

MORE THAN ENOUGH

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Calvary Church of Pacific Palisades

January 8, 2012 ♦ Sunday Morning Worship

Introduction:

Where do you turn for comfort? Food / drink. Cherry pie, Southern comfort. When you feel anxiety or discomfort ... prefer alone, or with others. Pain paralyzes some, while others to work (the work drug). When life hurts (disappointments, losses, burdens) we need something or someone better than that. Where do we go for comfort? Who will come alongside and relieve the suffering?

Please open your Bibles to **2 Corinthians ... page 816. Read vv. 1,2**

BKGND ... 18 months, heard reports ... Galatian heresy, Ephesian riots, Corinthian melt-down. Churches he had pour his life into, given his life for were collapsing around him.

On a personal note, he was really struggling ... suffering emotionally and physically. He wanted to quit.

WHEN HE GOT TO CORINTH HE WAS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE

Acts 18:9-11 (NIV84) ⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: **"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."** ¹¹ So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

Now they were the ones who were struggling, they needed assurance, wisdom and guidance ... writes Personal ... Paul shares his heart, what he had been going through. Wasn't sure he was going to make it. Heartening to know that the greatest follower of Christ had struggles, wanted to give up.

Over and over, expresses that he had some really low times, **shares with us where he found comfort.**

Better ... he shares with us that at his lowest, **comfort found him.**

Share with us what God's comfort is, and that it is more than enough.

vv. 3,4a **God is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Comforts us in all our troubles**

God of all comfort ... divine comfort, the best kind. Transcends. Satisfies.

Father of Compassion ... Never outgrow the need for a parent to come alongside when hurting.

Usually mom, she is the one who dispenses the bandaids. Here it is dad.

Not like most dads ... don't cry, get up, act like a man, stop whining, that didn't hurt. God takes our hurts and deals with compassion. Doesn't fix it, he joins us in the pain.

Ill. 1992 Barcelona Olympics, 400 meter Father of Derek Redmond. Father helps us up.

Ill. The prodigal son in Luke 15:20 "Father felt compassion" Father SUFFERS WITH. Receives us back.

Ill. Gen. Norman Swarzkopf. Mine field, had to pin the kid down, he was flailing. Father pins us down.

God gives comfort. It is His nature, who He is. Comfort begins with Him.

vv. 8-11 **God provides enough comfort to get us through. Hardships, pressure, despair. Grim. Not discounting or denying the pain and difficulty. Strength to get us through.**

1. What is comfort? 9x in 1-7. 29x in letter.

a. Common conception ... comfort is whatever makes us feel better. Something to relieve the pain. Not what Paul had in mind. Not what God chooses to do.

b. Biblical meaning. Comfort isn't what makes us feel better, it's what strengthens us so we can move through the pain.

Not soothing, rather strengthening. Not about feeling better, it is about feeling stronger.

God coming alongside and suffering with us.

Passion ... MODERN what drives us, makes us come alive. ANCIENT suffering. Passion of the Christ.

Passion of Christ = He suffered for us. **Father of Compassion** = He suffers with us. Alongside.

Ill. News of a heroine overdose; student at a local Christian College. Bad news, knees buckle. Sit down. When the bottom drops out, at we really need is comfort and compassion. And that is what God provides.

Father of compassion suffers with us. God of comfort gives strength to get us through.

What is comfort? Comfort is not the relief of sadness, Comfort isn't whatever makes us feel better, it is what strengthens us so we can move through the pain.

2. **Comfort isn't something you find, it has to find you.**

Someone has to bring it to you. Come alongside = comfort. Parakalew. Come to ones side. Aid.

OT ... God shows up when people are in distress and cry out.

NT ... God send the Holy Spirit to live inside us to give us the strength we need to endure.

"real comfort can't be found in a piece of cherry pie, or a shot of single malt scotch, or even in a walk in the woods." Real comfort is found in a person. Someone who seeks me out, who comes along and suffers with me, someone who provides the strength I don't have.

Ill. Marie Dickason ... Clyde (Navigators) human comforters are great, need them, but they can't sustain The best friend to have when in pain, under siege, knocked down is God Himself.

God is Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who provides enough comfort to get us through.

And when God gives us comfort, He doesn't just give enough to get us through,

vv. 4b-7 God gives us more than enough comfort to give away.

The strength we receive enables us to give strength to others. We become dispensers of comfort.

"When God gives us comfort, He doesn't just give enough to get us through, He gives us enough to give away."

ill. Like loaves and fishes ... feeding 5000; everyone satisfied and there were 12 baskets full of left-overs.

The more we get knocked around, the more people are blessed by what flows out of us.

Ill. Best small group experience of my life ... four couples struggling in marriage. No quick fixes.

Since that struggle, I have a tender heart for those who are in trouble.

Ill. Loss, Devastation, right here in our church. Want to give up, quit. Need a visit from the Lord, Like

Paul. ***"Worst time, best time, the Lord became co close and real to me."***

So much strength, before long, you'll be giving it away.

Conclusion:

Comfort is not about feeling better, it is about getting stronger.

Comfort isn't something we find, it's something that finds us.

Comfort is given to us so we can persevere in hardship and come out strong.

Comfort is designed to flow through us, into the lives of others. We have more than enough.