

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

8-15-12

He'll Kiss it & Make it Better!

I. Slide#1blank Intro:

- A. **Slide#2a** The bulletin board out in a shop carried this notice: IN CASE OF ACCIDENT OR INJURY, NOTIFY YOUR SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY. At the bottom of the notice someone scribbled, **Slide#2b** “He’ll kiss it and make it better.” [we laugh but, God will...]
- B. **Slide#3** Alan Redpath said, “Personally, I would rather have **the spiritual gift of bringing life to one broken heart** than the ability to preach a thousand sermons.”
- C. **There was actually 4 letters** written by Paul to Corinth that we know of:
 1. The **1st** we don’t have; the **2nd** letter written was our 1st Cor.; the **3rd** we don’t have(mentioned 2:4-11, scholars have named it the “**severe**” letter); **&** this letter was the **4th** letter, written from Macedonia **&** sent to Corinth by Titus.
 2. **1st Cor. was Practical; 2nd Cor. is Personal.**
- D. **Purpose of this letter** - to affirm his ministry, defend his authority as an apostle, to prepare them for his visit, **&** refute false teachers.
- E. **Key word** – **Comfort** (29 x’s in 2 Cor.)
 1. Yet many references to “**suffering**” also. – **We’ll see they often go hand in hand!**

II. Slide#4a COMFORT! (1-7)

- A. Paul addresses one of the oldest questions of man...“**Why suffering?**”
 1. **Slide#4b** His answer is 3-fold: **Christians Need Comfort; Christians Receive Comfort; Christians Share Comfort.**
- B. Let’s define...Comfort/Παρακαλεω – (Para=**alongside**; Kaleo=**to call**) “*to call alongside.*”
 1. Thus, comfort is **given by someone called alongside to help.**
 - a) **Like a nurse** called to a patients bedside.
- C. **Slide#5 CHRISTIANS NEED COMFORT!**
- D. **Who comforts US in ALL our tribulations**(afflictions)
- E. **Everyone needs comfort!** - [Jesus in Gethsemane. Paul. To the disciples Jesus said He would send them “the comforter”]
 1. When **tragedy strikes**, when our **life collapses** before our eyes, **that’s when** we need someone to **come alongside** **&** put an arm around us!
- F. **Slide#6 CHRISTIANS RECEIVE COMFORT! (3,4a,5)**
- G. Though God is often **silent** during these times, He’s always our **Παρακαλεω**.

1. You've heard of "*Creature Comfort*"?...**well**, the best comfort for the creature is from his **Creator!**
2. **He** will give you the **Grace & Peace**(2) you need, when you need it.
3. Sufferings are not **accidents** but **divine appointments**.
4. To follow Christ is to *follow him into* suffering!

H. **Slide#7 The law of flow and overflow!** (5)

1. When a cup is filled to overflowing, whatever spills over the edge is *the same as* what's being poured in.
2. **Slide#8** If suffering is poured into a Christian, the Christian will overflow. **But** what spills over is **different** from what is poured in.
 - a) **Suffering** goes in but **comfort** comes out.
3. When we experience tribulation for being a Christian, and suffering is poured into our lives, *God will transform it by His supernatural **grace and power***. Another translation reads, "**Just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows**" (2 Cor. 1:5 NLT 2007)

I. **Slide#9 The law of a blessed proportion!** (sufferings/comforts)

1. **The Ruler of Providence seems to bear a pair of scales** - on one side He puts His people's **trials**, and in the other He puts their **consolations/comforts**.
 - a) When the scale of **trial** is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of consolation in nearly the same condition; and when the scale of **trials** is full, you will find the scale of consolation just as heavy.

J. **How have you experienced God's comfort during times of difficulty & pain?**

K. **Slide#10 CHRISTIANS SHARE COMFORT!** (4b,6,7)

- L. I'm listening to the audiobook Kel gave me for Father's day by **Philip Yancey** called *Prayer*.
 1. **Slide#11** He was interviewing a lady who goes ever day into the most violent prison in South Africa. Her efforts there have shown remarkable results in calming the violence. Twice prompting the BBC to do a documentary on her. In trying to explain the results Joanna said to him, "well of course Philip, God was **already present** in the prison, I just had to **make Him visible!**"
 - a) **Slide#12** When you come alongside to share comfort w/someone, remember this 1 thing. **God is already present** in that situation, & you just had to **make Him visible!**

M. When it comes to suffering, you can choose to have "Me-centered suffering" or "Others-centered suffering"!

- N. “God’s comfort is not **given**; it is **loaned**, & you are expected to **pass it on** to others.”¹
1. God seeks *chain reaction comfort*...pass it on!
 2. Here is a ministry all Christians **can(& should)** possess! [*the giving comfort ministry!*]
 - a) **Yet**, it is a very costly ministry!
- O. Remember, **comfort** is given by someone *called alongside* to help.
1. **Slide#13,14** Little children have to deal with monsters or bad guys “*under the bed.*”
 - a) A child’s fears are not to be *laughed at* **but** to be **worked through**.
 - (1) **I used to check for sure!** (under beds, in closets, make my rounds b4 bed)
 - b) And so, you alleviate those fears by “*looking under the bed*” **for them!**
- P. When you suffer, avoid **self-pity**, because self-pity will turn you into a **reservoir** instead of a **channel**.
1. If you don’t share the comfort God gave you, your *experience in the fire* will be wasted. - **Don’t waste your sufferings!**
 2. John Henry Jowett said, “**God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters.**”
 - a) Lycia at Randy’s memorial...*comforted us!* [Greg England gave the nicest compliment]
 3. **Have you gone through any sufferings? How** have you used them?
 4. **When you know someone around you is suffering, how** do you respond?
Do you agonize with them, or does it give you 5 minutes of concern? :(
- Q. What a sad plight when our *modern-day armchair-preachers*, preach a gospel of **health & wealth for everyone**...*what do they do with this?*
1. **God forbid their message was true**...look how much we’d miss out on via suffering!
 - a) I don’t look forward to suffering, but when I read it’s *divine benefits* **how can’t you seek God’s direct comfort to you? And**, being able to **help others** because of it.
 2. To point to “suffering” & say it is “*because of sin in the individuals life*”, their finger also must point to **the Savior & damn Him also**...**for He suffered!**
 - a) Rom.8:18 **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**
- R. P. T. Forsyth said, “**You must live with people** to know their problems, **and live with God** **In order to solve them.**”
1. If we want to bring comfort to others, **we must** have an intimate relationship with the Lord and experience His comfort.

¹ Warren Wiersbe

- S. (6) **Enduring** = υπομονη(upomone), **not** *bleak acceptance of trouble*, but triumph.
1. Don't just except suffering, but triumph over it.
 2. Often we **start well** in our sufferings, often holding on to our "pat" scriptures (i.e. not fresh). **Yet** after "a whole day" we **fizzle fast!**
 - a) **Slide#15** The **cheetah** survives by **running down its prey**. The big cat can sprint **70mph**. But the cheetah cannot sustain that pace for long. Within its long, sleek body is a disproportionately **small heart**, which causes the cheetah to tire quickly. Unless the cheetah catches its prey in the **first flurry**, *it must abandon the chase*.
 - b) Sometimes **Christians** seem to have the **cheetah's** approach to suffering. We lack the heart for *sustained effort*, we **fizzle** before we **finish**. We vow to start faster and run harder, when what we need may be not more speed but more staying power - stamina that comes only from **a bigger heart**. Motion and busyness, no matter how great, yield nothing unless we allow God to *give us the heart*.
- T. So, **How do I share this comfort?**
1. Well, **How do you seek to be** comforted & supported by others?
 2. **Read practical list...**
- U. **Slide#16 What Do I Do? What Do I Say?**
1. Do be a good listener. Answer briefly any questions.
 2. Do show extreme sensitivity.
 3. Do remember words aren't always necessary (in giving comfort).
 4. Do acknowledge the grieving person's pain.
 5. Do allow them to express whatever emotion they are comfortable with.
 6. **Slide#17** Do give a squeeze of the hand, or hand on the shoulder (depending on its appropriateness, or familiarity with the individual).
 7. Do remember the others who are grieving also.
 8. Do help them to put off any decisions that don't have to be made right away (often they start worrying about the future, this obviously isn't the right time to make any "life" decisions at such an emotional time).
 9. Do give brief & simple explanations w/children. Use concrete & familiar examples.
 10. Do give assurances, and extend hope ("You will be ok", "You will get through this.")
- V. **Slide#18 What I Shouldn't Do. What I Shouldn't Say?**
1. Don't avoid the grieving person.
 2. Don't wait for them to reach out to you, reach out to them.
 3. Don't be critical of the bereaved person's actions.
 4. Don't ask countless loaded questions.

5. Don't encourage flights of fantasy, help them in the process of accepting the realities of death.
6. **Slide#19** Don't say, "I know what you are going through." **Everyone's grief is unique.**
7. Don't try to answer when they ask **"Why?"**
8. Don't try to have **"all"** the answers.
9. Don't give platitudes, cliches or trite expressions, such as, **"At least he didn't suffer"**, **"Time heals all wounds"**, **"The Lord knows best"**, **God doesn't make mistakes.** (These are true, but they don't necessarily bring **comfort** at this time)
10. Don't minimize the loss of a baby through a miscarriage, or still-birth.
11. Don't tell them about similar incidents or accidents!!!

W. **Read** Job 2:11-13 --> then 16:1-5.

X. **How have you been able to help others because of the sufferings & comforts you have experienced?** (my moms death, & being involved in many families lives through many funerals)

III. **Slide#20 CONFIDENCE! (8-11)**

- A. (8) We do not know exactly which experience this was.
 1. Paul experienced suffering so intense that he was almost ready to give up.
 2. **Fact...God does not shelter His people from trials!**
- B. Re-read vs.8 (**Poem**)
 1. **Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length;
Pressed so intensely, it seems beyond strength;
Pressed in the body, and pressed in the soul;
Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll.
Pressure by foes, and pressure from friends,
Pressure on pressure, till life nearly ends.
Pressed into knowing no helper but God; Pressed into loving the staff and the rod;
Pressed into living a life in the Lord; Pressed into living a Christ-life outpoured.**
 2. **Are you under pressure?** Sure. **We all are.** But we can be **victorious** if we let that pressure **teach us to live in the power of Christ!**²
- C. **Slide#21 NOT TRUST IN OURSELVES!** (9a)
- D. Just as we shouldn't focus on self in **suffering** so we shouldn't focus on self in **trusting!**
- E. **Slide#22** Alan Redpath said, "...God has one great purpose for His people above everything else: **It is to destroy in us forever any possible confidence in the flesh; it is to bring us to the**

² Galaxie Software. (2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

place where self-confidence has *passed into history* & has been exchanged for a **confidence in God, who raises the dead.**”

- F. When we are most **helpless** we are also most **dependent!**
- G. **Slide#23 TRUST IN GOD!** (9b)
- H. Be driven back to God!
- I. Why is it so important to learn how to **rely on God** rather than **ourselves** during life's trials?
1. We need **divine weapons** to fight against these.
 2. And only **God's Grace** is sufficient for us in every type of suffering or hardship.
 3. A key throughout 2 Cor. is that, God displays **His power** to us & others through **our weaknesses!**
 - a) He is usually most glorified **in the midst of** our weaknesses **rather than** by **removing** them!
- J. Job said, **Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.** 13:15
- K. **Slide#24 End: Robert Louis Stevenson** tells of **a storm** that caught a vessel off a rocky coast and threatened to drive it and its passengers to destruction. In the midst of the terror, **one daring man**, contrary to orders, **went to the deck**, made a dangerous passage to the pilot house and saw the steerman, lashed fast at his post of holding the wheel unwaveringly, and inch by inch, turning the ship out, once more, to sea. The pilot saw the watcher and **smiled**. **Then**, the daring passenger went below and gave out a note of cheer: “I have seen the face of the pilot, and he smiled. All is well.”
- Slide#25**
- L. **Prayer:**
 God, show us Your face so we'll know **all is well**.
 God, You WILL **kiss it & make it better**.
 God, we will do our best to **make you visible**.