

## 2Corinthians – Week 1

### I. Historical Background

#### A. Paul was anxious to find out how the Corinthians reacted to his letter

- i. It is thought, by way of the information found in both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, that the following occurred:
  1. Paul's first visit to Corinth (Acts 18)
  2. Paul's former letter to the Corinthians (1Cor. 5:9 – deemed a lost letter)
  3. The Corinthians write a letter to Paul, asking doctrinal questions (1Cor. 7:1).
  4. Paul writes 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.
  5. Paul's painful visitation (2Cor. 2:1).
  6. Paul writes a severe letter to them (2Cor. 2:3-5 – deemed a lost letter).
  7. Titus met with Paul and tells him about the Corinthians (2Cor. 7:6-7).
    - a. Good News:
      - i. Most of the Church responded to Paul's directives and longed to see him.
      - ii. The saints had disciplined the sinning brother and the brother had developed great remorse over his sin.
    - b. Bad News:
      - i. The Church had never sent the money to the needy saints in Jerusalem. (2Cor. 8-9).
      - ii. There was still some undermining Paul's apostolic authority over them. (2Cor. 10-13).
  8. This led Paul to write the second epistle to the Corinthians.

#### B. Outline of the Epistle:

- i. Salutations (1:1-2)
- ii. God's comfort in affliction (1:3-11)
- iii. Paul's commitment to the Corinthians and his ministry (1:12-7:16)
- iv. Instructions concerning the collections for the poor saints (8-9:15)
- v. Appeals concerning Paul's apostolic authority (10-13:10)
- vi. Conclusion (13:11-14)

### II. Chapter 1

#### A. 2Corinthians 1:1-2 (ESV), *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

- i. Like in his former letter, Paul, states his apostleship.
- ii. But here, he comes right out and says it, setting the tone of the letter and establishing his apostolic authority.
- iii. And he makes it clear that he did not choose apostleship by his own will (he was not self-appointed) but he was sent into the work by Jesus Christ through the will of God!
  1. We see this in Paul's conversion in Acts 9...
    - a. Acts 9:15-17 (ESV), *“But the Lord said to him [that is, Ananias], ‘Go, for he [that is, Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’”*
      - i. Paul was chosen by God to be an apostle, and the mark of his apostleship was the suffering he would endure for the sake of Christ!
- iv. Paul, now, seeks to enable his readers to appreciate what he -- as an apostle -- had endured for Christ and the comfort that God supplies to those who suffer for His sake...

- B. 2Corinthians 1:3 (ESV), “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort*”**
- i. The phrase “*blessed be the God...*” is used here as an expression of gratitude and adoration.**
  - ii. And as we learned in 1Cor. 11:1-3, God, the Father, is the head of Christ.**
  - iii. And as the Son, God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
  - iv. Jesus Himself said in John 20:17b (ESV), “*...I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*”**
  - v. God is the Father of mercies and comfort, that is, He is the very source of them!**
    - 1. Greek word used for “comfort” is “*paraklesis*,” which communicates the idea of a person standing alongside another to encourage and support his friend.**
    - 2. To Paul and every true disciple of Christ, there is no other real source of comfort except God!**
    - 3. And He is able and willing to impart consolation to His people!**
- C. 2Corinthians 1:4 (ESV), “*who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*”**
- i. Paul's idea here seems to be as follows:**
    - 1. No matter what variety of affliction we may be experiencing, and no matter what its intensity, God will provide strength and encouragement that is adequate for our need.**
    - 2. Nevertheless God does not intend this strength and encouragement to end with our personal benefit. Its ultimate purpose is to enable us to become God's ministers, extending His comfort to others in their afflictions.**
    - 3. For example: Those who know what it means to lose a loved one to death are able to comfort those who are experiencing the same thing.**
    - 4. Similar experiences are able to help us sympathize with others who are hurting!**
    - 5. Everything that we have from God, we have on behalf of others...**
      - a. The gospel we have from God, we shared with others**
      - b. The material blessings we have from God, we share with others**
      - c. The love we have from God, we share with others**
      - d. The comfort we have from God, we share with others**
    - 6. Keep this in mind: a life of ease is a stagnant life, lacking experience.**
      - a. Experience enables us to effectively comfort and encourage others.**
    - 7. This is not to say that if a person hasn't gone through a similar experience they are unable to comfort others!**
      - a. However, those who understand the pain become more effective ministers to those hurting!**
      - b. As someone once said, “*We are not comforted to be comfortable; we are comforted to be comforters!*”**
  - ii. Now the sufferings Paul was addressing was the sufferings we, as Christians, endure because we belong to Christ and we stand up for Christ in a hostile world...**

**D. 2Corinthians 1:5-7 (ESV), “For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. <sup>6</sup> If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. <sup>7</sup> Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.”**

**i. Paul's suffering as an apostle called by Jesus was to comfort those who are afflicted because of their faith in Christ.**

- 1. Verse 6 is designed to show that Paul's trials were for their benefit:**
  - a. His suffering was for their comfort and advantage.**
  - b. This statement was designed to strengthen their affection for him as opposed to make them think that he was disinterested in them.**
- 2. We are deeply indebted to those who suffer for us!**
  - a. There is nothing that would bind us more dearly to those who have been subject to insult, mockery and injury on our account!**
  - b. This is why a true disciple readily submits to his Lord Jesus Christ!**
- 3. As verse 7 indicates, Paul's confidence in the Corinthians was due to the fact that they were also suffering for Jesus' sake!**
- 4. And their suffering would result in the comfort that comes from the God who loves and cares for them!**
- 5. As he told the Philippians, he knew that the Father of mercies and all comfort would finish the work He started in them!**
  - a. Phil. 1:6 (ESV), “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”**