

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
⁴ 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. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's
sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. ⁶ If we are afflicted, it is for your
comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you
patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as
you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

—2 Corinthians 1:1-7 (ESV)

v 1 – “Paul, an apostle...”

by the will of God – Paul was appointed by God, definitely not by man
You also are appointed unto your place of life and service by God
It was, however, necessary for Paul to understand and to surrender to his call—otherwise
he would *not* have been an apostle, even though that was his calling
And the same holds true for us

“to the church of God that is at Corinth...”

Certainly, Paul’s letter is to this particular congregation
Some of what is in the letter is particular to this congregation
But it is also the word of God, written for all Christians—not just those “in the whole of
Achaia”

v 2 – Grace to you and peace...

Paul is representing God the Father and the Lord Jesus when he writes this
This is not the message to the world at large (Jesus’ message was to repent)
But it is God’s message and desire for those who are His

Are you receiving God’s grace and peace?

Grace means much more than God has decided to tolerate you.

He loves you
He has called and reached out to you
He has made you a child of his, and a joint-heir with Christ himself
He has forgiven all your sins and “killed the fatted calf” because of your repentance
He desires loving fellowship with you—as your Creator and as your Heavenly Father—
Christ, as your Lord, Savior, and Friend
He has eternal plans for you, and He will never forsake you

Peace—God wants you to be at peace. Are you?
Peace comes from God through...
Prayer, faith, relationship, and God's word

v 3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
Father of all mercies—or, compassions
This is what God is like—we are not more compassionate than He is!

God of all comfort
paraklêsis – one who is right beside us, helping us, giving us strength—through the work
of the Holy Spirit

who comforts us in our affliction
affliction – *thlipsis*, the word also translated as *tribulation*
This does not mean minor troubles—this means agonizing turmoil

How does He comfort us?
Love
Help
Presence
Promise and Hope

So that...
for us to have the power [*dunamai*]

We have the ability, the power, to comfort others who need it—and to do so *in the same way* as
God has comforted us

This makes us more like Him!

As a reminder:

To *comfort* – to stand alongside; the Holy Spirit's ministry to us we share with
one another, with...

Love
Help
Presence
Promise and Hope

v 5 – For as the sufferings of Christ abound [in or to] us...
Two interpretations/translations—either of them actually is true
1. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings...
2. For as the sufferings of Christ abound on our behalf

through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too
that of a strength-providing, close, partner
not the “there, there, now” kind of comfort

v 6 – “If we are afflicted...”
Emphasizing the relationship between the apostles and the congregation

He saw that the apostles' experience of suffering worked to the good of those to whom they ministered—*who were also suffering in much the same way*
We see something of this in “support groups,” “recovery groups,” etc.
One channel for the comfort/strength we have received in our own suffering is to seek to share it with others who are suffering in a similar way
Likewise, one way to receive strength (comfort) in suffering is to seek the support of others who are experiencing or have experienced similar hardships
Enemies to this are pride and pretense

v 7 – “Our hope for you is unshaken...”

A faith statement

Paul knew that he could not “solve their problems” or take away their pain

But he also knew that Christ was faithful, and that He would help those in Corinth in the same way that He helped Paul and the other apostles

This did not mean that every problem was solved or that all suffering was avoided—far from it.

It did mean that through it all, Christ walked closely with the suffering person, and that His eternal plans for that person would ultimately be fulfilled.