeridge says, he turns them into a treasure about him, about God, and about who he has created us to be.

[39 : 12] And not only for our sake, but also God uses suffering for others' sake. Part of our suffering is to enable us to receive the suffering from God and then turn around and give a helping hand.

Give the support to others. That we share in suffering. We also share in comfort in that we can give ourselves. We can be that conduit. When God comforts us, that overflow of God's comfort can overflow into others' lives in the body through the times that we spend together with fellow believers in the body.

That's why we have so many one and others in the New Testament. love one another, serve one another, forgive one another. All of these one and others, it's in connection in the body as we are living life together.

And then finally, it comes full circle. It was for us to extend to others in order to come back to God. God uses suffering for his sake.

Think about this. What Paul is saying is, I suffered so that I can comfort you. So that in turn, you who have received that comfort can turn back around and say, don't we have a great God?

[40 : 35] It goes full circle. God uses suffering in our life for our sake so that he can comfort us, so that we can in turn comfort others, so that in turn, God can get the glory.

That's the way Christian life works. That's the purpose in suffering. That's the purpose in pain. And we can't settle for sitting in a worship service and calling that church anymore. It's got to be us connecting on a regular basis.

And don't wait for somebody else to do it. Even though, those, I know I said earlier in the beginning, in the introduction, we who've been together for a while should be the ones that reach out to others. But also, if you're new here, don't wait for somebody to reach out to you. You reach out to them. You reach out to us and say, hey, look, hey, why don't you come have dinner? Why don't you, let's go do this. Let's do whatever.

Guys, if you like to hunt together, fish together, if you like to go do whatever, invite someone else and say, hey, let's do it together. And then during that time, you can talk about how your life is going.

[41 : 39] That's community. As a result, God gets the glory. So what now? You look on the back of your note sheet. So this week, I would say, let's pray continually that we will be a community with deep care for one another to the glory of God.

So let's pray. God, how do you want to use me? Who needs the comfort that you've given me this week? whose life can I share their journey with?

And remember that word, help? Who can I walk under with and work with them? With, under, work. Who can I join with this week to come under their burden and help them carry their burden this week? And as we pray that, I guarantee you, God is going to show you someone that he wants you to connect with and comfort.

Let's pray. Lord, use this day. Use this message today for your honor, for your glory. Help us to be who you want us to be. Help us to be a community of believers that care for one another, that support one another, that comfort one another, that help one another through our burdens, through our suffering, through our difficult times.

[43 : 01] And as we're able to cry with one another as well, laugh with one another as we're able to share our lowest points and share our highest points together. Because that's what family does. That's a body. Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.