**THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT**

2 Corinthians 1:1-24

Key Verse 3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

**Introduction**



 Paul was somewhat concerned about how the church at Corinth would receive his first letter. He wondered how they accepted his rebukes, so he sent Titus to Corinth to find out the effect of his letter. He was glad when Titus reported that the majority of the church had received the letter in the proper way. But there were those who still doubted his motives and even denied his apostleship. So he wrote his second letter to express his joy over the encouraging news and to defend his apostleship. Above all he gives more of his personal history in this letter than in any of his other letters. He reveals his courage and his self sacrificing love. The epistle began and ended with the word, “comfort”. Through this passage we learn what is the true source of comfort in our trials, and how to find it. May the Lord help us to learn of apostle Paul who relied on the comfort of God in helping the Corinthian church believers.

1. Read verses 1-11. How did Paul greet the Corinthian church? (1-2) What reasons does Paul give for praising God despite sufferings and troubles? (3-7) Describe his sufferings in the province of Asia. (8, 9a) What did Paul learn through this suffering? (9b-11)

1-1, Read verses 1-11.

 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: **2** Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **5** For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. **6** 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. **7** 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. **8** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1#fen-NIV-28809a)] 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. **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. **10** He has delivered us from such a deadly peril,and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, **11** as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

###

1-2, How did Paul greet the Corinthian church? (1-2)

 ***Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

* Paul was not an apostle by the decision or desire of any man, including Paul himself. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. If some of the Corinthian Christians did not recognize him as an apostle, he was confident of God’s will.
* It is remarkable that Paul freely calls the Corinthian Christians “all his holy people(saints)” despite their many problems.
* Addressing all the holy people who are in Achaia also shows us that Paul intended his letters to be spread among the churches. This wasn't just for the Christians in the city of Corinth, but for all the Christians in the region who might read the letter.
* Grace and peace are familiar greetings of Paul whenever he wrote his epistles.
* Paul does not want material things such as silver and gold from the church. What he wanted for them was that they receive spiritual blessings such as grace and peace, which come to all poor sinners from God and Jesus.

1-3, What reasons does Paul give for praising God despite sufferings and troubles? (3-7)

 ***Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.***

* Right after giving a greeting, Paul praises God. Paul uses two words to explain who God is: the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.
* Compassion is a feeling of pity toward those in distress. Our God enters with us into all our troubles.

Psalm 103:13 says,

 “As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.”

Exodus 34:6-7,

 “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”

* It is very important for us to know that God is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort in our troubled lives.
* People seek comfort in many ways. Some husbands want to be comforted by their wives. Many wives want to be comforted by their husbands.
* But only God can understand us completely and comfort us until we are fully comforted. God is the God of compassion and the source of all comfort.
* If we try to receive comfort from others, we only feel miserable and empty. But when we come to God, God welcomes us and understands us deeply. In His compassion, God comforts us. Then we are truly comforted and satisfied. Furthermore, we can comfort others through the comfort God provides.
* Our God is the God of all comfort, which when translated is the God of every kind of comfort. God is able to give us every kind of comfort.
* The kind of comfort we need most of all, is the comfort of forgiveness. In many cases our suffering results from our own sin.
* When we have trouble, we must hold onto the word of God's promise. Then the word of God gives us true comfort and strength.
* The word of God gives us the grace of forgiveness, wisdom, power, encouragement, compassion and true peace, at the very time that we need.
* Eventually the word of God gives us true hope and leads us to the eternal kingdom of God.

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

* Paul shares his own example. Paul was distressed over the Corinthians. Then God comforted him. This comfort overflowed to the Corinthians.
* He said that his suffering was not just his suffering but Jesus’ sufferings. So through Christ he received abundant comfort. Praise Jesus!
* Jesus was not distant from Paul in his trials. He was right there, identifying with Paul and comforting him.
* Jesus endured suffering the most. So he is qualified & understands every suffering. He is One who can comfort others.

***6 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. 7 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 see Paul living in the footsteps of Jesus, who was truly an others-centered person like a shepherd. Paul's life is not focused on himself, but on the Lord and on those whom the Lord has given him to serve.
* Is Paul suffering? It is so God can do something good in the Corinthian Christians. Is Paul comforted? It is so God can bless the Corinthian Christians. Suffering or comforted, it wasn't all about Paul; it was all about others.

1-4, Describe his sufferings in the province of Asia. (8, 9a)

***8 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. 9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.***

* Paul teaches the meaning of suffering by sharing his suffering. Paul was a powerful and mature man of God. Still, he struggled with despair and fear. He was under great pressure, far beyond his ability to endure.

1-5, What did Paul learn through this suffering? (9b-11)

 ***But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril,and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,***

* He sought God in his despair. He realized that trials came so that he might not rely on himself but on God who raises the dead.
* When he relied on the Almighty God who raises the dead, he could have unwavering resurrection faith. God who raised Jesus from the dead is not just the God of the past. He is the living God at present.
* He is the God of each one of us who is working with his power in our lives today. When we depend on God we can live a life of victory in any circumstance.
* He delivers and will deliver us in the same way just as he has done in the past.

***11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.***

* Paul knew the value of intercessory prayer, and was not shy about asking the Corinthians to pray for him.
1. Read verses 12-20. What did Paul rely on in serving the Corinthians believers? (12-14) What was Paul's original plan in visiting Corinth? (15-16) Why should Paul change his plan? (17-20)

2-1, Read verses 12-20.

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1#fen-NIV-28813b)] and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace. **13** For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, **14** as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus. **15** Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. **16** I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. **17** Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”?

**18** But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” **19** For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1#fen-NIV-28820c)] and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” **20** For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2-2, What did Paul rely on in serving the Corinthians believers? (12-14)

***12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace. 13 For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, 14 as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.***

* The Corinthian Christians had become cynical. They believed that everyone had bad motives by nature, and everyone was out for personal gain and power. They didn't trust Paul because they were cynical.
* Paul testified that he had conducted himself with integrity and godly sincerity rather than in worldly ways.
* Paul conducted himself in holiness and sincerity.
* Paul could have conducted himself with worldly wisdom because Corinth was full of worldly wisdom and Greek philosophy.
* But Paul resolved to know nothing while he was with them except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1Co 2:2). Paul delivered the pure message of the cross.
* Then God worked graciously among them. Paul served the Corinthians based on the wisdom from God.

2-3, What was Paul's original plan in visiting Corinth? (15-16)

***15 Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.***

* These two verses provide some background for verses 12-14. Paul’s original plan was to leave Ephesus and go directly to Corinth on his way to Macedonia. On his return from Macedonia, he would visit Corinth again before going on to Judea with their help.
* But Paul changed his plan. Instead of visiting Corinth twice he visited Corinth only once and then returned to Ephesus. Later, he went to Macedonia, without visiting Corinth.
* Some of them began to criticize Paul as an unreliable man who did not keep his word. They began to doubt Paul's integrity, and even his apostleship.
* For the sake of their faith, Paul defended his integrity by explaining why he changed his plan. In doing so, Paul shares some of his principles as a gospel worker.

2-4, Why should Paul change his plan? (17-20)

***17 Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? 18 But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+1#fen-NIV-28820c)***] and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” 20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.***

* At first Paul was confident to visit Corinth. He believed that his plan to visit them would benefit them twice. However he changed his plan.
* Did this mean he made his original plan lightly? Or did he make his plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath he could say, "Yes, yes," and "No, no?" Not at all.
* When he planned his first visit he must have prayed a lot. However, as events unfolded, the Holy Spirit guided him another way. So he obeyed God's direction. He followed God's will on the basis of God's faithfulness.
* Because Paul believed in God's faithfulness, he followed God’s guidance carefully by denying his own, just as Jesus Christ followed God's time schedule. Jesus always did what pleased God. Jesus always said, "Yes," to God.
* Even at the time of his Gethsemane prayer, Jesus said, “Not my will, but yours be done.” It was because Jesus fully trusted God and obeyed God absolutely. Jesus obeyed God to death, even death on a cross.
* In this way all of God's promises were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. God's faithfulness has been proven through Jesus Christ. Since God is always faithful, we can say “Yes” to the word of God's promises and give glory to God.

3. Read verses 21-24. What did God do for both Paul and the Corinthians? (21-22)

 How did Paul defend himself and help their faith? (23-24 )

3-1, Read verses 21-24.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, **22** set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. **23** I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. **24** Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

3-2, What did God do for both Paul and the Corinthians? (21-22)

***21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.***

* Paul reminded them that it is God who made both Paul and the Corinthians stand firm. God set his seal of ownership on them and put his Spirit in their hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what was to come.
* Since they had the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they should follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. When Paul continued to pray about his plan, he came to know the guidance of the Holy Spirit better. So he could change his plan to visit them.

3-3, How did Paul defend himself and help their faith? (23-24 )

 ***I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. 24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.***

* Paul explained that changing of his plan was to spare them. It was for the good of the Corinthian church, not to lord it over their faith, but for their joy. While Paul did not visit them, they were able to stand firm in their faith all the more.

**Conclusion**

 In today's passage we learn that God is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Also, God is faithful. God is always the same, yesterday and today and forever. So when we are in trouble and need comfort, let's come to God. When we come to God as we are, God welcomes us, understands us deeply and comforts us. When we find true comfort, we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we have receive from God.

**One word: God of all comforts!**