



6/29/26

Today we closed our series on Building A Godly Home. The ultimate hope of having a home devoted to God is allowing Him to be the center of my own life. That means we live by His will, His way, according to His work... not questioning His word, but trusting even the words that are hard to follow. He will always give us the strength to follow Him. I pray you and I will entrust our lives to Him. As the old hymn goes, "Trust and obey... for there's no other way... to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." 🙏

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Marriage is hard. It's hard when both husband and wife are pursuing their relationship with the Lord because we're both sinners. It's especially hard when one or both spouses are making selfish choices. No matter what the situation, every relationship experiences some kind of suffering. I'm learning that if I look at the suffering through God's eyes, every trial is an opportunity to learn to lean on the Lord more and more. 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 gives me a perspective about the difficulties of life that help me to face them with hope.

Vs. 3-4 ~ "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 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 think it's very easy to believe that as a Christian going through difficult circumstances, I'm supposed to pull myself up by the bootstraps and hold it together with no complaints. Isn't that what a mature Christian should do? No. Maturity brings submission, not perfection. So when I try to be strong and figure it out on my own, I fail. And when I fail, because I will, I want to avoid the Lord because I think He must be so disappointed in me. But that's not what this passage says.

This passage blesses the Father. It calls Him "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." He is the Father of mercies... compassion. That doesn't sound like someone who's telling me to just pull it together and be strong. He's the God of all comfort, all encouragement, all consolation. He knows I'm going to struggle in life. He is compassionate and comforting. The question is not, "Does God love me enough to comfort me and have compassion on me?" The question is, "Am I willing to let Him?" If I refuse to go to Him for comfort, He won't force Himself on me.

He comforts me so much in ALL my afflictions, all my struggles, all my trials, that I'm able to comfort others. Instead of saying, "I don't have it for you because I'm struggling, too", I can say, "The Lord has so filled me with His peace in the midst of my struggle that I have comfort and encouragement to give to you, too."

Several years ago, I learned about "lament" in one of my Masters of Biblical Counseling classes. It was so hard to learn how to lament to the Lord... I felt like if I were a strong Christian, I wouldn't need to lament. I wouldn't need to cry out to God in my pain. But I learned that over 1/3 of the psalms are psalms of lament. God wants me to bring my pain to Him, even though He allows the pain for a purpose, and He wants to be my comforter. Even though He allows the pain, He still wants to comfort me, and He will not let my suffering be wasted.

The truth is, I'm going to lament to someone when I'm suffering. Why not let that someone be the Lord? He's the one who can do something about it. Even when He doesn't change my circumstances right away, He can still encourage me and comfort me and sustain me along the way.

Vs. 6 ~ "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."

When I'm willing to lean on the Lord through whatever suffering I experience, I will receive ample comfort to walk through it. I remember experiencing this when my father-in-law was brought home to Jesus through an accident where a driver fell asleep at the wheel and my FIL was the unintended victim. I was devastated. I kept saying that I was thankful that he was home with the Lord, but the hole he left behind was excruciating. The Lord met me in my sorrow in a way that I can't describe. I went to His lap to find comfort, and He gave me abundant compassion. I can't explain how. I just know that He brought peace to my heart even while I grieved my father-in-law's loss.

Vs. 6-7 ~ "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. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort."

Paul's love for the Lord was so amazing. To have a love like that is my heart's desire. The evidence of a love like that is found in how I handle it when I suffer. If I'm truly allowing the

Lord to be my comfort, it will show itself in how I handle other people's suffering.

Paul said, "If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation." He was saying, "I'm willing to go through whatever suffering it takes if it means that my suffering can bring about other people's comfort and salvation." Here's an example... I have friends who have been afflicted with cancer. Other unbelieving patients with cancer may be completely unwilling to hear from others about Jesus because they haven't walked in their shoes. But because the believing patients leaned on Jesus, they were able to share Jesus with those unbelieving patients. Their affliction became the unbelievers' comfort and salvation. Any way that I suffer, the Lord can use it to help me comfort someone else, and hopefully see them comforted with the ultimate comfort ~ salvation.

"If we are comforted, it is for your comfort." How sad would it be if I was filled up with God's comfort and compassion and ignored the needs of others??? How cool also that we have this promise from God ~ When we patiently endure the suffering that we experience as we wait on the Lord, we have the assurance that He will be our comfort. With the Lord, my suffering is never wasted, I experience His comfort and encouragement in the midst of my suffering, and I'm able to be used by God to be a comfort to others who are experiencing the same kind of suffering. It's such a beautiful promise.

The truth is, EVERYONE faces suffering on this earth. We live in a broken world. But when we turn to the Lord in our suffering, we have the promise from Him that He will comfort us, encourage us, and use even our suffering for our good. When I don't turn to the Lord in my suffering, I have no strength in myself to endure. I'm not able to comfort myself with a lasting comfort. Comfort from others can be helpful, but they don't have the power to fix it. Only Jesus does. With the Lord, He will use others to be a comfort to me, and He will use me to be a comfort to others, but He is ultimately the one who gives freedom and hope.

Paul said, "Our hope for you is unshaken." He had the confident expectation that they would experience God's comfort in response to any affliction they faced. Of course, I would love the promise that I will never need to be comforted because I will never face affliction. But as long as I'm on this earth, I won't have that kind of assurance. While I'm on this earth, I have the assurance of His comfort and compassion. Being free from all suffering IS a promise, but it's a promise that won't be fulfilled until Jesus takes me home.

Why does God allow us to go through suffering while we're on this earth??? It's not to punish us, so what is it??? Vs. 8-11 will answer that.

Vs. 8-9 ~ "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. 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."

God allowed Paul to go through some pretty scary situations. In fact, he thought he was going

to die. But God allowed it for a purpose... to make him rely on the Lord and not on himself. Whoa. This is a lesson I need to learn over and over again. God knows that the safest place for me to be is with Him. He also knows that I'm really dense, and I'll try to take matters into my own hands a lot. He knows that taking matters into my own hands will cause damage. So He allows me to experience just enough that I keep running back to Him. Instead of asking why God is allowing me to suffer, I need to ask, "Lord, what do You want to teach me so that I can cling to You better? Help me to learn no matter how long it takes!" I have a quote by Jon bloom that I pray regularly ~ "Whatever it takes, Lord, keep me desperate for You, because I tend to wander when I stop feeling my need for You." That's what this passage is talking about... relying on the Lord.

Vs. 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."

I know from 2 Timothy 4:18 and Philippians 1:19-20 that Paul understood deliverance. He was not necessarily looking for God to deliver him from suffering on this earth. He was willing to go through whatever it took because he had the hope that God would someday take him home to heaven. That was enough for him. O Lord, let that be enough for me!!! Let the promise of eternity with You be what brings me inexpressible joy, as it says in 1 Peter 1.

Vs. 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."

I love this. Paul asked the Corinthians to pray for him. He knew that the Lord would bless their prayers. I think the greatest thing we can do for someone who is suffering is to pray for that person. They need the Lord's comfort a lot more than they need mine. One of the ways I comfort a person, whether they know it or not, is to pray for them.

So... God knows that I will suffer. He promises that my suffering won't be wasted. He promises to comfort me and have compassion on me. He promises deliverance. What do I need to do? I need to willingly receive His comfort and compassion. I need to look to see who else is hurting and ask the Lord to use me to be a comfort to them. I need to pray for them. I need to completely depend on the Lord. O Lord, please make this so in me. Help me not to minimize who You are. Help me not to avoid You. Help me to run to You as a toddler runs for her mama or daddy, without restraint, without trying to cover up her sadness, without shame. You are always there waiting to welcome me with open arms.

If I'm going through suffering at the hands of another person, no matter who they are, You are not good with it if they're sinning against me. Let me not forget that. You are the God of justice. You will bring good. I can completely depend on You. Amen.