

2 CORINTHIANS I

The God of All Comfort

Student Guides

Daily Bible Reading

Day 1	2 Cor. 1: 1-7
Day 2	2 Cor. 1: 8-20
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The famed Evangelist, Billy Graham, once said, "one of the most comforting truths in all the Bible to me as I travel from one part of the world to another is to know that God has stationed His heavenly guards to protect, guide, and lead me through life's dangerous way. I cannot see these beings with my physical eyes, but I sense they are present every day.

Our God is a God of comfort, and He will walk with us every step during our times of trial, trouble, and difficulty.

1. God is the Author of our Fortitude (vv. 1-7)

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians concerning their church. Now he writes an intensely personal letter applicable especially to each believer individually (vv. 1-2). It is as if Paul knew the personal struggles they experienced. The Apostle peered deeply into their hearts, examining their daily lives and circumstances. That's the way God is. He never is far from His children. He knows the difficulties we face and the trauma we feel.

Who God Is (vv. 3-4) - Immediately, he asserts God is the author of our strength and fortitude. He is the "Father of mercies" as well as the "God of all comfort."

What God Does (v. 6) - He comforts us in all our troubles. The moment trouble comes, God's heart goes out to us. We may stand with confidence: when trouble comes, the Lord is on His way!

Paul further states, "we ourselves are comforted by God." One way He comforts us is through *Holy Scripture*. In fact, trouble itself is a vehicle which drives us to the Word (cp. Rom. 15:4; Ps. 119:50). We also gain comfort through the *Holy Spirit*. Jesus promised, I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you (John 14:8). Finally, we gain comfort from God through *His Saints* (cp. 7:6-7; Col. 4:7-8,11). God's people can be comforting to each other in times of trouble. This is specifically why the Apostle mentions "we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble."

2. God is the Aim of our Faith (vv. 8-20)

We noted above that God is the author of our fortitude, our strength. Now Paul affirms God is the aim of our faith.

Fact of Trouble (vv. 8-9) - Every believer must trust God alone in his or her trouble. Trouble is part of the process of growth. Sooner or later, trouble comes to every child of God.

Function of Trouble (vv. 9b-10) - Trouble teaches us many things including the lesson that we cannot trust in ourselves. God is the aim of our faith. God is the One Whose power "raises the dead." The same One Who raises the dead "delivers" (v. 10).

Fruit of Trouble (v. 11) - According to the Apostle, both prayer and praise are offspring of the trouble we face. Consequently, we learn what Jesus can do with a life lived exclusively for Him.

What does a life look like which is lived exclusively for Jesus?

First, a life lived for Christ is a life of *sincerity* (vv. 12-14). The believer's internal testimony displays a conscience with "godly sincerity." Our motives in everything we do are to be sincere and filled with integrity.

Second, a life lived for Christ is a life of *flexibility* (vv. 15-19). We must never cling to methods for method's sake. Human plans are notoriously known for becoming quickly outdated. We must be clear, however; for neither does the Apostle confuse being fickle with being flexible. Our methods change but our message remains dependable (vv. 18-19).

Third, a life lived for Christ is a life of *certainty* (v. 20). Someone counted all the Bible promises of God and totaled them to be 8,800. We live by promises; we do not live by explanations! Christ completes every promise we Biblically claim.

3. God is the Agent of Our Freedom (vv. 21-24)

Our faith aims high; we trust in the Almighty. When we do, God promises us deliverance; He assures us of rescue (vv. 21-22). Interestingly, the verbs in these verses are all in the past tense indicative of completion. God has already given deliverance. When, you ask. The moment you said yes to God! The very second our hearts were changed in regeneration.

In the final verses of the chapter, Paul gives three beautiful symbols of the Holy Spirit.

First, we note the *anointing* of the Holy Spirit. He has "anointed us." Through God's Spirit, we have God's power in our hearts. The filling of the Holy Spirit makes Christians spiritual (Rom 5:5; Eph. 5:18). But the anointing makes Christians successful! Anointed Christians are successful in their work for Jesus. Anointing provides for us the power to serve God, to obey God. In addition, anointing makes Christians successful in their witness for Jesus. Jesus was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18). The Holy Spirit provides a stirring witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, we note the *sealing* of the Spirit. Paul says God's Spirit has "sealed us." Sealing by the Holy Spirit assures protection by the Holy Spirit. When we are saved, we are sealed (Eph. 1:13). Furthermore, the sealing is an eternal mark; that is, our salvation is forever complete. God says, in essence, we are eternally valuable to Him; we belong to Him forever (cp. 2 Tim. 2:19).

Finally, we note the *earnest* of the Spirit. Indicative of this truth are Paul's words that the Father has "given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." God's down payment is given as a trust, a guarantee we are eternally His. The cross of Christ secured it in the past, present, and future!

Wrap Up

Trouble is inevitable. Such a message sounds so weary in an age of indulgence, a culture ever pursuing pleasure. However, the Christian faith tells it like it is; the Bible keeps it real. We cannot live as if difficulties do not exist. Yet, we know we do not go it alone. God is the God of comfort! He is our strength and our deliverer. We aim our faith totally in Him. The Divine Agent—the wonderful Holy Spirit—empowers us, seals, assures us, and protects us from any deadly difficulty the world has to offer. We belong to God! He never leaves His own.