

2 Corinthians
June 5, 2011
Introduction
Verses 1:1-7

I. Learning from Job Class

What did Job learn about the power of God and God's involvement in his suffering? Who did Job say was responsible for his suffering? Was he correct? When we suffer who has ultimate responsibility for that suffering?

II. Background on the Book

Background on Corinthians, a rich but immoral city

Its location

Purposes of Book: Trials/Suffering

Hope

Giving (especial chapters 8 and 9)

Paul's Authority

Sound Doctrine

Paul probably wrote at least four letters to the Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 5:9 and 2 Cor. 2:1-4). 2 Corinthians is the most personal of Paul's books; he dwells on his trials, authority, and hope for the future Corinthian church.

III. Salutations

2 Cor 1:1-2

1 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:

2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NIV

-Paul's calling comes directly from God.

-Timothy is apparently a co-writer, but we will reference Paul as the only writer.

Question: How many books of the Bible did Timothy "co-write"?

-Corinth was the largest city in Achaia; the words sent to it would be seen by other believers in the vicinity. Corinth was also on an isthmus that was

used by ships. Today, there is a canal, but in Paul's time, ships were actually pull across on land between Corinth and Cenchreae to avoid a long sea voyage around Greece.

-Verse 2 is a common opening for one of Paul's letters.

-“Grace” would have been a common Greek greeting and peace, translated to the Greek here, would have been a common Hebrew greeting.

IV. The Comfort of God

2 Cor 1:3-4

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 have received from God

NIV

Compassion (*oiktirmon*) pity, compassion, mercy for the ills of others," is used (a) of God, Who is "the Father of compassion," <2 Cor. 1:3>; His "mercies" are the ground upon which believers are to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) See Roman 12:1 for the significance of God's compassion (i.e. mercy)

Comfort (*parakleeseos*) literally means "a calling to one's side." Comfort is a very strong word in the Greek, implying strength and courage, a stabilizing of weak knees and sagging spirits. In 2 Cor. 1:3-7, comfort is used as a noun on five times and as a verb on four occasions.

Parakleeseos is translated three ways in the NT: Comfort, Encourage, and Admonish. The NAU translation of the word uses all three translations in its version of 1 Thessalonians.

- What is the purpose of facing trials?
- How do we experience the compassion of God?
- How do we experience His comfort?
- How can we “comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received?

THOUGHT: If God can comfort us in our trials and correct what has gone wrong, given that He is the Creator of all and has all power, why does He not simply protect us from enduring the trial in the first place?

V. Suffering/Affliction and Comfort

2 Cor 1:5-7

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

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.

NIV

Why does God allow suffering to occur?

What is the purpose of suffering?

What does “sharing in the fellowship of suffering” mean?

How is suffering and comfort/encouragement related?

How is suffering and hope related?

VI. Assignment for next time:

Can a Christian experience despair? (NOTE: Despair means without hope.)