

## Delivered From So Great a Death: 2 Corinthians 1:8-14

### Scriptures for Today:

***2 Corinthians 1:8-14** For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; 11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. 12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 13 For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; 14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

### Introduction

We are back in the book of 2 Corinthians. This is the 47<sup>th</sup> book of the Bible and it has 13 chapters. 2 Corinthians is the 2nd letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, which is a city in Greece.

**2 Corinthians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

Achaia was the southern region of Greece, a Roman province, where Corinth was located. So the gospel at this point has been spreading throughout the world. The city of Corinth was roughly 800 miles from Jerusalem across the mediterranean sea. Paul went to Corinth in Acts 18 and established the Corinthian church. Similar to how this church was planted. The gospel was preached and believers begin to assemble together.

Corinth was an important city but it was also very difficult. It was known for immorality, idolatry, and pride. When Paul planted the church there, those problems did not just disappear overnight. When we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ we become a new creature. But we still carry the baggage of our sinful flesh.

The Corinthian church had real issues. In Paul's first letter (**1 Corinthians**), his tone is firm, corrective, and rebuking. He had to correct them on divisions, carnality, fornication, disorder in the church, confusion about the resurrection, and many other things.

After Paul's first letter, there was tension between him and the church. Some in Corinth had questioned Paul's sincerity, authority, motives, and apostleship.

By the time Paul writes 2 Corinthians, many in the church had responded well to his correction, but there were still opponents stirring up doubts about him. So Paul writes to defend his ministry, explain his sufferings, restore trust, and prepare them for his coming visit.

Paul's tone in 2 Corinthians is deeply personal, and emotional. He is showing them that true ministry, serving the Lord, is not always impressive on the outside. It involves suffering, it involves being burdened, misunderstood, and afflicted. But through that weakness, the power of Christ is made known.

## Recap of 2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Paul opens the letter by pointing to God as the source of mercy and comfort.

**2 Corinthians 1:3** Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

True comfort does not come from the pleasures of this world. True comfort only comes from God. Everything else is just temporary fulfillment of your flesh.

Paul explains that suffering is part of the Christian life, but God comforts His people so we can comfort others.

**2 Corinthians 1:4** Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Paul's own afflictions were not wasted; they became part of his ministry to strengthen and encourage the church.

There may be things that happened in your life and you're wondering why did God allow me to go through those things? When you find yourself questioning, it's good to remember the suffering that Jesus went through...

**2 Corinthians 1:5** For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

The same way Jesus suffered and brought comfort to us through His death, our suffering in this life becomes a means of comfort to others. When people go through the same or similar things that you have gone through, you are able to help them in a way that someone else may not be able to.

So in verses 1–7, Paul teaches that **Christian suffering is real, but God's comfort is greater**. The suffering may abound, but the consolation abounds more in Jesus.

## Exposition of 2 Corinthians 1:8-14

Now starting in verse 8, Paul gives a personal example of the suffering and tribulations they were facing.

### Verse 8

**2 Corinthians 1:8** For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

Paul is now telling the Corinthians that he doesn't want them to be ignorant or unaware. He wants the church to know what has happened to him. He's bringing to their attention the real trouble that he faced.

Notice that he says that they were **pressed out of measure**. That phrase means the pressure was beyond normal limits. We are not told many details about the specific trouble they faced, but we do know it was some kind of serious affliction. Paul is describing it as a crushing burden. It's something that exceeded what he could naturally bear...

"Pressed out of measure, above strength...this was more than he could handle in himself.

Then it says "insomuch that we despaired even of life" In other words, Paul thought that death was imminent.

That's how overwhelming and crushing this tribulation was. They thought they were going to die. And this is important because many people today who profess to be Christians want an easy life. No troubles. No worries. No pressure. No suffering.

They want Christianity to mean that everything goes smoothly, their finances always work out, their health never fails, their family never struggles, and their path is always comfortable. They want to reap benefits and blessings from God on their terms. But that is not the Christianity of the Bible.

The apostle Paul was one of the greatest Christians who ever lived, and yet he said, "**we were pressed out of measure.**" He was not outside the will of God. He was not being chastened because he had quit on God. He was serving God faithfully, preaching the gospel, strengthening churches, and doing the work God had called him to do — and yet he still faced trouble so heavy that he despaired even of life.

And that tells you something very important: **A blessed life is not the same thing as an easy life.**

Many people confuse those two things. They think if God is blessing them, then everything should be easy. But Paul's life proves the opposite. Paul was blessed, but he was also afflicted. Paul was used by God, but he was also pressed beyond his own strength. Paul was in the will of God, but he was not exempt from tribulation.

The Christian life is not a promise that you will never suffer. It is a promise that God will be with you in the suffering. We are actually promised tribulation in this life.

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

**Philippians 1:29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

That is not a maybe. That is not a possibility. Jesus said, **“ye shall have tribulation.”**  
It is given to us **“to suffer for his sake.”**

So if your idea of Christianity is that God should give you a pain-free life, you are going to be disappointed. But if you understand that the Christian life includes suffering, then you will not be shaken when trouble comes.

Paul is showing us that even strong Christians can be overwhelmed. You will face burdens that are beyond your own strength. You will be faced with moments where you will not know how you are going to make it through.

But the difference is this: the world suffers without hope, but the Christian suffers with and for Jesus Christ. That is why Paul can talk about being pressed out of measure and still call God **“the God of all comfort.”** Because when we face these things, we only have one place to turn.

## Verse 9 - 10

**2 Corinthians 1:9** But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

So why did Paul have a sentence of death in themselves. Why were they being pressed beyond measure to the point of death? So they would not trust in themselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

That’s why you don’t have to be afraid of anything in this life. If your faith and trust is in Jesus Christ, then you have the Creator of the universe on your side who has power over all things.

But sometimes we need to be reminded of that. We really need to be reminded of that constantly so that we don’t forget. We need to make sure we don’t find ourselves trusting in our own strength. That’s why you always thank God through those tribulations in your life because those are reminders that we need Him.

Paul was brought to the end of his own strength so that he would not trust in himself but in God...

**2 Corinthians 1:10** Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver *us*;

Here we see Paul declares a threefold truth:

God delivered them – in the past.

God doth deliver them — in the present.

He trusts that God will yet deliver them — in the future.

Paul's confidence was not that he would never suffer again. His confidence was that God would be faithful no matter what came next.

That's the kind of confidence that you want to have in God. He is able to deliver, sustain, and carry us through whatever happens. And let's say God does allow our flesh to die unexpectedly — Understand that God is delivering you out of this world and into His presence. That why even in the most perilous times in your life, just worship God and trust Him. You can have peace and comfort knowing that He will deliver you no matter what. If he can deliver your soul from hell, how much more can he deliver you from trouble in this life.

## Verse 11

**2 Corinthians 1:11** Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

So now Paul is bringing the Corinthians into this testimony. He's reminding them of how important their prayers were in this situation. "Ye also helping together by prayer for us"...

He's saying we were helped because of your prayers. That's not a small thing. Together as a body of believers, we are able to help others in ways that we would never be able to on our own. There I times when I do not know how to help someone. There are times when I don't know how to help myself. But do you know who does know how to help? God knows.

Imagine if hundreds of believers, children of God, are all praying and calling upon God for the same thing. Something that is according to His Will. Do you think God is going to listen? If He hears even just one person, how much more will he hearken to the cries of many of His children.

**Psalms 145:18-19** The LORD *is* nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. **19** He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

**Psalms 34:17** *The righteous cry*, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

**Psalms 34:19** Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Isn't that awesome? To have a God that delivers us out of all of our troubles. Maybe you're thinking "Well He isn't delivering me out of my troubles". You just keep trusting and worshiping God and see what happens. Paul was at the point of death. Don't give up. You wait on the Lord and watch Him work. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.

And when we are praying for each other, that is going to help more than we can comprehend.

Paul says..." that for the gift *bestowed* upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

The gift that was bestowed upon Paul was the deliverance given by God. Many people prayed. God answered their prayers. And because many people were involved in praying, many people were also involved in giving thanks.

God allows burdens to be shared among believers. That's something that we need to be doing as a church. When burdens are shared, the prayers are multiplied. And when God answers, thanksgiving is multiplied. More people are able to glorify God together. God receives more glory.

That is a great blessing of having fellowship with other Christians.

We do not suffer alone. We do not pray alone. And we do not rejoice alone. We partake in all of these things together. When we are all relying on the strength of The Creator of all things, we become an unstoppable force. When I say unstoppable, I mean absolutely unstoppable. When we all fear the Lord, are praying and worshiping together, understand that the few of us here can accomplish more for God than thousands upon thousands of people. Because of who we have on our side.

## Verse 12

**2 Corinthians 1:12** For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

So far in verses 8 – 11 Paul has been talking about his trouble, his deliverance, and the prayers of the saints. But here in verse 12 he begins to talk about his integrity.

He says: "**For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience...**"

Paul is saying, "Here is what gives me confidence and joy: my conscience is clear before God." Paul had been through suffering, but he had also been misunderstood. Some people at Corinth questioned him. They questioned his motives. They questioned his sincerity. They may have thought he was unreliable because his travel plans had changed which we see later in the chapter.

So verse 12 is not random. Paul is preparing to explain that his changed plans were not because he was dishonest, careless, or double-minded. Before he explains the details he's saying **my conscience is clear**.

Notice what he says... that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

Paul was not trying to manipulate people. He was not playing games. He was not saying one thing while meaning another. He was not using the Corinthians for personal advantage.

Paul's conversation in the world, (his manner of life and behavior) was characterized by simplicity and godly sincerity. Not with fleshly wisdom, worldly tactics, or self-promotion.

That is how you want to be in your life. We should never be trying to take advantage of other people. Our behavior should be consistent throughout our lives. No matter who we are around.

**Philippians 2:3-4** Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. **4** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Imagine how different this world would be if we stopped being so self-centered and started esteeming others better than ourselves.

There are some people who think it's okay to say whatever they want, hide whatever they want, flatter people when necessary, manipulate situations, and do absolutely anything just to get ahead.

Paul is saying, That is not how we dealt with you. Their behavior was sincere and godly in the world and even more so to the Corinthians.

### Verse 13 – 14

**2 Corinthians 1:13-14** For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; **14** As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul continues his thought from verse 12 in regards to his conscience being clear. He says: **“For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge...”**

In other words, he's not writing with hidden meaning. He's not trying to say one thing while secretly meaning another. What you read is what I mean.

Paul is defending the honesty of his words. He is telling the Corinthians that his letters are straightforward. He is not being deceitful, crafty, or double-minded.

He says, “and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; **14** As also ye have acknowledged us in part,”

He wants the Corinthians to fully understand and continue acknowledging the sincerity of his ministry. They had already recognized, at least partly, Paul’s sincerity and apostleship. Not everyone may have fully understood him, and not everyone may have fully appreciated him, but many of them had acknowledged that Paul was sincere and that God had used him in their lives.

He says, “that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

Paul is describing a **mutual rejoicing** between himself and the Corinthians. They could rejoice in Paul because he had brought them the truth, labored for them, and cared for their souls. And Paul could rejoice in them because they were the fruit of his ministry.

We should rejoice in one another. I’ve been in situations where people will only rejoice in you when you do what they want you to do. Let’s say you decided to move away from here and relocate and you found another good church where you can serve the Lord. I’m going to be sad, but I will still rejoice with you and be happy for you. There are some who will not rejoice with you even though you’re continuing to serve the Lord somewhere else. You don’t want to be like that.

So Paul is saying that when they stand before the Lord, he and the Corinthians will be able to rejoice in one another. Their relationship was not merely temporary or earthly. They were connected by the gospel, by spiritual labor, and by eternal fruit that would matter in the day of Christ.

In **2 Corinthians 1:8–14**, Paul shows that his suffering was overwhelming, even to the point that he despaired of life, but God used that trial to teach him not to trust in himself, but in **God which raiseth the dead**. He testifies that God delivered him, was still delivering him, and would yet deliver him. He also reminds the Corinthians that they were helping together by prayer, and then shifts to his integrity, showing that he had dealt with them in simplicity, godly sincerity, and a clear conscience before God.

## Application

### 1. Do not expect the Christian life to be trouble-free

Paul was serving God faithfully, yet he was “pressed out of measure, above strength.” Being saved does not mean life will always be easy. A blessed life is not the same thing as an easy life. But remember the comfort of God and His deliverance overcomes all things.

### 2. Let suffering teach you to trust God more deeply

Paul said the purpose of the trial was:

“that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.”

God sometimes allows us to come to the end of our own strength so we will stop leaning on ourselves and learn to depend on Him.

**3. Help others through prayer**

Paul told the Corinthians they were “helping together by prayer.” They may not have been with Paul physically, but they were still part of the work spiritually. They took part in that gift of deliverance that Paul received. Because many prayed. Many were able to give thanks and praise God.

**4. Live with godly sincerity, not selfish manipulation.**

Paul says his rejoicing was “**the testimony of our conscience.**” Even though some people at Corinth questioned his motives and sincerity, Paul could still say his conscience was clear before God.

That is how we should live. Our conduct should be honest and consistent no matter who we are around. We should not treat people as tools to help us get ahead. We should not say whatever benefits us in the moment. We should not be driven by strife, vainglory, or self-promotion.

As you go from here today, think about when life presses you beyond your strength, where will your trust be found?

Take Paul’s example and place all of your trust in the God of ALL comfort. The one who raises from the dead and gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ. Let’s Pray