

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 14TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION (2 CORINTHIANS 1:1–2)

A LITTLE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul (Saul) was **born in Tarsus** (modern-day Turkey). He was a **Roman citizen of Jewish descent**. He was a **highly educated Pharisee** (religious leader) who **persecuted early Christians** all the way up until his own conversion (Acts 9:1–21).

- He **planted churches on three missionary journeys** and **wrote 13 letters**, which make up almost half of the books in the NT.

“PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS”

Paul is one of the 13 representatives whom Jesus ordained as the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20).

- The church in Corinth began to question Paul's apostolic authority, but that did not change the fact that **he was an apostle by God's will**. Other people's opinions of him did not matter, but **what mattered was what God said about him**.

THE RECIPIENTS OF PAUL'S LETTER

Paul wrote this letter shortly after his first letter, around 55–57 A.D., **to the church of God at Corinth**, where Timothy served (Acts 18:5). The church in Corinth had people from all classes but mainly **those not considered rich, wise, or of noble birth**.

- In the opening of his letter, Paul made it clear he wanted his letter distributed to **all the saints who were throughout Achaia**.

CORRECTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Paul originally wrote to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians) because of their improper value of worldly wisdom.

- Paul visited the church after his first letter, and that meeting did not go well, which prompted him to write “a severe letter.” After receiving a report on the reception of that letter from Titus, **Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to be an encouragement to the Believers in Corinth**.

PURPOSE IN WRITING

Paul **sought restoration** for the ones inside the church who were causing conflict, **corrected their view** of him and his apostolic authority, and **encouraged them** to take part in the “special offering” for those in need in Judea.

- The common theme we see throughout Paul's letter is **the Spirit's power to comfort in the midst of suffering**.

COMFORT IN SUFFERING (2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–11)

WE ARE COMFORTED TO COMFORT OTHERS

The triune God, in every way, is full of comfort and provides the strength and help we need. One way that **God chooses to deliver comfort to us is through others**.

- God comforts us, equipping us to be a comfort to others. **We often do not receive the comfort God intends for us because we have been unwilling to reveal our needs in community**.

EDIFYING THE BODY

Our spiritual comforts are like the spiritual gifts we receive—**they are not meant for our use alone**.

- Both our trials and our comforts can be a great benefit to the Church, just like our gifts. Each person has a unique set of experiences and giftings that can be used to help others. **By being willing to share our giftings and experiences, we can be a great benefit to others**.

PURPOSE IN OUR AFFLICTIONS

Paul's suffering made him rely on God more which positioned him **to be used by God to bring comfort and salvation to so many of God's people**.

- We should pray to be used by God to touch the lives of others, but we must be aware that **it is through our suffering that we are equipped to comfort others**.

STOP COMPLAINING AND COMPARING

There is a sense in which all share in the same suffering. **Though our trials may not look exactly the same as those around us, we will all face trials** (John 16:33).

- We should never get into a “competition” with other Believers, comparing our sufferings. **We are not identified with our sufferings, but with One Who suffered for us and now comforts us**.

PUSH THROUGH THE PAIN TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

God desires us to **endure** through suffering. The word used for **endure** does not communicate the idea of passively accepting the bleak reality of suffering, but the ability through the Spirit to turn trials into triumphs.

- It is the **mentality of a marathon runner versus the mentality of a patient lying on the surgeon's table**.

HE IS THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE AGES

We do not know the affliction Paul endured in Asia, but whatever it was, his hope was in God. **God had delivered him in the past, so he trusted God would deliver him in the present, which fueled an expectation for a future deliverance**.

- **The expectation of a future resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings** (Philippians 3:10) should be fuel for the suffering Christian.

YES, AND AMEN (2 CORINTHIANS 1:12–24)

NOT USING DECEPTIVE OR MANIPULATIVE SPEECH

Paul confidently claimed a clear conscience in how he **ministered to the Corinthians with sincerity and purity by God's grace**.

- There were no hidden agendas with Paul, or cryptic messages in his letters. **The past experiences of the Corinthians caused them to be cynical, believing everyone had ulterior motives and could not be trusted**.

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Paul tells the Corinthians, **“that we are your reason for pride, just as you also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus.”**

- Paul is not describing a sinful boasting but more of a celebration. It is Paul and the Corinthians crossing the finish line, rejoicing that **despite conflict and suffering they made it through together**.

THE CONFLICT

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said he would visit after going through Macedonia (1 Corinthians 16:5–7), but **he decided it would benefit them to stop on his way to Macedonia as well**.

- His visit on the way to Macedonia went so bad that instead of making the trip back after leaving Macedonia, **he decided it best to have Titus deliver a “severe letter” from him**.

LET YOUR YES MEAN YES (MATTHEW 5:37)

They questioned Paul's reliability and sincerity, possibly by using the words of Jesus against him, claiming that he says yes but really means no and says no but means yes.

- It was **okay for them to be disappointed** that Paul did not come a second time, but it was **not okay for them to falsely blame him for their disappointment**.

“EVERY ONE OF GOD'S PROMISES IS ‘YES’ IN HIM”

Paul uses **two spiritual reasons to show that their accusations were false**.

- First, Paul **closely and sincerely preached Christ, Who is reliable. Therefore, Paul was conformed to the teachings Christ taught**.
- Second, was the **reliability of the Father, Who is the One Who established, anointed, and sealed them**.

BE ENCOURAGED

- Several passages throughout the NT show that suffering is a reality of the Christian life (**Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3; Philippians 1:29; Romans 5:3**), but we are also promised consolation in suffering.
- Consolation abounds through Christ. He has overcome and He understands suffering (John 16:33; Hebrews 2:18)
- **“[God] has put his seal on us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment” (v. 22)**.
- The Father has sealed us, indicating that **we belong to Him**, and we can't be tampered with because **He is protecting us**.
- **He has given us the Spirit as a down payment, meaning a guarantee of what God will do. The HS is a promise of greater things to come.**