

Community Group Study - Winter/Spring 2018

2 Cor 1:3-7

Theme: Gospel Partners Comfort One Another

Introduction to Winter/Spring Study: Gospel Partnership

This semester we're doing a study on "Gospel Partnership" that ties in with our preaching series on Philippians. Paul thanks the church in Philippians for their "partnership in the gospel" (1:5). Today, our relationships in the church are still built on this "gospel partnership." We have explored the foundation of that partnership in the first two studies, we looked at the goal of the partnership (mission) for two studies, and now we're looking at some practical help for relating to one another as gospel partners.

Study Overview

When we become "gospel partners" we become united in Christ, but we must live out that unity practically. One key way we live out that unity is by caring for one another. But "care" doesn't always look the same way in every situation. Today we'll explore what this can look like.

Text : 2 Cor 1:3-7

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 may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. [5] For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. [6] 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. [7] Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. (ESV)

Study Questions

1. How does Paul describe God in verse 3? Why does Paul use those titles and what do they mean?
2. Paul points to one of the ways God uses our affliction for good in verse 4. What's the connection between our comfort from God and the comfort we give others?
3. There are times we share in the sufferings of Christ--times we suffer for following Jesus. But Paul sees that suffering as encouraging! Why is suffering encouraging to Paul? (i.e. it shows that we are "in Christ")
4. Paul seems to say that if he is "afflicted" it results in "comfort and salvation" for his readers? How does that work?
5. Why does Paul say his hope is unshaken despite severe suffering?

Application Questions

1. What does it look like to experience God as the God of Comfort? How does who God is and what he's done comfort us in our afflictions?
2. How can it encourage us when other believers we know endure suffering and affliction while holding on to Jesus? Can you share any examples that have affected you personally?
3. How can we encourage others when we endure suffering and affliction while following Jesus? How would understanding that transform our perspective of that suffering?
4. What does it look like to comfort others with the comfort we've received from God? What could that look like practically?
5. How could this response to suffering be a radical witness to the world around us? Have you ever seen a time that enduring suffering with the hope of Christ affecting someone who didn't know Christ?

Prayer

- Spend time praying for anyone in the group that is suffering or in affliction to experience the God of Comfort
- Spend time asking the Lord to help us comfort others well and be a community of Christ-like comfort
- Pray for any other needs in the group