

September 14, 2025

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of 2 Corinthians – Part 1

The Ministry of Comfort

Today we continue on our multi-year journey through the New Testament where we are seeking to understand the historical, chronological & missiological of the 1st Century Church so that we in the 21st Century Church can keep the “CHURCH ALIVE & GROWING”. We pick up where we left off with Paul at the end of his 1st Letter to the Church in Corinth.

As I mentioned before, Paul had spent 1 ½ years previously in Corinth evangelizing, discipling and planting churches. He then left to go to Ephesus where he stayed 3 years. During this time, Paul received news of the chaos that had erupted in the Corinth Church. That's when he wrote we know of as 1st Corinthians. It appears that he left Ephesus and may a quick ‘painful visit’ as we will learn in Chapter 2:1,2. Paul then left and promised to return for a longer visit and then he went to Macedonia. It appears he stayed in Macedonia longer than expected by him and by the Corinth church and they began to accuse him of forgetting them and seemed to question his integrity and intentions. This prompted Paul to write the letter we know of as **2 Corinthians** about 1 year after he had sent them 1st Corinthians. Approximately 55/56 BC.

Key Themes in 2 Corinthians

- **God's Strength in Weakness** – Paul emphasizes that human weakness allows God's power to be displayed (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

- **The Ministry of Reconciliation** – Believers are called to be ambassadors of Christ, spreading the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
- **The New Covenant** – Paul contrasts the old covenant of the Law with the new covenant of grace in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- **Generosity and Giving** – Paul teaches that cheerful giving blesses both the giver and the recipient (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).
- **Paul's Personal Suffering** – He shares the hardships he has endured for the sake of the gospel (2 Corinthians 11:23-29).

Purpose

- **To Defend His Apostleship** – Some false teachers in Corinth were questioning Paul's authority and spreading lies about him. Paul responds by sharing his hardships and sincerity in ministry (2 Corinthians 10-12).
- **To Encourage Reconciliation** – Paul urges the church to forgive a repentant offender and restore unity (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).
- **To Teach About Suffering and Strength** – He explains how God's power is made perfect in weakness and that suffering for Christ is part of the Christian life (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- **To Promote Generosity** – Paul encourages the Corinthians to contribute to a collection for struggling believers in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8-9). Adapted from <https://www.walkofgrace.com/bible-study-guides/history-and-background-of-the-book-of-2-corinthians/>

“2 Corinthians speaks to every believer who has faced hardship, doubt, or opposition. It reminds us that **God’s grace is sufficient**, that we are called to be **ministers of reconciliation**, and that our sufferings are opportunities for God’s power to shine through us.

Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians is a powerful testimony of perseverance, grace, and faithfulness. It challenges us to rely on God’s strength, seek reconciliation, and live generously. Above all, it reassures us that no matter our struggles, **God’s grace is always enough**”. (walkofgrace.com)

Much of the following is adapted from <https://www.videobible.com/sermon-preaching/2-corinthians-1>

Introduction of Grace & Peace.

2 Corinthians 1:1,2...¹ *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Introduction of Grace & Peace

Doctrinal Insight: Paul identifies himself as an apostle not by human appointment, but “*by the will of God*”—emphasizing divine calling and authority. This was essential due to challenges to his apostleship in Corinth.

Application: Christian leaders must ground their ministry in God’s calling, not human validation. Every believer belongs to God’s church—not a man-made institution.

God is the Father of Compassion and the God of All Comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7...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 will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. ⁶ But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; ⁷ and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.*

God is the Father of Compassion and the God of All Comfort.

Doctrinal Insight: God is not distant or disinterested; He is intimately involved in the suffering of His people.

The Greek word for *comfort* (paraklēsis) implies encouragement, consolation, and strengthening. God uses suffering as a tool for spiritual formation, enabling believers to be conduits of comfort to others.

Application: The compassion of God does not negate His justice or sovereignty; rather, it flows from His covenantal faithfulness. The comfort believers receive equips them to comfort others, fostering spiritual unity within the body of Christ. Christians must embrace trials as part of God’s redemptive plan, finding and offering divine comfort in Christ.

Suffering Serves a Part in God's Sovereign Plan.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11... ⁸ *For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, ¹¹ you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.*

Suffering Serves a Part in God's Sovereign Plan

Doctrinal Insight: Paul's affliction in Asia, which brought him to the brink of death, taught him not to rely on himself but on God who raises the dead. In God's plan suffering doesn't have to be random—it can be a divinely appointed means of sanctification, dependence, and preparation for ministry. God allows suffering to magnify His resurrection power and to wean believers off earthly trust and into a full trust in Him.

Application: God permits and uses suffering for His glory and the good of His people (Romans 8:28), revealing His power through human weakness. Our faith is not in our strength or circumstances but in the God who raises the dead. In hardship, we must fix our hope on eternal deliverance.

God Is...

Sovereign – Orchestrating all events for redemptive purposes.

Relational – A Father who comforts, not a distant deity.

Faithful – His promises are fulfilled in Christ, and He gives the Spirit to guarantee our future.

The Vital Need for Integrity and Holiness in Ministry

2 Corinthians 1:12-14... ¹² *For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. ¹³ For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; ¹⁴ just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.*

The Vital Need for Integrity and Holiness in Ministry

Doctrinal Insight: Paul emphasizes sincerity and holiness that come from God, not worldly wisdom. True ministry must be marked by divine character. Paul's transparency contrasts with false teachers.

Application: Ministers must be above reproach, transparent, and faithful. The gospel ministry must be carried out with clear consciences and divine sincerity. Leaders must walk in holiness and speak plainly, with integrity that reflects the gospel's purity.

Our Confidence is Based on the Promises of Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:15-22... ¹⁵ *In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing; ¹⁶ that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. ¹⁷ Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time? ¹⁸ But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. ²⁰ For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore, also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. ²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*

Our Confidence is Based on the Promises of Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Doctrinal Insight: Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises. Paul affirms that the gospel is not a message of ambiguity ("Yes and No") but of certainty. Jesus Christ is the guaranteed fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. His person and work authenticate every divine promise. Christ is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament promise structure. God's faithfulness is

embodied in Him.

Application: The reliability of Scripture is grounded in the finished work of Christ. God's Word is trustworthy and binding. Believers can trust God's Word fully because of Christ. Ministry and personal life must be built on His faithfulness. God establishes us as believers in Christ, anoints us, and seals us with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee which affirms our security and continuity in our salvation.

Ministry Must Be Rooted in Love and Wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:23,24... ²³ *But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith, you are standing firm.*

Ministry Must Be Rooted in Love and Wisdom.

Explanation: Paul clarifies that his absence was not neglect but pastoral care. He didn't want to cause further grief.

Application: Wise leaders know when to act and when to wait. Not every confrontation is fruitful. Christian leadership balances truth and tenderness. Correction must always aim at restoration and joy in Christ.

The Emotional Weight of Ministry.

2 Corinthians 2:1-4... *¹But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. ²For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? ³This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.*

The Emotional Weight of Ministry.

Biblical Teaching: Ministry is not merely administrative—it is deeply relational and spiritual. Paul’s tears and anguish reflect Christ-like shepherding. The heart of a pastor must mirror the heart of God—broken over sin, eager for restoration, and committed to loving truthfully.

Application: Pastoral leaders should never exercise authority coldly or mechanically. Biblical leadership involves emotional engagement rooted in love and holiness.

Church Discipline and Forgiveness

2 Corinthians 2:5-11... *⁵But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you. ⁶Sufficient for such a one is this punishment, which was inflicted by the majority, ⁷so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰But one whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*

Church Discipline and Forgiveness

Biblical Teaching: Church discipline is a necessary part of maintaining purity and order (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5). But discipline is not the end goal—restoration is.

Evangelical Perspective: The church must balance holiness and mercy. After repentance, forgiveness is a gospel imperative (Ephesians 4:32). Paul warns that if forgiveness is withheld, Satan may exploit disunity (v. 11).

Application: Church leaders must foster an environment where truth and grace coexist. Biblical authority includes the command to restore repentant sinners, modeling the heart of Christ.

Conclusion: A Call to Trust, Comfort & Stand Firm

God comforts us so we can comfort others. His promises are unshakable in Christ. His Spirit seals us with assurance.

Call to Action:

1. **Receive God's Comfort**—stop resisting His hand in suffering.

2. **Extend God's Comfort**—who needs to hear your testimony of God's faithfulness? Discipleship includes walking alongside others in hardship, bearing one another's burdens ([Galatians 6:2](#)... ***Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.***

3. **Walk in Integrity**—live a life that reflects the reliability of God's Word.