

Suffering To Comfort Others

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. This is the first message in our new series in the book of 2 Corinthians.

Take your Bible now and turn to 2 Corinthians, if you would, 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And I'm excited that you get to see and we get to delve into the beauties and the wonders of what God says in this book.

Now, the Apostle Paul started the church at Corinth. He was the first pastor. And if you have your Bible, you might look with me at Acts chapter 18, verses 1 through 18.

I'm just going to hit some highlights and show you real quickly. He started the church. Every church starts with a group of people like you who are pioneers that decide a man of God comes along.

And the people of God get together and they put their shoulder into it. And they may meet in a basement and in an office park and in a warehouse. And eventually God goes about giving them a place to meet.

[1 : 02] But a church is never about a building. It's about what God's doing in the work of a life of people. Say amen to that. He didn't send this letter. He didn't send this letter to a post office box.

And he didn't send this letter to a physical street address. He sent it to born-again saints of God in a location that organized themselves into a church. And in Acts chapter 18, he started that church.

Acts chapter 18, verse 1. After these things, Paul departed from Athens and he came to Corinth. And when he got there, he ran into a guy named Aquila in verse 2. And this guy named Aquila had a wife whose name was Priscilla.

And in verse 3, they had the same job. Paul was at this time, he was doing part-time work to pay his way as a preacher. He will later ask forgiveness for having done that and how it hurt this church because they didn't pay their pastor.

They didn't take care of their pastor. He'll ask forgiveness for that. And you'll get to see that. And every Saturday, he went down to the synagogue. And he went into the synagogue because they had a custom that the visiting rabbis could speak.

[2 : 07] So Paul was born a Jew and dressed like a Jew and talked like a Jew and walked like a Jew. He had been a Jew until he was born again. He'd walk in and he'd sit down. And when he got to sit down, they'd say, anybody got a word to say?

And the apostle Paul would say, I sure do. And they'd say, well, you can come on up. So Paul would step up there and say, man, I love the scriptures. He's always a Bible preacher. And so he'd just open them up, one of them Old Testament books in the Old Testament.

And he would reason with them. He would say, look at this book, Isaiah chapter 53. Do you see what's going on in Isaiah chapter 53? There's a Messiah coming. And he's going to die.

And all the sins of the world are going to be placed on him. Let me tell you, that's Jesus. He'd go to Genesis chapter 3, verse 15. He'd show them, that's Jesus. He'd go to Psalm chapter 23 and say, that's Jesus. And every Saturday, he would go in there and he would reason with them.

And he always preached the same message. He had one message. Look, if you would, in verse 5. This is our message. Look at verse 5. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in his spirit and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

[3 : 11] He said, Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is sent from God. Jesus is the one the Old Testament talked about. And when he did that, all these people at the synagogue, they got mad.

Buddy, they did not like to hear it. You see, they liked the Old Testament. They liked the way he knew the Old Testament. They liked the way he knew the Bible. But if you tried to show them that Jesus was the Messiah, then you were blaspheming God.

And so they got mad. If you got your Bible open, they got mad. And they shook his raiment. And when they opposed him, it says they blasphemed. He shook his raiment. Paul did. And he said, all right, you guys don't want to hear me.

You guys are saying I'm blaspheming God. Let your blood be on your own heads. I came here and I told you the truth. You rejected my truth. You won't listen to what the Bible says. I am clean.

Not my fault if you go to hell. Not my fault if you go to hell. I will from now on go speak to Gentiles. That's in verse 6. And could I just say this to you? Listen to me real closely. Every Sunday I try to give you the gospel.

[4 : 10] Every Sunday I try to teach you that you're a sinner and you deserve to go to hell. And every Sunday I try to teach you that the only way to go to heaven is to recognize your need of Christ and to place your faith and trust in Jesus and what he did on the cross at Calvary.

And if you reject that message, it's your fault. Your Sunday school teachers have been telling you about Jesus. Your foundations teachers have been telling you about Jesus. The discipleship people tell you.

I mean, Jesus is all we talk about around here. It's not about knowing about Jesus. It's about knowing Jesus. And you know him through the finished work on the cross at Calvary.

And I hope you do. Because if you don't, it is your responsibility. Well, when Paul got through preaching there, they threw him out. And he said, I'm going to go to the Gentiles. There was this guy in verse 7 named Justice.

And Justice was a man that worshipped God. And he had a house. It was right next to the synagogue. I mean, he was the next door number right down the street. And a guy named Crispus, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue, he even believed in the Lord.

[5 : 09] And many other people believed, and they all got baptized. I'll stop right there in just a second. You see, what happens is that when you believe, you get baptized. Hey, repeat that with me. When you believe, you get baptized.

You know why you get baptized when you believe? Because baptism is like a public picture. While you stand in that water in the baptistry, you stand up and you say, I stand here, the old man who did not know Jesus, the old man who lived for himself, the old man who rejected God.

And I died of that person. I have died of that person. And then you're buried in the water and you're raised to walk again in newness of life. What a baptism is, is an outward revelation of an inward reality.

God is saying to you, or you're saying to the world, God did something on the inside of me and I'm showing it on the outside of me. Not long ago, we had a young couple get married right here in this little room.

And when they got married in this room and they came up front and they stood right here and they repeated vows and said they loved each other. The truth of the matter is the decision to get married was made long before they stood here on the platform.

[6 : 13] This was only an outward revelation of an inward reality. You see, I said, I said to Kyle, I said, Kyle, will you love her? And will you, will you give her everything you got?

And Kyle said, I sure will. Do you think he just thought that up right then? Do you think we just picked two people out of the crowd and said, You come up here and you come up here and I'll ask you those questions? That's not what happened. It was already real. Can you say amen right there?

Well, that's exactly what happens when you get baptized. If he's real to you, you want to get baptized. If he's real to you, you want to shout at the top of your lungs, I love Jesus. I love Jesus.

And I want to follow him in the step of baptism. Why? Because that's what they did all the way through the Bible. And I'm a Bible guy. And I want to do what the Bible did. And so I'm a Bible guy. And if in the Bible that's what they did, that's what I'm going to do.

I had the privilege Thursday night of taking Pastor Gizzle way out to get him a taco after church. And a man from his church came who had never really been to church but one time before he got saved.

[7 : 10] And at one time he went to church. He was 13. They told him he was going to go to hell if he didn't get saved. He said he thought that was a good deal to get saved. So he raised his hand, went up and prayed a prayer, went out and lived the same devil life he'd always lived before.

And then one day he said God started just working on him and he was riding on from work and he got saved. And I said, well, your mom and dad weren't saved. Nope. You ever been to church? Nope. Never been around church.

Never been around anything about church. He said, but I figured out something. I decided I want in and I ain't like the rest of them people go to church. No worries about me. I want to be there. I don't want to be there because I don't want to be there because I'm supposed to.

I like it. He said, I like it. I'm sorry. I never had it. Don't know anything about it. Nobody ever told me nothing about it. He said, but I'm in. And I mean, I'm in. He said, so they tell me what's going on. I'm in.

And I said, man, you're an unusual cookie. He said, maybe that's where other people ought to be. I said, well, I'm not. We're not in church. We're not preaching. Say amen. But don't you think you ought to get excited? Don't you think you ought to get baptized if you've been born again?

[8 : 07] Don't you think you ought to step up and say, I am in love with Jesus. They were baptized. And then go down if you would. There are people wanting to hurt Paul. But the spirit tells him in a dream not to be afraid.

But look at verse 11. He continued there a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. And I wish you'd put a big circle. If you got your Bible open, which I really hope you do.

Put a circle around the word teaching the word of God among them. You know what the apostle Paul did? The apostle Paul took the Bible, walked in there and said, all right, open your Bibles. He didn't say open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians because that hadn't been put in the Bible yet.

He would have said open your Bible to the book of Isaiah, open it to Jeremiah, open it to Exodus, open it to Leviticus. But he taught them the word of God. Now I want you to understand something. Here's a big confusing thing that goes on in America today.

Underline the word teaching. Teaching. And today most people tend to think here in the South that unless you yell, sweat, scream and run and jump on pews, you're not preaching.

[9 : 11] And they say teaching is not what we're supposed to do in the pulpit. Well, the apostle Paul messed up because he stayed in that town 18 months. And guess what he did to those people?

Tell me out loud. What did he do? He taught them. And what did he teach them? He taught them Dr. Phil 101. He said, there's a TV program all of you guys ought to be watching.

And she's got her own channel now, Oprah. That's not what he said. He said, I'm just a dumb preacher. If you'll open your Bibles, I'll read it to you and tell you what it says. He taught them the word of God.

That's what you ought to come to church for. You ought to come to church with your Bible in your hand. Your notebook, your ink pen. You ought to come and say, I'm here to let God speak to me. I want to learn what God's word says. So he stayed there and he taught them for a year and a half.

And then the people really got upset. I love this. Look at verse 13. Verse 13. And this fellow persuadeth men to worship God against our laws.

[10 : 10] Contrary to the law. Boy, wouldn't that be a sweet thing to be said about you. Can you imagine that? If you'd have gone to Paul and said, hey, you've been trying to get people to worship God.

Not the way we Jews say. Paul would have said, guilty. Then he said, that's wrong. He just said, y'all might call it wrong. I call it right. And I ain't quitting. Paul was a Bible preacher, Bible teacher.

Down in verse 17, they beat him before the judgment seat. In verse 18, Paul, after this, tarried there yet a good while, then took his leave of the brethren. Now listen to this. In 18 months, the apostle Paul got this church going, taught those people a lot of Bible and left.

But he's going to have a long-term relationship. He made a major mistake at this church. One, he never taught them to give. He never taught them to support their church and their pastor.

And he's going to apologize for that in this. Could I just tell you that as a church, it's a whole lot more about than just coming to a show. It's a whole lot more than just coming to hear me speak or hear the guys sing and hear the choir and see the people play the instruments.

[11 : 14] It's a whole lot more about that. We're in this together. And I have responsibilities and you have responsibilities. And Paul will actually say to them, forgive me this wrong.

After that, Paul sent Timothy to talk to them. Look at your Bible. First Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17. They were having some problems. First Corinthians chapter 4 verse 17.

The Bible says, Here's what happened.

Things seem to kind of get out of kilter there. Paul left the church at Corinth. Moves on down the road. The church at Corinth started kind of messing up. So Paul said, Timothy, I need you to run down to Corinth.

And when Timothy gets down to Corinth, Timothy walks in. And Timothy is so much like Paul and says the same things Paul says because he's just a Bible teacher, Bible preacher.

[12 : 11] Paul walks, Timothy walks in and starts teaching him. And he reminds them about what Paul teaches. And he reminds them about what Paul does. He's saying, get back on track. We're Bible Christians, Bible believers.

Something happens in our society. You guys get saved. You guys get saved. And the Lord changes you and he doesn't work in your life. And then TBN gives you a dose and you get off track.

And then some gospel music thing gets you a dose and you get off track. Here's what you do. Take your Bible. Take your Bible. Take your Bible. Open your Bible. Take your Bible. Open your Bible. Take your ink pen.

Open your Bible. Get your ink pen out. Write it down. Hey, you're a Bible student. We teach the book. And so when you go somewhere, find out, is this the book? And by the way, just because they say independent Baptist don't mean they teach the book.

Say amen. Take the book. Open the book. Listen to what they got to say. Find out if it's in the book. Some preachers, the Bible is only a spot to jump off of so they can preach about what they want to preach on.

[13 : 10] Today, I think I got a political message on Huckabee. And so here it comes. First Tuckabee, verse one, verse one. Now let's jump on. That's not what Bible preaching is. Bible preaching is open the book. Open the book.

Can you say amen right there? Open the book. Timothy goes in there to see that. It seems that Paul might have made a visit. After he was written the first letter, he might have made a visit to confront some of the troublemakers.

Because in 2 Corinthians chapter two, verse one, he said, I determined this with myself. I would not come again to you in heaviness. I've already come once. I've already come once. And I was pretty upset.

I was pretty sad. I was pretty under the burden. I was under the burden. Things weren't doing right at the church. You guys were messing up.

Would you listen to this? It's a lot more than about attendance. It's a lot more than about how much the offerings were. It's a lot more about do you love Jesus?

[14 : 06] Does your love for Jesus translate into Jesus living his life out through you? This is not a game we're playing. It's for real. Then Paul wrote him a very harsh letter.

He wrote him a mean letter. Possibly after 1 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians chapter two, verse four. The Bible says, proud of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears that you should be grieved, but not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love with which I love you.

He said in chapter seven, verse eight, I made you sorry with a letter. He said, and you're sorrowed to repentance. And in verse 11, you're sorrowed after a godly sort. Paul wrote them and said, guys, get it straight.

Get it straight. Get it straight. Paul wrote them and told them to get it straight. Now listen to me. I'll mention a couple of things that will save the rest for another service. You know that being a church is a whole lot more.

Please listen to this. It's a whole lot more than about a building. It's very easy for you to come in and look around and say black walls and no wall. This is a church without walls. Amen. Well, church without a wall.

[15 : 15] And it's easy to come in and think of a church as a edifice. It's easy to walk into a church and think of a church as a group of people to have some things organized.

But let me tell you this. Paul started a church. Paul's writing a letter to that church. Paul's excited to talk to that church. But Paul's dealing with real problems in that church. There were people in the church who were living in known sin.

There was a guy in 1 Corinthians 5 that was sleeping with his daddy's wife. There were people in the first church who were eat up with pride and arrogance. There were people in the first church going around judging each other and being critical.

There were people in the first church with all kinds of problems. It sounds just like a regular church. And so Paul's writing a second letter to Corinthians now, to the Corinthians, and he's going to deal with some of those problems.

And he's going to tell them why he writes the letter. He's going to tell them what's going on in the letter. And he's going to show them what they need to do. Let me tell you why he wrote the letter.

[16:12] Let me just give you this one, and I quit. One of the main reasons he writes this letter is to tell that church to forgive and restore. to forgive and restore. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 6, if you would, verse 11.

2 Corinthians 2, 6, down to 11. Verse 6 says, Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, so that contrariwise you ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write that I might know the proof of you whether you be obedient in all things. To whom you forgive anything, I forgive also.

For if I forgave anything to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get advantage of us for we are not ignorant of his plans.

One of the reasons Paul writes this letter is this. Now watch. A person in the church messed up big time. And that person in the church got punished by the church.

[17:23] That's completely foreign to us. We don't really do that very much. I'm pretty sure, and most Bible people probably somewhat agree with this, it's probably the guy out of 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

And this guy in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 is committing a sin that's very uncommon even in the lost world. So, his daddy has a wife and he is sleeping with her. And the apostle Paul hears about it.

And Paul says, hey, we're saved by grace. But you guys are abusing the idea of grace. When you get saved by grace, it doesn't mean you have a license to sin. It means you have liberty to live right.

It means you have liberty to serve God and live a holy life. Can you say amen right there? Thank you. Yes, you can. You can live a holy life. Say amen. It's not about, hey, I'm saved by grace, so I'll do whatever I want.

It's I'm saved by grace, I'll serve Jesus. I'm saved by grace. I'm freed from sin. So this guy's sleeping with this woman. And Paul writes him a letter in 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

[18:20] He says, stop it. I'm telling you, stop it. And I want you to quit fellowshiping with him. I don't want you going out to eat with him. I don't want you meeting him at Chick-fil-A. I don't want you meeting him at any other place.

I want you to stay away from the guy. He's sleeping with his daddy's mama, his daddy's wife. What in the world is going on here? This is ridiculous. I don't want you giving him any handshakes. You shouldn't do that with other Christians.

Well, that guy, all of a sudden, everywhere he went, he was down at Walmart and he ran into another Christian from the church. And when he ran into the other Christian, he said, hey, brother Frick. And brother Frick just ignored him.

And he knew why he was being ignored. He was told why he was being ignored. You're being ignored because you on purpose have chosen to live in sin rather than obey God. I don't know how long it took.

Don't know how many weeks went by. Don't know how many months or even how many hours went by. But that man realized one day I've been doing wrong. And he apologized for his sin. He repented of his sin.

[19 : 16] He turned from his sin and he started doing right. But the church had become very much like our churches have become. And the church had become a critical judgmental group of people. They needed to judge sin when it needed judging.

But they needed to stop when he repented. When your child does wrong, do you not believe your child should get some discipline? How many of you believe you ought to discipline your children? Say amen.

How many of you believe you can over-discipline your children? Say amen. Yes, you can. Hey, don't say amen. The young guys said amen. But you know, you can over-discipline.

Maybe one SWAT would have done it and you gave them ten. Maybe one day without the Nintendo or whatever it is you take away from them nowadays would have been enough and you took it away for two years.

You know how it is. You say, if you do that again, you'll never, ever eat again, kid. And two hours later you feed them. You know how it goes. And so anyway, they were over-disciplining him and Paul writes them a letter and he says, 2 Corinthians, he said, listen to me guys, the devil is really getting in the church and he's taking advantage of us.

[20 : 22] He said, because the guy did wrong but he's asked for forgiveness and so I want you all to do several things. Open your Bibles and mark these things right quickly if you would. Open your Bibles and mark these things right there in your Bible if you would.

in verse, in verse whatever, let me see where I am and I'll tell you. Yep. He says to them, I want you to forgive him.

Chapter 2, verse 6. 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 6, if you would. I want you to forgive them. 2 Corinthians, excuse me. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 6. I want you to forgive him.

Then he says, I want you to comfort him. That's in verse 7 actually. Forgive him and comfort him and then in verse 8 and confirm him.

I want you to repeat that with me. What do you do when a guy gets right with God? What's the first thing you do? Help me out loud. We forgive him. After we forgive him, we comfort him.

[21 : 23] After we comfort him, we confirm him. Now we get to what's going on. He said, if you don't, he might be swallowed up in over much sorrow. In other words, a guy could do wrong and when he does wrong, everybody's still being mean to him to the point that he just gets like, I don't have any reason to live any longer.

You know, if you over-discipline a child, you could break their will, break their spirit, break them. It's just too much. And so he said, hey, he's done wrong. Forgive him. Comfort him and confirm him.

Now watch this. It's like when mama gives you a spanking and you're a little child and you get your little spanking and the truth is your spanking wasn't to hurt you. It was to heal you. Can you say amen right there?

Come on, talk to me. It was not to hurt you. It was to heal you. Now the kids don't understand that. Every kid said, no, it was to hurt. But every adult in this room knows that that little swat was not meant to hurt.

It was meant to heal. It was meant to stop a problem and help the kids. Amen. Is that not true? If it isn't true, talk to me. And then, you know what he said, do after that? He said, after they've gotten sorry for it and after they've realized they've done wrong, it's time for a bunch of slobbery hugs and kisses.

[22 : 36] It said, bring the kid up in your lap and just kiss them all over the face. It's just hug them and tell them, I'm in love with you. You comfort them. You comfort them. You say, daddy didn't want to spank you.

Mama didn't want to spank you. We didn't want that to happen. That was done so you'd realize you were doing wrong and the discipline ought to be extremely balanced and never too much. And then after you've comforted them, then they ought to confirm it.

That means this, you know what you got to say? I love you a whole lot of times because right now they might be thinking you don't. So I love you. It's not just, hey, I love you. And it's over. It's I love you. I love you.

I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. Jacob and Hannah are adopted children because adopted children often feel like they're not loved.

I probably tell them they're loved more than I tell you the rest of them. A lot of times I'll say, Jacob, if I ever told you that you're loved and this is what Jacob does. Yes, sir.

[23 : 34] 10,000 times. And then I say, good. Let me tell you something. I know you love me. I said, you got it. Okay. Don't forget. They need to be confirmed.

So three things we do. We forgive. We comfort. We confirm. Would you go over those with me? Three things we do. We. Let's do that again.

We. That's what we do with our children too. It's also what we do with church members. Let's say we find a church member who's doing some gross sin and there's proof of it.

Now we don't walk around like 007. You're not supposed to walk around. Not everybody here. You don't need binoculars. Some people come to church. They're all walking around going, checking out sin. Oh, I think I see something right there.

Yeah. Hey, walkie talkie. Walkie talkie. Report in headquarters. Found sin on road number three. That's, that's not the goal of a Christian. Say, man, but this guy was living in known open sin.

[24 : 33] It was sin that the world was talking about. And Paul said, Hey, I'm writing a letter. So you guys know that if you don't handle this, right, the devil wins. Let me show you that.

And I quit. Go with me. If you would, to second Corinthians chapter two, verse 11, second Corinthians chapter two, verse 11. If you would, the Bible says, less Satan should get an advantage of us.

For we are not ignorant of his devices. And that verse has been abused by many churches. They preach that about everything. For example, if you skip church tonight, that means you'll probably lose your salvation because we're not ignorant of his devices.

Not true. That's not what this is talking about at all. This is talking about over correcting and not forgiving and not comforting and not confirming. Listen to this.

It's a devil breaks into the church by making the sanctimonious past better than now. Pharisaical, super Pharisee Christians who love to judge others and never forgive.

[25 : 32] And the devil wins the battle with that kind of attitude. The devil's in the, I got Christians to hating Christians job. That's one of his favorite games to play. And so Paul says, guys, the guy has asked forgiveness.

If you, you, you forgive him. And if you forgive, I forgive. And he even says this, I'm writing this to see if you guys are going to obey me or not. Because there's three things I want out of you. And those three things are, would you help me?

What's the first one? Forgive him. Second one? Comfort him. Third one? And if you don't, the devil will get advantage. I'm glad to preach that again, because that's in chapter two and I'm not there yet.

That's one of the reasons Paul wrote the verse. This ought to be the sweetest, loveliest group of people you've ever been around. Somebody messes up around here. They, they mess up. Then they fess up. And then we love up.

How do you like that one? They mess up, fess up. And we love. And buddy, they come in and they, they mess up. And we're like, I don't remember that man. Just give me a hug. I love you. They come in and it's not like, Hey, I remember when you were sleeping with you.

[26 : 33] I remember when you were sleeping with your daddy's wife. That's not what happened. He said, no, you don't do that. You don't do that. Or he'll be swallowed up and over much sorrow. This ought to be the room full of love and forgiveness and kindness and mercy.

Because we serve a God who is all of those things. He's a father of mercy and the father of all comfort. What a wonderful thing to serve the great God of heaven.

Father in heaven. I love you. And thank you for the chance to preach your word. I pray God that you bless your people. I pray that you let this passage of scripture mean something and work in their lives. And I'll give you great honor and glory and praise for all that you do.

With every head bowed and every eye closed. I have no idea. I really messed up the passage. I have no idea if the Holy Spirit spoke to you. I have no idea if it was what you needed.

But if God dealt with you about anything, I ask you to find a place to pray and get ahold of God. Right now at the altar or in your seat. Maybe there's some people, maybe some parents need to learn just a tad of parenting there.

[27 : 33] Not to overreact and to always confirm that love. Maybe some husbands fuss and fight with their wives. They need to learn to confirm that love and comfort wives to their husbands.

Maybe there's some Christians here that aren't baptized. And you really should say, I'm not baptized and I'm going to obey God and take that step of obedience.

If God's dealt with your heart, would you step out right now and do whatever you'd have you do? Would you obey God in these moments? Father God, bring honor to your name. Dwarf yourself through this invitation. And I'll give you praise for all that you do.

You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church. For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com.

stepdad.

[28 : 40] Right. Thank you. You.