

WHY? SUFFERING AND POWER

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-11

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POWER FOLLOWS SUFFERING.

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. 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. 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.

Some affliction can feel overwhelming. *"For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself."* 1:8b

'Despaired' – to be at a loss psychologically, *be in great difficulty, doubt, embarrassment.*¹

Consolations in the midst of overwhelming affliction

- All mercy and comfort ultimately come from God – 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,*

Mercy: *"display of concern over another's misfortune."*²

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

Comfort: *"lifting of another's spirits."*³

- God's comfort to you is your gift to others – 1:4-7 *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.*

“The deepest lessons come out of the deepest waters and the hottest fires” – Elisabeth Elliot

- You're not alone in overwhelming affliction – 1:8 *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.*

How can we comfort others in the midst of overwhelming affliction?

- Examine your heart

Psalms 139:23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!* ²⁴ *And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

- Listen

Proverbs 18:13 *If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.*

James 1:19-20

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- Pray

2 Corinthians 1:11a *You also must help us by prayer,*

- Overwhelming affliction will not last forever – 1:9-11 *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.* 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.* 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.*

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 345.

² *Ibid.*, 700.

³ *Ibid.*, 766.