

Love-driven Ministry

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *2 Cor. 1:3–14, 2 Cor. 2:17, 2 Cor. 4:2, [1 Cor. 16:5–7,] 2 Cor. 7:5–13, 2 Cor. 2:5–17.*

Memory Text: "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you" (*2 Corinthians 2:4, NKJV*).

The apostle Paul didn't always have it so easy.

Besides jail and the life-threatening situations he faced, he also wrote: "From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, IN SLEEPLESSNESS OFTEN, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what

comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:24-28, NKJV).

KIND OF GIVES THE COMPLAINT, THAT CHURCH WASN'T VERY FRIENDLY, A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

What we see in his letters to the Corinthians is some of the "deep concern" that he had for this church. Yet, amid it all, his love for them never failed, just as Christ's love for us never fails us. In fact, it was from Jesus that Paul learned to love NOT JUST the churches BUT HIS WORST ENEMIES in a way that reflects the love that Jesus has for us (2 Cor. 5:14; see 1 Cor. 11:1).

"I TELL THE TRUTH IN CHRIST, I AM NOT LYING, MY CONSCIENCE ALSO BEARING ME WITNESS IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT I HAVE GREAT SORROW AND CONTINUAL GRIEF IN MY HEART. FOR I COULD WISH THAT I MYSELF WERE ACCURSED FROM CHRIST FOR MY BRETHREN, MY COUNTRYMEN ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,"
ROMANS 9:1-3 NKJV

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for
Sabbath, August 29.*

Sunday

August 23

Thanksgiving

**Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. What is the
reason for Paul's attitude of thanksgiving here?**

2 COR. 1:3-7:
Blessed be God, even the Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies,
and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in
all our tribulation, that we may be able to
comfort them which are in any trouble, by the

comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of
God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in
us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.
And whether we be afflicted, it is for your
consolation and salvation, which is effectual in
the enduring of the same sufferings which we
also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is
for your consolation and salvation. And our hope
of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are
partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also
of the consolation"

Paul's thankfulness focuses on the comfort
that God provides for those who are suffering.
In this passage, the verb *to comfort* (*parak-*
aleō) and the noun *comfort* (*parak-lēsis*) occur
together *ten times*. This represents one third of
all occurrences of these words in 2 Corinthians
(29 times). God is portrayed as the "Father of

mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1:3, 4, NKJV).

The comfort one receives from God is not to be kept for oneself (2 Cor. 1:4, 5). Only the afflicted heart that became the recipient of God's consolation is able to impart comfort effectively to those in affliction, too.

Paul could comfort others because he himself, in his sufferings, received comfort from God. "If we are afflicted, it is for *your* consolation and salvation. . . . Or if we are comforted, it is for *your* consolation and salvation" (2 Cor. 1:6, NKJV; *emphasis supplied*). This is love!

What is Paul expressing thanks for in 2 Corinthians 1:8-11?

2 COR. 1:8-11:

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: WHO DELIVERED US FROM SO GREAT A DEATH, AND DOTH DELIVER: IN WHOM WE TRUST THAT HE WILL YET DELIVER US; Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf"

THE WORD "DELIVER" IN THE GREEK MEANS TO "RESCUE" (STRONG'S-#4506). THIS WORD IS FOUND TO DESCRIBE THE BELIEVERS SALVATION DELIVERANCE IN CHRIST THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1THESSALONIANS 1:10-DELIVERANCE FROM THE WRATH TO COME -

COLOSSIANS 1:13-DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF
DARKNESS -

ROMANS 11:26 - THERE SHALL COME OUT OF SION THE
DELIVERER - JESUS CHRIST

JESUS CHRIST IS OUR DELIVERER - WE HAVE ACCEPTED
HIM AS MY DELIVERER FROM SIN, DARKNESS AND
WRATH. WE URGE YOU TO ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS
YOUR DELIVERER ALSO. YOU WILL, WITH US AND THE
APOSTLE PAUL, BE THANKFUL FOR ALL ETERNITY.
AMEN!

NEXT WEEK - 10- AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Paul speaks of trouble "beyond measure, above strength" that made him and his fellow workers fear that the end had come to them (2 Cor. 1:8). For a moment, they thought the resurrection was their only hope. However, God delivered them, and the scenario changed (2 Cor.

1:10). From the fear of death (2 Cor. 1:8), they rise to an implicit hope that God would deliver them once again (2 Cor. 1:10). God's victories in the past give us confidence that He will do the same in the future. God uses afflictions to teach us to trust in Him. Hardships can lead us to spiritual maturity, at least to the extent that we allow them to draw us closer to God. Paul's thanksgiving also displays the power of intercessory prayer and the gratitude we experience because of God's deliverance (2 Cor. 1:11).

What have you found helpful in dealing with the suffering that, one way or another, we all face?