

Introduction: Do y'all know people who are well-intentioned yet sometimes overwhelmed by life to the point of despair? If so, how many times have y'all heard them utter words that are inappropriate in polite society? *** I remember a colleague from my working days who was hard-working and high performing. He cared about his work and strove to do everything with excellence. But, Murphy's Law always got the upper hand with him: If anything can go wrong it will go wrong. He had a cubicle poster with corollaries to Murphy's Law, titled *Murphy Was an Optimist*. One that particularly struck me was: the thing that most often goes wrong is the most critical part of the project. Occasionally he used the mildest obscenity in one-on-one conversations; but, in our project team meetings at 8:00 AM, some twenty-five people standing and giving updates so, as a team, we could modify our plans to stay on target, the worst he would ever say was: 'IT happens' before his voice trailed off. *** How do we encourage people like him? *** Our texts this morning from the apostle Paul and brother Timothy, as well as Jesus' Upper Room promise, give us what we need. *** As Jesus said in His *Inaugural Address*: Our Father causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the un-righteous (Matthew 5:45). In other words, everyone on earth experiences the same trials, tribulations, sufferings and afflictions. All these happen to unbelievers and believers. *** However, believers experience the comforting of God through the Comforter, or Holy Spirit. We are then to pass this comfort on to those not yet knowing Jesus. My co-worker told me a few years after the project was over that the way he saw me act on the job gave him hope that people could do things right even in times of difficulty and stress. *** So now, let's learn from our powerful texts.

Letterhead: From: Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ through will of God, and Timothy the brother
To: The Church of God being in Corinth, with the saints in all Achaia
Greeting: Grace to y'all and peace from God, Father of us, and of Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:1-2)

I. God comforts His people in trouble to comfort others; and, affliction and suffering are for salvation, endurance in suffering and comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

- A. The God of comfort is blessed for comforting His people in their trouble to be able to comfort those in any trouble as God comforted them. (Verses 3-5)
1. Blessed (is) the God and Father of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. (Verse 3)
Mercies: Father God shows compassion, sympathy and pity to His people.
Comfort: The word for comfort is: *pār-āk'-lay-sīs*, also: consolation, encouragement, earnest request.
 2. Who (is) comforting us concerning all our trouble, (for) us to be able to comfort those in all trouble. (Verses 4a-b)
Comfort us: First, Father God comforts His people, those who are in Him by the faith of His Son.
To be able: This comfort God gives His people makes them able to comfort other people who are in any trouble.
 3. By the comfort of which we are being comforted ourselves of God. (Verse 4c)
God through us: God comforts those of us who are His people, in the Church of His Son, so that we can tell others experiencing trouble similar to what we experienced what God did for us, so they may trust Him to do the same for them. This is pre-evangelism.

God comforts His people that they may comfort others

4. Because just as it is abounding, the sufferings of Christ in us, in this way, by means of Christ, it is also abounding, our comfort. (Verse 5)
IN Christ: All who are IN Christ, by grace through His faith, know every time their sufferings they share with Him increase, their comfort IN Him will increase. (Philippians 3:7-11; 2 Timothy 2:11).
- B. God's ministers have been afflicted for His people's comfort and salvation to work endurance in them to know both sufferings and comfort. (Verses 6-7)
1. But, whether we are being afflicted (is) on behalf of your comfort and salvation, whether we are being comforted on behalf of your comfort of the working in endurance of the same sufferings (to y'all) which also we are suffering. (Verse 6)
Your comfort and salvation: The afflictions Paul's ministry team may suffer are for the sake of (on behalf of) the comfort and salvation of the believers in Corinth.
Endurance from suffering: And Paul says that their endurance by sharing in the sufferings of his ministry team will comfort them and work endurance in them from what they share of the suffering of Christ and His ministers.
 2. And our reliable hope on behalf of y'all, knowing that as y'all are being partakers of sufferings, in this way also (y'all are being partakers) of the comfort. (Verse 7)
Flow: Enduring suffering for Christ flows into receiving His Father's comfort. Let us thank God for His salvation that we may also receive more faith so our suffering for Christ will flow into His comfort to us. Then we will be able to comfort others.

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II. When they despair of life God's people must trust Him to deliver them and pray with gratitude because Jesus promised the Comforter who gives His peace. (2 Corinthians 1:8-11; John 14:25-27)

- A. The church must know of despair even to live in order to trust God raising the dead and His deliverance, so joining together in prayer may result in gratitude. (2 Corinthians 1:8-11)
1. For not we are desiring y'all to be ignorant, brothers, concerning our trouble having happened in Asia (Minor – Turkey), that just as surpassing above (our) strength, we were being weighed down so that to be despaired, us, even to (of) life. (Verse 8)
Trouble: Their trouble in present day Turkey was so great it was as tribulation so great they were not strong enough to bear it.
Low: They were brought so low in despair they wondered if they would still be able to live!

2. But we, in ourselves, the sentence of death had received, that not persuaded we might be (to trust) in ourselves, but IN God who is raising the dead. (*Verse 9*)

In us: To receive what we need from God, each one of us needs to come to the end of himself or herself. The same is true of every church and every ministry team. We are insufficient in ourselves.

IN God: God is the source of hope, faith and life. Jesus said all who hear His words and believe in the One sending Him have crossed from death to life (John 5:24-25). All we need is IN God!

3. Who from so great a death, He delivered us, and He will deliver us; in whom we have hoped that also yet, He will deliver us. (*Verse 10*)

Deliverance: It is God who has rescued by drawing out of danger to set free to follow Him in His Way, not the way of either the world or of ourselves. And, we can be sure He will continue to deliver us IN His Son, Messiah-Savior. May we all have assurance of deliverance to come based on the deliverance we have already received from God in Jesus.

4. Joining in helping together also y'all on behalf of us in prayer, that from many persons, the to us gift, by many, thanks may be given, on behalf of us. (*Verse 11*)

Joined together prayer: God bestows His gracious gift of comfort to His people through the united prayers of many of His people being offered on behalf of one another.

Result: The result of all this is God's people are moved to give thanks to God for the comfort they have received, and can pass comfort along to others by His grace through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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- B. Jesus says the Comforter will teach the Eleven all things and remind them of all He said; He is giving them His peace so they must not be afraid. (*John 14:25-27*)

1. [Jesus said] these things I have spoken to y'all, with y'all remaining. (*Verse 25*)

Jesus remaining: In the Upper Room, just before going to the Cross, Jesus had spoken some hard truths that caused His apostles discomfort. He now tells them He needed to do this while He was still with them and before the life-shattering life-changing events happened.

2. But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom He will send, the Father in My Name, that one y'all He will teach all things; and, all things He will remind y'all, all things, whatever I told y'all, even I. (*Verse 26*)

Trinity: In this one heavily packed sentence, Jesus mentions the three persons of the Trinity. He calls the Holy Spirit the Comforter, the same word the apostle Paul used ten times in our first passage.

He says Father God will send the Comforter; and, He will be sent in the Name of Jesus the Savior.

Ministry: The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to comfort, console and encourage God's people in Jesus (His Church) so they may all comfort others who do not yet know Him, or Jesus, and so do not have eternal life (John 17:1-3).

We must be grateful for all the comfort we have received from God in trouble to be motivated by the Holy Spirit to comfort others in the same trouble we have had.

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The Eleven: These words, of the Holy Spirit reminding of all the words Jesus spoke, were only addressed to the eleven apostles remaining after Judas left. However, the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit according to these words of Jesus to write the Gospels and the New Testament. It is reasonable that we can expect the Holy Spirit to help us remember all these words He inspired the apostles to write.

3. Peace I am leaving with y'all, My peace I am giving to y'all; not as the world is giving, I, even I, am giving to y'all. (*Verses 27a-b*)

Peace: Jesus' peace is a wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The ongoing peace of the Holy Spirit is the source of comfort for all disciples of Jesus, not just the eleven apostles.

The Holy Spirit brings God's comfort to Jesus' disciples

4. It must not be troubled, the heart of y'all, neither it must be afraid. (*Verse 27c*)

Encouragement: The Church of Jesus is many people with one heart – His heart. And, His peace gives us courage. May we experience the peace the Comforter gives so we will live without fear.

Conclusion: God comforts His people in trouble so they can comfort others. Affliction leads to salvation, endurance in suffering and comfort. When they despair of life, God's people must trust Him to deliver them and pray with gratitude. Jesus said the Comforter will come and be giving peace to His people.

God comforts His people that they may comfort others