

“Finding Comfort In The Chaos”
(2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

~ INTRO ~

ABOUT A MONTH AGO...

- We did a motorcycle ride to raise awareness for human trafficking...
 - I ended up taking a spill and injuring myself...
 - Road rash / bumps & bruises / hurt my wrist
- When my wrist didn't seem to be healing I went in to have it x-rayed...
 - And it turns out the scaphoid bone was broken...
 - I needed to have a cast.

HERE'S WHAT CAUGHT MY ATTENTION...

- The Scaphoid doesn't heal well on its own...
 - Because it gets very little blood flow.

I WAS INTERESTED BY THIS...

- So I did a little research on the topic and here's what I found...

Medically speaking, the scaphoid bone sits in the wrist in such a way that part of it gets very little circulation, so fractures there can take months to mend, sometimes even needing surgery or bone grafts because blood flow is the critical factor. Blood is what carries the life of healing.

It's fascinating that the Bible points to this same truth — “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11). Physically, blood carries oxygen, nutrients, clotting factors, and immune cells to repair broken tissue.

SO WHAT I'VE LEARNED IS...

- It's blood that brings healing to the brokenness...
 - When it's cut off from the supply...
 - Healing doesn't happen like it should.

THERE'S A POWERFUL SPIRITUAL PEARL HERE...

- Just like blood rushes to an injury to bring healing...
 - God draws near to us in our pain...
 - As the source of comfort & healing for our brokenness.

~ RECAP ~

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THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE’RE GOING TO LEARN ABOUT TODAY...

- How God draws near to bring comfort in the brokenness of life.

OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS...

- The Lord has been walking us through some big topics...
 - The promise of Jesus’ healing (David)
 - Dealing with conflict (Last weds)
 - Wrestling with suffering (Jeff – Job)

TODAY WE’RE TAKING THE NEXT STEP...

- In the middle of these topics...
 - Paul teaches us that every believer has something to cling to...
 - *“Finding Comfort in the Chaos”*

AS WE LOOK AT (2 COR. 1:1-11)...

- Paul will teach us in the chaos of life...
 - Comfort is found at the source...
 - In the Body of believers...
 - And through God’s proven faithfulness.

~ IDEA 1 – “Straight To The Source” (vv. 1-4a) ~

(v. 1-2)

THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY PAUL...

- Is one of the most personal & emotional letters in the NT...
 - He pulls back the curtain on...
 - His struggles / fears / deep emotions...
 - With an intimate & pastoral heart.
 - Gives *“the heartbeat of ministry”*

BUT IT WAS ALSO WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION...

- False teachers had slipped into the church...
 - Attacking & undermining his authority by...
 - Accusing him of weakness / inconsistency / lack of credentials
- The Corinthians had begun to take heed to rumors being spread...
 - Which turned their hearts away from Paul...

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- Their spiritual father in the faith.

THIS BRINGS UP AN IMPORTANT POINT FOR THE CHURCH...

- We can easily identify a wolf in sheep's clothing...
 - By what they eat!

“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (Galatians 5:15) NKJV

- Wolves feed on the flock...
 - Instead of feeding & heeding the Word of God.

AND YET... IN THE MIDST OF ATTACK...

- Paul didn't run to self-defense or self-pity...
 - He ran straight to the source of “*all comfort*”

(vv. 3-4a)

HE RESPONDED BY PRAISING GOD...

- Because of the comfort he received to keep moving forward...
 - In spite of difficult circumstances...
 - (2 Cor. 6:3-13) NLT.
- The Corinthians didn't give him comfort...
 - They questioned his motives...
 - Believed lies about him...
 - Withheld their affection!

MUCH LIKE JOB SAID ABOUT HIS “SO CALLED FRIENDS”

- Who accused him of sinning against God...
 - Or offered empty platitudes /half-truths that just deepened his pain.
 - Like being handed an empty cup...
 - When you're thirsty & needing water.

"How then will you comfort me with empty nothings? There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood." (Job 21:34 ESV)

BUT PAUL KNEW BETTER...

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- And knew where to go to find true comfort...
 - Straight to the source!
 - Which is why he could praise in the pain.

WHEN PAUL TALKS ABOUT **COMFORT** HERE...

- He's not talking about the kind of comfort Job's friends offered (empty)
 - The word Paul uses is: *“paraklēsis”* (G3874)
 - From the verb *“parakaleō”* (G3870)
- It literally means “to be called alongside of”...
 - The type of comfort that comes from someone drawing near...
 - Strengthening / encouraging / walking with you.
- That's why Paul calls God “the God of all comfort”...
 - Because He doesn't just send you a Hallmark card from Heaven...
 - He comes along side of you by His Spirit!
 - **(John 14:16-18) NLT**
- That word for **Advocate** is *paraklētos* (G3875) **is from the same root**
 - para (alongside) + kaleō (to call)...
 - Means “advocate, helper, one called alongside to strengthen.”

NOW TO THE PERSON WHO'S HERE...

- Thinking that they've been experiencing so much pain...
 - And not the comfort of God...
 - I want to remind you of a few truths today.
- 1) **God's presence isn't always felt but it's promised**
 - a. **(John 14:16-18) / (Isa. 43:2)**
 - i. *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you... when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned.”*
 - 2) **Jesus understands your pain**
 - a. **(Heb. 4:15-16)**
 - i. *“We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses...”*
 - 3) **God's comfort can look like other people**

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- a. (2 Cor. 7:6)
 - i. *“God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”*

HERE’S THE KEY...

- People are not the source of comfort – Only God is...
 - The beauty of it is that when we receive His comfort...
 - He then pours it out through us to others...
 - He’s the fountain / we’re the cup he uses.
- Where have you been looking for comfort...
 - But walking away with an empty cup?

~ IDEA 2 – Comfort On The Move (vv. 4b-7) ~

(v. 4b)

PAUL GOES ON TO EXPLAIN...

- What happens naturally in the body of Christ...
 - When believers respond to being comforted.

SIMILARLY TO HOW THE HEART FUNCTIONS...

- Pumping life giving blood through the body...
 - Circulating it so every part gets to heal & thrive.

PAUL REPEATS THE WORD COMFORT (X10)...

- In this section of scripture reinforcing the idea that...
 - **Comfort is a cycle that should be experienced by everyone.**
- Because sometimes what you need isn’t another bible verse sent to you...
 - But you need “Jesus with skin on”
 - A brother or sister in the Lord who shows up...
 - To sit with you in the pain...
 - And serve you along the way.

I CAN REMEMBER WHEN...

- Adi was having her first emergency open-heart surgery...
 - Stephani & I had to walk her down the hall...
 - And pass her off to the nurses...

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- Not knowing if we would ever see her alive again.
- This was by far the hardest thing we’ve ever had to do...
 - And as soon as we turned the corner to the waiting room...
 - We were met by a group of people from our church...
 - Who immediately hugged us and prayed for us.
- The trial that we were walking through didn’t go away...
 - But we had a sense of peace through the Holy Spirit...
 - Who was alive and present at that moment...
 - Through the believers.

NOW ALMOST 13 YEARS LATER...

- We had the opportunity to walk alongside another family here...
 - Who went thru something similar with their little boy...
 - And got to encourage them...
 - With the same comfort we received.

MAY THAT BE A REMINDER FOR US TODAY...

- If we’re looking for comfort we can find it here in the church...
 - And if we’ve been comforted we can reach out to others...
 - Who need to be ministered to.
 - (Eph. 4:16) NLT

THAT’S WHY PAUL CONSTANTLY COMMANDS THE CHURCH...

- To be unified together & stop fighting with each other...
 - When the church fights itself...
 - It’s like a body part cutting off blood flow...
 - The members who need healing get starved!

BUT HERE’S THE PARADOX...

- The very comfort we share with others...
 - Is only learned one way...
 - Through suffering!

(vv. 5-7)

THIS WAS CERTAINLY TRUE FOR THREE AMIGOS IN THE O.T.

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- Shadrach / Meshach & Abednego...
 - (Dan 3:25) NLT
- Even though they obeyed God...
 - They were thrown into the fire!
- But it was only in the fire...
 - That they experienced the protection & presence of God!
 - They didn't experience this unique encounter with God...
 - Until they stepped into the fire by faith.

PAUL SAYS WHEN THE SUFFERING OF THE GODLY ABOUNDS...

- So does the supernatural presence of Christ...
 - To shower us with His comfort.
- When you experience comfort like this...
 - You can't help but share it with someone else!
- Who has God placed in your life...
 - That needs the comfort you have experienced?

THIS IS WHAT PAUL WAS DESCRIBING...

- After talking about the comfort that flows to us & thru us...
 - He gets personal and explains his own situation...
 - And the crushing weight of what he experienced.

~ IDEA 3 – Confidence Thru Crushing (vv. 8-11) ~

(v. 8)

CORRIE TEN BOOM WAS A DUTCH CHRISTIAN...

- Who hid Jews from the Nazis during WWII...
 - She was eventually arrested and sent to a concentration camp...
 - Where she lost nearly everything.
- Out of that deep suffering she said...

“You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have”

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(v. 9)

PAUL SAYS THAT HE WAS CRUSHED & OVERWHELMED...

- Beyond what he could endure...
 - Wondering if he would make it out alive.
- And in this moment he realizes it was all so he would...
 - Stop relying upon himself...
 - And learn to rely upon the God who raises the dead.

(vv. 10)

AND THIS GAVE HIM CONFIDENCE TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD...

- Because he had experienced God deliver him in the past...
 - He knew God would deliver him in that present moment...
 - And that God would be faithful in the future.
- His confidence came when he came to the end of himself...
 - And relied fully upon Jesus.

I’M REMINDED OF CALEB IN (JOSHUA 14)...

- Who clung to the promises of God until the end of his life...
 - At 80 years old he knew that God was faithful...
 - So he asked for the most difficult land (hills)...
 - Filled with the most giants (Anak).
 - (Joshua 14:12) NLT
- His confidence came through waiting & delay...
 - But trusting in the promises of God...
 - Knowing that His strength was made perfect in weakness.

BOTH PAUL & CALEB...

- Had come to the same conclusion in life...
 - That God is faithful...
 - But it was only found when they had to fully rely open God.

(v. 11)

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PAUL CLOSES THIS SECTION...

- After unpacking God’s past / present / future deliverance...
 - With the importance of prayer partnership.
- He points to the effectiveness of their prayers for Paul's missionary crew
 - To help them understand how they can join him in the battle.

IN A TIME WHEN PRAYER IS DISCOUNTED & DESCREDITED...

- Paul reminds us how important and effective prayer is...
 - And that we should continue to walk it out faithfully.
- You can be apart of someone else’s story of deliverance...
 - When you consistently pray for them.

IN THE CHAOS OF LIFE WE ALL HAVE A CHOICE...

- Will we continue to look for empty cups to find comfort...
 - or go straight to the source?
- Will we keep comfort to ourselves...
 - Or pass it on to someone else who needs it?
- Will we keep relying upon our own strength to make it thru...
 - Or discover the God who raises the dead?
- Will we sit on the sidelines...
 - Or join the battle in someone else’s life through prayer?
- Because comfort isn’t just something we receive...
 - It’s something we respond to as well!

~ IN CLOSING (CALL WORSHIP TEAM) ~

THROUGH THIS MESSAGE TODAY...

- We’ve been encouraged by understanding where we can find comfort...
 - How we can be used by God to give comfort...
 - And how we can have confidence in our most crushing moments.

AND WE KNOW...

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- The greatest comfort ever given...
 - Came through Jesus who bore the crushing weight of our sin...
 - On the cross so we could have access to God our Father today.

MY ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU TODAY...

- Is to responds to the Lord by drawing close to Him...
 - And receiving the comfort He desires to give you.
- If you need to experience comfort from the source...
 - Come forward for prayer now.