



## 2 Corinthians: Triumph in Trials

### Week 1: Comfort in Troubles

#### 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

#### Overview of 2 Corinthians

#### **'The most moving document Paul has left us'**

Beasley-Murray ('Introduction' in the Second letter to the Corinthians)

You might like to begin by showing the overview of 2 Corinthians video on the Bible Project here:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/2-corinthians/>

We will be covering just the first 7 chapters in our sermon series before Easter, but it is helpful to have an overview of the whole book and the context.

Our series is entitled 'Triumph in Trials' and we particularly will be considering how Paul faces challenges and leads from weakness and brokenness. Thiselton in his commentary says '*in 2 Corinthians we see Paul bare his soul. He allows us to see his inner self in turmoil...*' and in doing so he models to us a different style of leadership – a cross-shaped style of leadership.

#### Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

#### Questions (choose some from):

- 1) What do you normally think of when you think of the word 'comfort'?
- 2) The origins of the word in Latin and French ('con forte') give the idea of 'being greatly strengthened.' How does this change help when thinking of God being the 'God of all comfort' (v3) in times of trial?
- 3) (In smaller groups?) Have you any stories of how you have known the 'God of all comfort' in trials that you have faced in life? Share what that looked like and felt like for you.
- 4) Dave talked in his sermon about the danger, in testing times, of looking to 'false comforts' (comfort eating, shopping, pornography, alcohol etc.) rather than looking to the God who gives 'all comfort.' Do you see that as a danger and how can Christian friends help each other in these times to point to God's comfort?
- 5) Reflect on v4 'who comforts us in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we have received from God.' What does this mean for you in your situations, on your frontlines? How can our own experiences of trials, be used to help others?
- 6) We all find it difficult to understand when people (especially those who are really following God) go through difficult times if God is the 'Father of compassion.' What does this passage say in response to this (especially v5,6,9)? What do you think it means for us to 'share in the sufferings of Christ' (v5)?
- 7) Have you any stories to share as to how God has grown you and shaped you through challenging times and suffering?
- 8) How might v8-11 encourage those who are having challenging times? What do they say to those who are not currently in a place of trials (esp v11)?

## Respond and Encounter:

Some suggestions:

- 1) If there is a particular person (or a few) in your group who are particularly going through trials then invite them briefly to share anything they want to share and then pray over them using scripture from this passage and any words you may feel God give you. You might like to lay hands on them as they do and pray for the 'God of all Comfort' to encounter them.
- 2) Take a few moments of silence and stillness. Ask everyone to reflect on what God has spoken to them most about through this passage. How is he calling them to respond? Share this with each other (in small groups) and pray about these things.
- 3) Invite everyone to think of someone on their 'frontlines' who is facing trials and needing comfort and write their names on a card. In a time of silence
  - a. invite each person to pray for God's comfort for that person using words of scripture from today's passage
  - b. Invite everyone to be listen to the Holy Spirit to see if God gives them any words to share with that person or guides them as to how they might bless and bring comfort to that person.

Then invite people to take the card home to remind them to pray for their person in the coming week.

- 4) Listen to the song 'Comfort' ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgH7Y5Mb\\_s0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgH7Y5Mb_s0)) together and allow the Holy Spirit to meet you all through the words...

I will be anxious for nothing  
Hold on to one thing  
My Comfort my Peace  
I will be safe in Your presence  
So fierce and so tender  
My Comfort my Peace  
  
Your voice stronger than fear  
Waits in the night  
Your words tear through the dark  
Flood it with light  
Fill it with fire  
  
You won't forsake me  
You won't betray me  
You never fail me  
And I won't be afraid.

### **Key Verse to meditate on and learn this week:**

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)**