

COMFORTED TO COMFORT

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

“How can you know, you’ve never . . .” There is a fairly common belief that it is easier to have empathy for someone when you have experienced what is currently happening in their life. The thought is you must first walk in another person’s shoes in order to be able to relate to them.

Affliction, difficulties, trials and tribulations are experienced by Christians and non-Christians alike. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 is addressed to Christians who were experiencing difficulties in their life because they were followers of Jesus Christ. At first blush, it might seem strange verse three begins with the word “blessed.” How could “affliction” in any way be a blessing?

It has been said, “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” The author of this sentence went on to explain, “Affliction to the people of God is but a pruning knife to the vine to prepare them for greater usefulness to others. One of the greatest evidences of God’s love to His own is to send them afflictions with grace to bear them.” (Summarized Bible) As true regarding Jesus’ words to St. Paul who was under great duress, so it is for you, ““My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Strengthened by Jesus’ message to him, St. Paul then wrote, “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

One of the many paradoxes of the Christian life is that the grace of God is most keenly experienced not in the best but in what seem to be the worst of times. Paul, having personally endured much affliction received much comfort from God. Having received God’s comfort, he said, He was able to comfort those who were in any affliction, with the comfort with which he himself had been comforted by God. (Adapted from 2 Corinthians 1:4)

God, in His grace, comforts you. The word comfort means “to walk beside.” What a joy it is to know that God stands at your side to help whenever you go through troubles. What a privilege God gives you to walk beside others as they go through their troubles.

Prayer: O Lord, thanks and praise to You for walking beside me when I experience troubles in my life. Lead and guide me to those You want me to walk beside during their time of trouble in the name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen.

Christ, our human likeness sharing, Heaven’s love on earth portrayed;
Christ the Shepherd, tending, caring, In His death our ransom paid:
Christ The Savior, Christ the Servant, Be Your life in us displayed.

Hear the word that Christ has spoken, Help the weak, the hungry feed;
See the pow’rs of darkness broken, Sinners pardoned, captives freed:
Christ the Savior, Christ the Servant, Help us meet our neighbor’s need.

Christ, in ev’ry congregation Build Your temple, stone by stone,
With Your word as firm foundation For a faith matured and grown:
Christ the Savior, Christ the Servant, Make in us Your Gospel known.

Come, O living Christ, renew us, As of old in wind and flame;
With the Spirit’s pow’r endue us, Servants of Your saving name:
Christ the Savior, Christ the Servant, Christ whose kingdom we proclaim.
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