

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Read and Acknowledge Unto the End
2 Corinthians 1:8-24

Last time...we began 2 Cor in Ch 1:1-7

Our Father the God of all comfort and the ministry of comfort...to and thru us

This time...finishing 2 Cor 1, we are exhorted, in simplicity and godly sincerity,
to read and acknowledge the Word of God unto the end of our walk with the Lord

v5-8 v8: Continuing the flow of thought from v5-7...

- as sure as the sufferings for Christ is the comfort in Christ
 - whether afflicted or comforted, the comfort and salvation of God is in play
- the Apostle Paul reminds the Church of the trouble/anguish/tribulation he faced in the province of Asia...the uproar in Ephesus (Acts 19)...was used by God for their comfort and salvation

There, “no small stir” stemming from the silversmiths making their living from the Temple of Diana ignited the entire city

The whole city was filled with confusion and wrath at Paul for his preaching of the Gospel, which affected the worship of Diana

In that caldron, Paul and Timothy and Erastus felt they were going to die violent deaths at the hands of the mob blinded by rage

But...

v9-10 Rom 8:28...even if we could not see how in our wildest imaginations

God had a purpose/lesson/work in that severe trial, from which He provided deliverance, for Paul and Co, and thru them for the Church:

1. do not trust in yourselves and in your flawed and finite strength to get what you can do in the circumstance
2. trust in God and in His almighty and sovereign strength to get what He can do in the circumstance

Even if the trouble ends in physical death, the “Worst case” scenario:

Jesus Christ greets you and you see Him face-to-face in glory in heaven

Matt 10:28 *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*

Phil 1:20-23 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain...to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better

God's deliverance of His children is past, present, and future...how comforting!

1. Past: God has delivered us from "so great a death"...eternal death
2. Present: God does deliver His children who are in trouble...
consider His track record in your life in previous trials and tribulations!
3. Future: We can trust God to deliver us from trouble every time until our appointed number of days on earth is completed and he calls us into His presence

Circumstances are always changing

Difficulties and hardships are unending, the result of
either the doing of another here behind enemy lines in the world that hates
Jesus and those who follow Him
or our own doing our own failures, fruit of our error-prone flesh

What to do?

Trust God and not yourself

Receive His help and His grace

(Must ask...our walk with the Lord is not a forced march,
it is a relationship of 2 willing volunteers, and it "takes 2")

Then give it as freely to someone else who needs it

A man of God in the will of God is immortal until his and God's work (Phil 1:6)
is done

1 Thes 5:23-24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

2 Tim 4:17-18 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

v11 Driven from Asia (Ephesus), Paul went to Macedonia and then on to Achaia (Corinth)
While in those places, Paul gathered a gift for the suffering church in Jerusalem
Now, at this point in Paul's ministry, he was taking that love offering from the churches
in Achaia and Macedonia to the suffering persecuted church in Jerusalem...
to provide for them and to encourage them to continue in the faith

The church at Corinth had received God's help and was now sharing God's help with
another fellowship that needed it

They were willingly being a part of what God was doing, not only by giving an offering
of their substance but also by giving an offering of prayer for Paul and those to
whom he is being sent

The writing of this letter fits here into the flow of Paul's ministry

- in Philippi with Timothy
- on his way to Jerusalem with the gift from the Gentile churches
(without Timothy)
- after having visited Corinth twice
- before his anticipated 3rd visit (Ch 12:14)

v12 The testimony of Paul's conscience as he "writes" this letter is that he rejoices that

- in simplicity...singleness of focus and purpose
- in godly sincerity...purity and genuineness (no hidden agenda)
- NOT with man's carnal wisdom
- by the grace of God

he and Timothy, who is still with him, have, in spite of all their trials and tribulations

- lived their lives
- walked the talk
- taught by example

before

- man and God
- this church that will receive this letter

Words to live by: Simplicity and Sincerity

Simplicity

Man-kind in their pride and spiritual darkness make things so difficult and
complicated and messy, convoluted and deceptive
But God keeps things unchangingly simple for us sheep!

Example: marriage

Man-kind – shelves upon shelves of books
God – One thing each in Eph 5

Example: salvation

Man-kind – religions, by endless works, never knowing

God – relationship, by grace thru faith in His work, knowing

2 Cor 11:1-4

All God has ever wanted of His beloved is that we believe Him

Garden of Eden

Gen 15:6

John 6:27-28

Heb 11:6

Sincerity

Say what you mean and mean what you say

Speak the truth in love

Do not be double-minded and unstable in all your ways...like the world

The way of the world is hypocrisy and duplicity, rife with hidden agendas
Climate Change and environmental activists like John Kerry and
Meghan Markle, preaching reducing personal carbon footprints
and net-zero carbon emissions of fossil fuels...while jetting around
in private jets

How is it that Paul can make such a claim as v12?

v13 At Paul's feet, the church at Corinth has

- read...the Scriptures, the written Word of God

John 17:17

The "NT" is still in process of being received and recorded

- acknowledged...The Gospel, the Truth

1 Cor 15:3-4

1 Tim 2:4 (just written for Timothy to carry with him to Ephesus)

Paul has "fed" them ONLY the Bread of Life, NOT anything else

No religious dogma

No denominational divisions

No traditions of men that make void the Word of God

No philosophies of men

No personal opinions or agendas

Col 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,
after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not
after Christ.

And his expectation is that they will "Stay the Course" and "Finish Well their course"

Our charge...individually and corporately...is to do the same –

- stay the course of preaching and teaching only the Word of God
- finish well our course with joy and the ministry we have received from the Lord Jesus Christ
- never stopping, never giving up, not even in these fierce Days of Noah and Days of Lot...not looking back but keeping our hand on the plow

v14 The church at Corinth struggled with carnality, correction being the purpose of 1 Cor Paul's authority as an Apostle was vehemently challenged there in their carnality

But they have received his letters as inspired direction from the Lord

At the end of the day...

the day of the Lord, once they have run their course and been called home
(John 14:1-3)...

the church at Corinth rejoices in the Apostle Paul and Timothy and the Apostle Paul and Timothy rejoice in them...in the unity of the faith and in the fulness of Christ

v15-16 With the confidence of

- the simplicity and sincerity of their witness to the Corinthians
(v12)
- the sure foundation upon which they co-labored with God to build the church
(v13)
- the love and respect they have for each other
(v14)

Paul

- came to them via Macedonia the 2nd time, as he had the 1st time, to share a second spiritual blessing with them
- left them via Macedonia to take their gift to the church at Jerusalem

Now, in Philippi on his way to Jerusalem and looking back on his visits to Corinth and his ministry there...

v17 While he served the Lord in ministering to the believers in Corinth,

- did he use lightness/levity...jokes, fluff, entertaining stories to tickle their ears, or reading a few verses of Scripture to use as a springboard to talk about what he wanted to talk about?
- did seek to please man with his opinions to cater to their opinions/beliefs seeking to draw a people unto himself (yea and nay)?
- did he seek to impress men with his intellect and cleverness?
- did he attempt to dull the sword of Jesus (Matt 10:34) or dilute God's Word?

No, no, no, and no!

1 Cor 2:1-5

Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?
for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

If I want to follow Jesus as Paul followed Jesus, how should I conduct my ministry?

v18-20 Paul fed the people the Bread of Life, the Word of God, words that will remain after
heaven and earth cease to exist

He “Acts 20:27” faithfully in Corinth and everywhere he went

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God
The entire counsel, not just the parts he liked or the parts they, in their flesh, would like

As did faithful Jeremiah, speaking the word the Lord put in his mouth

Jer 1:7-9, 17-19

As did faithful Ezekiel, speaking the word the Lord put in his mouth

Ezk 3:25-27

Paul did not spout his opinions, his agenda, society’s political correctness, or woke-isms,
the “yea and nay” of itching ears

Because the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was preached to the Corinthians

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name
under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

2 Tim 3:15 the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto
salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

John 20:29b **blest are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to
the Jew first, and also to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God
revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God the Son...the yea and Amen of God

Jesus Christ is the Lord of all...the yea and Amen of God

Jesus Christ has been highly exalted by God, given a name above every name that at the
name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ
is Lord, to the glory of the Father...whether believed or not,
the yea of God’s Word and not the yea and nay of man’s opinions
the Amen of God

In Jesus Christ, and only in Jesus Christ (John 14:6), the unchanging promises of God
(eternal life...1 John 2:25, 1 John 5:11-12)
are

- Yea...Heb 10:7
- Amen...the Last Word, Rev 3:14

What do the

- lost people in the world
- followers of Jesus Christ
- hungry and thirsty
- hurting and hopeless
- spiritually dead and lukewarm
- seekers of truth and meaning

need to hear from me/us/this church?

What God says...the Word of God
The Gospel of Jesus Christ
And nothing more!

Yet...Amos 8:11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a
famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but
of hearing the words of the LORD

It seems as if we are in those days

And as was in Israel during Isaiah's ministry, so it seems today in ours

Is 30:9-15

My flesh wants to draw a big crowd

Yet it is the Holy Spirit that testifies of and draws people to Jesus

Should I/we cater to men...or serve God?

So we...

- continue in Jesus' words, steadfastly and faithfully
- stay the course
- finish well our course with joy
- pray for the softening of hearts
- a new work of the Holy Spirit

v21-22 A unchanging testimony of God in times of trouble, then and now:

- He establishes us "in Christ", our Yea, Amen, and Firm Foundation
(not the other way around, any more than with our salvation)

- He anoints us

1 John 2:27

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

- He has sealed us

- He has given us the earnest/down payment of His Spirit, the Spirit of Christ
 Eph 1:13-14 after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
 Eph 4:30 the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption
 John 17:11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are*

v23-24 This letter being written from Philippi to the saints in Corinth and Achaia after Paul has taken his leave from them, he appeals “as God as my witness” that

- he has come to them both times now with God’s Word for them... a little ear-tingling, NOT ear-tickling
- God directs his steps/itinerary, he is not self-willed in his journeys
- it is for their good that he has departed and not stayed like he did the first time (18 mos)

because

- they stand before God by their faith...not by Paul or Paul’s faith
- he is a co-laborer of God in His building in Corinth...a sub-contractor
- he is a helper of their joy in the Lord Jesus Christ...not the source
- he has dominion over no one...he is their servant (Matt 20:25-28)
- the church at Corinth was purchased by Jesus Christ with His blood (1 Cor 6:19-20, Acts 20:28)...not by Paul’s blood

I am merely the helper of your joy of the Lord, eternal life in Christ Jesus

I am called to give you the entire counsel of God to help you in your personal walk with the Lord

If you need help, you have to

- want help
- ask for help

James 4:2 you have not because you ask not

James 4:6 God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up

God makes you all to stand...I do not

Rom 14:4b God is able to make him stand.

Jude 24-25 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

I need God to make me stand!

I need His grace to remove my failures!

I have not “arrived”, I am still pressing toward the mark (perfection) for the prize
of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

I am just a helper in all my roles – husband, father, friend, pastor

I need God’s help to be a sealed and Spirit-filled servant of God to

- be a witness of Jesus Christ to you
- remind you what Jesus did and said
- teach the Truth (Word of God) and only the Truth
- point you to Jesus, Whose you are by the shedding of His blood
- glorify Jesus in all I do and say

Armed with the sword of the Spirit (Word of God) and equipped by the Holy Spirit,
God our Helper,

let us be resolved to stay the course and finish well our course until the
Lord Jesus Christ comes to take us to the presence of our Father,
in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God,
before God and man