

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
The Ministry of Comfort
2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Last time...we finished 1 Timothy with a teaching on riches and contentment
And an exhortation to Flee, Follow, Fight, and Finish

This time...we begin 2 Cor

As we studied the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ (chronologically),
we are studying the Ministry of the Holy Spirit (chronologically),
from Acts 1 to Rev 22

However, the precise timing of His ministry is not always clear; I could be wrong!

Acts 20:1-3a [map of 3rd Missionary journey of Paul]
After an uproar in Ephesus, he went to Corinth
There he recorded Romans

Acts 20:3b-5
Intending to sail home, he opts for the land route to escape the murderous
intentions of the unbelieving Jews
In Philippi, on his way to Jerusalem with the love offering from the churches in
Achaia and Macedonia for the persecuted and suffering church in
Jerusalem
Timothy is travelling with Paul
There he records 1 Timothy...will shortly be sending Timothy to Ephesus to
pastor the church there
There he also records 2 Corinthians, a follow up to his first letter (of correction) to
them...before leaving these Roman provinces and continuing his journey
to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6 – 28:31)
2 Cor 12:14a Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you (after 2nd)

Moving on in the chronology of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit....2 Cor 1:1-7 and the
ministry of comfort

v1 From: Paul: the 12th Apostle, taking Judas' place...by the will of God
Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen
vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and
kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how
great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

Timothy: Paul's son in the faith, very soon to be sent to Ephesus with his
"walking papers" (1 Timothy)

To: the church

- of God...the Church that belongs to God
This is God's church, NOT Doug's church
- the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3, 1 Cor 6)
- at Corinth...he planted during 2nd Missionary Journey
Acts 18:9-11 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision,
Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

all the saints in the Roman province of Achaia of which Corinth was the chief city

v2 The "signature" greeting of all of the Epistles of Paul to churches
(To the pastors Timothy and Titus: added was "mercy")

Grace and peace from

- God our Father
 - Family relationship, Head of Family not a stranger
 - loving and knowable and near and protective and Provider
- the Lord Jesus Christ
 - the Head of the Church, His Body that is continuing His work

Grace...undeserved but justly paid-for forgiveness of sin,
reconciliation and restoration of the Family relationship
Eph 2:8-9

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Peace...stillness of heart, mind, and soul, regardless of circumstances

John 14:1-3

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Note: Is 48:22 *There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.*
Grace is available (Rom 5:20) but there is no peace for the wicked apart from faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1), faith that purifies the heart unto salvation (Acts 15:9, 11)

v3 Blessed be God...a vague and indistinct word is “God”
The religions of Islam, Buddhism, Mormonism, Humanism have different “God”s
So more information (our Father, v2) is needed to be sure of the right God

Our God is The Father of

1. our Lord Jesus Christ

The mystery of God revealed in His Word – His name, His nature

The LORD

I AM that I AM (Ex 3:14)

Jehovah (Ex 6:3)

Jesus...Joshua, “Jehovah is salvation”, John 10:30

John 3:16 Love, Triune, merciful, gracious, pleased with faith
Col 2:9 For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead
bodily (in the likeness of men).

Heb 1:2-3 heir of all things, by whom also He made the
worlds; Who being the brightness of *His* glory, and
the express image of His person, and upholding all
things by the word of His power, when He had by
Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand
of the Majesty on high

Acts 10:36 the Lord of all

1 Tim 2:5 the Mediator between God and men

Acts 13:38 thru this man is preached the forgiveness of sins

2. mercies

pity, compassion, kindness...from Him and to/thru us to others

Micah 7:18-19 Who *is* a God like unto thee, that pardoneth
iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the
remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger
for ever, because He delighteth *in* mercy. He will
turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He
will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all
their sins into the depths of the sea.

James 2:13b mercy rejoiceth against judgment (Ezk 18:33)

1 Tim 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 longsuffering

Ps 103:8-18

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and
what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do
justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with
thy God?

Matt 5:7 **Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain
mercy**

Matt 9:9-13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Matt 12:1-8 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

3. all comfort

all...what is excluded from “all”?

Only in our Father can we find comfort

Is 51:12a I, *even* I, *am* he that comforteth you

Is 66:13a As one whom his mother comforteth,
so will I comfort you

2 Cor 7:6a

Any other “comfort” is a deceptive counterfeit

Comfort is NOT found in a bottle, pill, food, person

comfort...*paraklesis*

our Comforter (*parakletos*)...John 14:26, John 15:26

Ps 23

Ps 46

Ps 69 Prayer of Jesus on the Cross

His grace and peace, His promises, comfort us

Matt 5:4 *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

1 Thes 1:10 Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thes 5:9-11 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another,

1 Thes 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Our God is

The One True and Living God, Maker of heaven and earth

Our Savior, the Savior of the world

The LORD God Who will be known before Whom every knee will bow
and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

The God revealed in the Bible, The Father Who hears the cries of His
children and comforts them...comfort for us and thru us for others

v4 Our God comforts us..."wraps His loving arms around us"
ala you are feeling badly and someone wraps a warmed blanket around you
in all our tribulation...every affliction, anguish, trial, trouble...without exception

Why does our Father comfort us?

a. He loves us...personally and profoundly!

John 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved
me, and have believed that I came out from God.

He wants the best for us, our best (not merely good) interests are in His
heart

b. He wants to use us in His ministry of comfort

That we would freely share with those in need of that which we have
freely received from Him – Divine comfort in times of trials,
tribulations, anguish, trouble

His children are the ministers of comfort of the God of all comfort

Monica: a minister of comfort for those facing breast cancer

Rosemarie: for those facing loneliness (Lois and others)

Marcelles and Dykstras: for those facing the loss of a child

Manegolds: for those facing an enduring and overwhelming illness of a child

Mike/Sheila: for those facing heart by-pass surgery

our daughter Hayley: infertility, miscarriage

Divorce

Financial distress

Discouragement...like a wet blanket when feeling poorly/sickly

Disease

Fear (of the known or the unknown, conquered by the comfort of faith)

Bondage of addiction – drugs, alcohol, pornography, etc

Unequally yoked marriage

Betrayal by a friend

Estranged relationships – parent and child, siblings, once dear friends (failure of grace)

Imprisonment

Injustice

Persecution

Madness/insanity gripping the world in the perilous Days of Noah and Days of Lot

Demise of USA (shedding innocent blood, attack on the image of God)

You can talk to me and many others about most of those things

1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

We can bear these things because of the comfort of God

Who has this ministry of comfort?
We all do!

Where is this ministry we all have?
In this church
In the Church
In our families
In our neighborhoods
In our workplaces

Where does this ministry of comfort start and end?
In the heart of God, the Alpha/Omega, Beginning/End of all things

What are the tools of this ministry?
The Word of God
1 Cor 14:3
Prov 25:11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold in pictures of silver. (precious)
Prov 15:23b a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it!*
Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

The Spirit of God
Gal 5:22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance (in His ministers)

Who gets the glory for the fruit of the ministry of comfort?
God alone!

What ordeal, terrible trial, great anguish have you endured...
because the Lord never left you and led you thru it...
whereby you can be a minister of God's comfort to someone else?

Rom 8:28

v5-6 Suffering in this fallen and cursed world that hates Jesus is a certainty for every person
In addition, for the Family of God, Phil 1:29

Yet equally true is the consolation/comfort of God that abounds thru Christ to us!

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Matt 28:20

When we suffer AND when we are comforted...a Divine purpose is in play
In us...Rom 8:29, the Captain of our salvation perfected thru sufferings

Thru us while we are suffering

People are watching, maybe wondering and drawn by what they see in us

“I know what you are going thru; why are you not freaked out?

You seem to be at peace; where does that come from?”

So when they are suffering with the same “common” trial, or even a different trial, they may be drawn to you...
for comfort and maybe even the gift of salvation

Thru us after we have suffered and been comforted by our Father

”I know what you are going thru, I’ve been there.

This is the comfort God my Father gave me...”

Being a touch point of the comfort of God for someone who needs it

Our suffering and the comfort we have make us credible witnesses of the
Living God and useful (effectual, active, efficient) ministers of comfort

- to the lost unto salvation
- to the saved unto peace and hope and encouragement

In the hands of God, would not the suffering of our anguish, tribulation, trouble
be all worth it...if a loved one or friend or enemy is saved from death?!

It was for Jesus!!!

Heb 12:1-2 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of ~~our~~ faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In our suffering AND in our comfort we have the opportunity to shine the Light
of Jesus Christ in this dark and hurting world

v7 Our hope...confident expectation
of you is steadfast...unshakeable
knowing...you will know both the sufferings of Christ and the comfort of God!
One does not come without the other

You will be able to say to someone in need of comfort,
“I’ve been there. I no longer am. The Lord never left me and He led me thru it.
That which He gave me He is offering to you.”

Both our suffering and our comforting from God are for both us and others to the glory of
our Father

What God is doing in our lives and thru our lives is FAR bigger than we can see or
imagine

We will see...in our Father’s Throne Room where we will be rejoicing for all eternity

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let
patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting
nothing.

1 Thes 5:16-19 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for
this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the
Spirit.

This will be true until there is a new heaven and new earth

Rev 21:4-5 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall
be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be
any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that
sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new.** And he
said unto me, **Write: for these words are true and faithful.**

Until then, rest in the comfort of God
And do not be too proud to ask for prayer
Your quiet pride might hinder the work of God in and thru you...
unto comfort and salvation to believer and unbeliever alike

Our thankful hearts should be moved to share the comfort of God with all who need it...
And so many do!
May we see what God sees
May we be willing to be sent to be used by God as was Isaiah

In our trouble, our Father is as a warmed blanket!
In someone else’s trouble, we can be as a warmed blanket or a wet blanket
Be as our Father!