

## Sermon Notes – October 9, 2022

### Welcome To Our Study Of II Corinthians!

- ⇒ Today we launch what will likely be a twenty-eight-part sermon series in II Corinthians under the heading, *“Strength & Weakness: God’s Treasure in Jars of Clay.”*
- ⇒ One writer says: *“II Corinthians is the most personally revealing of all Paul’s epistles. At the same time, it is perhaps the least familiar of all his inspired writings, often neglected by both individual believers and preachers alike. The neglect of this magnificent epistle is an immense loss to the church...”*

### Today’s Text: II Corinthians 1:1-7

Following the pattern of the first century, Paul begins his letter by introducing the writing team & the intended audience, and then offers a warm greeting based on their common relationship to God through Jesus Christ. The tone of II Corinthians is emotional, deeply \_\_\_\_\_ (as this opening text), and even tense at times as Paul defends his apostolic authority.

### First Things: Greeting Everyone “In The Room” (1-2)

- ⇒ The writer is the Apostle Paul, a man who never \_\_\_\_\_ to be a Christian in the first place. Acts 9 tells the gripping story of how this well-educated Jewish man changed from being a persecutor of believers in Jesus, to being one of them.
- ⇒ Timothy was a young guy whose early connection with Paul is described in **Acts 16**. He was born into a religiously and \_\_\_\_\_ divided household and nurtured in faith by his mother and his grandmother (also **II Timothy 1:6; 3:15**).
- ⇒ The city of Corinth was located on a narrow isthmus (that’s a skinny part of land that connects two larger sections) in what is now modern-day Greece. That meant that Corinth was at a major crossroad of trade and commerce.
- ⇒ Interestingly, Corinth had been totally destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and left in ruins until 44 B.C. when Julius Caesar rebuilt the place. Paul visited Corinth in A.D. 49-50 when it was about 80 years old.

5. God gives comfort in all kinds of difficulty. How might His comfort be different when the suffering is a result of our sinfulness or foolishness as compared to when the suffering is “for Christ”?
  
6. Verse 5 says that “through Christ we share abundantly in comfort.” What do you think he has in mind here? How do we share abundantly in comfort by Christ? How does that work for you or especially in a church family?

### Thinking Deeper & Taking It Home

THINK: Take a look at I Peter 4:12-19. How does Peter view suffering here, and how does this text complement what Paul writes in today’s text?

### Time to PRAY

(Or do this at the beginning of your group time)

Take time to share prayer requests that relate to the people in your group, and then pray for those needs. Here’s a place to list specific prayer needs:

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Worship Next Sunday: October 16, 2022

“Setting Our Hope On God Alone”

II Corinthians 1:8-11

Pastor Matt Richey

⇒ Corinth in Paul's day was diverse, rich, religious, and \_\_\_\_\_. One might have said, "What happens in Corinth..."

### God's Comfort In Our Suffering For The Gospel (3-7)

- ⇒ The \_\_\_\_\_ Christian life this side of heaven is often accompanied by difficulties, loss, sorrow, and suffering. This reality isn't intended to be a cause for discouragement, but rather encouragement, lest we feel picked on by God or think that experiencing difficulties means that we have been \_\_\_\_\_ by God. Peter says the same thing in **I Peter 4:12-13**.
- ⇒ Paul describes God as **"the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."** Let that sink in! Do you see how many times the word "comfort" appears in this text? Do you need mercy? Do you need grace? Then get the "biggest bucket" you can find and go directly to its source. See **John 7:37-39**.
- ⇒ This text is specifically about God's comfort in our suffering *for the gospel* ("Christ's sufferings" – v. 5); that is different from suffering that comes from our \_\_\_\_\_ world, and the suffering we experience as a result of our own sinfulness or foolishness. Again, see **I Peter 4:15-16**.
- ⇒ God *does* comfort repentant sinners and He *does* comfort us as we endure the affects of our fallen world, but the focus in this text and in the rest of this epistle is on suffering for the gospel (**II Cor. 11; II Timothy 1:8-12**).

### Responding to God's Word

- ⇒ People often ask "Why?" when they are suffering. Today's text does address one reason why God might allow us to suffer. Do you see it? But there's more to come in next week's text, so hold that question until then!
- ⇒ In John 16:33 Jesus says, "In this world you will have tribulation..." – a reminder that life in this fallen world is rarely perfect. What struggles have you faced that God used for good later in your life? Have you thought about this?
- ⇒ GIVE THANKS...that God is indeed **"the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."** Thank Him that He does not abandon you in seasons of difficulty, but rather draws closer!

## Community Group Notes

### Getting Started

At this moment we appear to be enjoying a prolonged season of warmer and sunny weather. There seems to be a movement afoot that expresses longing for rain! Where do YOU stand on that issue? Keep it sunny...or bring on the rain?

### Talking It Through

1. Review the sermon from Sunday: READ II Corinthians 1:1-7 and remember the main points from Sunday. In summary form, what was this week's sermon about?
2. As we began our study of II Corinthians, we mentioned some "background" issues about Paul, Timothy, and the church at Corinth. Which of those background issues did you find most helpful to remember or hear?
3. Thinking specifically about Corinth, it seems that sometimes people think about the gospel as "working best" in more "normal" settings. Paul seems to think that the gospel is what messy places and messy people need the most. Are you ever tempted to think that a situation or a person is beyond help? What do you think Paul would say about that?
4. Paul describes God as **"the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."** Think about this: How does a person's view of God affect their willingness to "run to Him" when things are a mess, as opposed to blaming Him or turning away? From this text, how does Paul view God? Think through the whole text on this.