

HOW THE GOSPEL REORIENTS OUR HEARTS IN SUFFERING

1. Look up to God in _____. (v.3)

2. Step out in compassionate _____. (v.4)

3. Lean in to Gospel _____. (v.5-7)

4. Lay down _____. (v.8-11)

TRANSFORMED

2 Corinthians 1:1–11

^[1] 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:

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

^[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ^[4] 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. ^[5] For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ^[6] 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. ^[7] Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

^[8] For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ^[9] Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ^[10] He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ^[11] You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (ESV)

How the Gospel Reorients our Hearts in Suffering

June 6, 2021

Open: What do you know about the book of 2 Corinthians?

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Discuss

1. 2 Corinthians is a letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. Note how Paul identifies himself, Timothy, and the believers in Corinth in verse 1. How might Paul have intended each of these descriptions to shape the way the believers in Corinth viewed Paul, Timothy and themselves?
2. Knowing God controls all things, Paul still praises God in the midst of his suffering (v. 3). What might have led Paul to exalt God in his suffering rather than feel bitterness or anger toward God? How do difficulties God allows in your life tend to affect your relationship with Him?
3. How have you experienced God's comfort in affliction (v. 4)? How might you counsel a believer who says they are not experiencing God's comfort? How have you seen your affliction(s) enable you to comfort others in their trials or hardships?
4. In verse 5 Paul makes a connection between sharing in the sufferings *of Christ* and sharing in the comfort *of Christ*. How would you explain Paul's point in this verse? How have you found suffering to lead to a deeper appreciation for and connection with Jesus?
5. Verses 6-7, 11 reveal the oneness Paul sees between believers when it comes to sharing in *each other's* experiences. How do Paul and the Corinthians share in *each other's* suffering and comfort? How might we work at fostering this kind of connection in our church?
6. Often we are reluctant to share our hardships with others. Why does Paul want these believers to know of the hardships he experienced (v. 8)? Paul says the reason for his suffering was to make his team "rely not on ourselves but on God" (v. 9). Why is this important for our spiritual lives? How have you found this truth to shape your own perspective in suffering?

Apply: What spiritual preparations can you make so hardships draw you closer to God instead of away from Him? How could you maximize the opportunity for your trials to allow you to bless others?

Pray: Pray for anyone in your group who is experiencing hardship. Ask God to help us view our suffering through the lens of the Gospel of Christ.

T R A N S F O R M E D

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

¹ 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:

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

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ 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. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. (ESV)