

# THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

*2 Corinthians 1:1 - 11*

"Become a Christian and all of your problems will disappear!" Ever hear a statement like that? Or, "become a really spiritual Christian (like Paul) and you won't experience any pain." Instead, the Christian life is full of affliction - but the good news is that there is also hope, comfort, and purpose in the midst of it all. This passage outlines that good news. It could be called "Insight into Affliction."

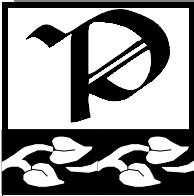
*I. Greeting 1:1-2*

*II. Good out of evil 1:3-4*

*III. Our comfort spreads to others 1:5-7*

*IV. A real life example 1:8-11*

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?



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 the saints throughout Achaia:

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup> For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup>

And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In light of the problems in Corinth, why does Paul introduce himself in this way?

### **"Grace and Peace"**

This was the common form of greeting in Paul's day. The Greeks used "charis" (meaning "greetings") and the Jews said "shalom". But for the Christian these terms take on a deeper meaning - God has chosen to set his love upon us (grace) and the result of that is something that the world cannot give - peace.

What is the first word of this letter (discounting the greeting of verses 1 & 2)? What does this tell you about the tone of the whole letter?

Paraphrase (restate in your own words) the principle Paul is trying to get across in verses 3 & 4.

Verse 5. What do you think Paul means by "the sufferings of Christ"? (see Matt 5:11, Rom 8:17 and Phil 3:10, 1 Pet 4:13)

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

<sup>8</sup> We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, <sup>11</sup> 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.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Paul seems to be saying that my problems can turn out for my comfort and for someone else's good. How can that be?

Here in verse 8 and following, Paul gives a real-life illustration of this principle at work. What situation do you think he was describing? (see 2 Cor. 11:24-27)

How severe was it, according to Paul?

What effect did this experience have on Paul?

What is the one of the end results of people joining in prayer for one another (verse 11) ? (See a similar thought expressed in 2 Cor 4:15.)

## WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage.



## LIFE RESPONSE

How is God asking you to put this into action in your life this week?



Think of one instance in which you were comforted by someone who had been through your problem before you.

Is there someone you could be encouraging now, who is going through (or has recently gone through) a trauma that you've experienced before?