

GOD'S PLAN & YOU (Pt 6 of 9): "COMFORT AND CONFIDENCE"

THESIS: Comfort And Give

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

OPEN: (*Insight from Os Hillman "Treasures In Darkness"*)

Treasures In Darkness

(By Os Hillman, *Today God Is First* 03/27/12)

Isaiah 45:3 "I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name."

"I have never been in this place before. It is new ground for me, and I find I am way out of my comfort zone. I am scared to death to trust Him at this level. I had to confess to the Lord I have not been able to accept or believe His love for me in this area." Those were the words I expressed to a friend when I was in a difficult place in my life. That day when I confessed those words, God led me to this passage of Scripture. What we perceive as dark periods in our lives are designed to be treasures from God. They are riches stored in secret places. We cannot see those times in this light because of the often-accompanying pain or fear that prevents us from accepting these times as treasures. They have a purpose from God's viewpoint: "...so that you may know that I am the Lord...who summons you by name."

You see, unless we are cast into times in which we are completely at God's mercy for breakthroughs in our lives, we will never experience God's faithfulness in those areas. We will never know how personal He is, or that He can be trusted to meet the deepest needs in our lives. God wants each of us to know that we are "summoned by name." Every hair of our head is numbered. He knows every activity we are involved in. His love for you and me knows no bounds, and He will take every opportunity to demonstrate this to us. Has God brought you into a place of darkness? Trust Him today to reveal that hidden treasure that can be found in this darkness. Let Him summon you by name.

In **2 Corinthians 1:3-11** let's discover God's plan for how you may redeem your sufferings for the sake of Christ and experience gracious favor.

1. COMFORT AND GIVE CONFIDENCE IN GOD TO OTHERS.

A. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

1. **Father** (Greek: *pater*) means nourisher, protector, upholder, the progenitor of the people, metaphorically, of the originator of a family or company of persons animated by the same spirit of himself. *NIV Notes*: "God as the source."

a. *Praise God's compassion and comfort so others may be confident in Him.*

1. **Praise** (Greek: *eulogetos*) means to speak well of; celebrate with glowing words, make happy, of that which is addressed to God, acknowledging His goodness, with desire for His honor.

a. **2 Corinthians 7:5-7, 13** "For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever...By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you."

2. **Insight from William B. Eerdman:** “Paul’s suffering had two positive side-effects: (1) The experience of God’s comfort in it all; (2) A new ability to help and comfort those in similar circumstances” (*Eerdmans Handbook To The Bible*, p. 596).
 - b. *Pass along God’s compassion and comfort so others may be confident in Him.*
 1. **Comfort** (Greek: *paraklesis*) means encouragement or urging; coming alongside someone to help strengthen them to stand up under pressure. It includes calling one to pursue a course of conduct that has prospects for the future.
 - a. **Genesis 50:15-21** “When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?’ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father left these instructions before he died: ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.’ When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. ‘We are your slaves,’ they said. But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.”
 - b. **2 Corinthians 1:6** “If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.”
 2. **Application:** When hardship comes ask God to assist you in answering the following questions:
 - a. What can I be thankful for from this?
 - b. What can I learn from this?
 - c. How can I redeem this?
 3. **Illustration:** The Chinese symbol for crisis means danger. It also means opportunity. The Greek poet Homer understood the value of a crisis. He wrote, “Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.”
- B. **2 Corinthians 1:10b-11** “On God we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.”
1. *Pray for God’s compassion and comfort so others may be confident in Him.*
 - a. **Deliver** (Greek: *rhyomai*) means to rescue or save.
 1. **2 Corinthians 1:8-10a** “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us.”
 - a. Later in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians he details some hardships he suffered:
 1. **2 Corinthians 11:23b-28** “I have been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored

and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”

- b. Paul was detailed in his prayer requests to the church. We should be as well because it's conducive to mutual thanksgiving and joy.
 1. **Romans 15:30-32** “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.”
- b. **Application:** How do we redeem our hardship and suffering to comfort and give confidence in God?
 1. Realize even strongest of faith (ex. apostles) suffer hardships and suffering (2 Cor 1:4-5, 8).
 2. Share your suffering stories (2 Cor 1:8-9) and encouraging Scriptures (Rom 15:4).
 3. Do unto others (Matt 7:12). It's not enough to say, “I know how you feel” and then move on. Utilize what helped you to comfort and give confidence in God to others.
 4. Keep helping others (2 Cor 1:3-4/1 Thes 2:13).
 - a. The temptation when difficulty arises, especially that which causes us to distress or despair, is to retreat from others and refuse to reach out because we're pre-occupied with our own situation. Perhaps we feel incompetent or ineffective. However, keep in mind that this passage teaches us that it is God who works through us as we keep helping others. He redeems it for us and allows us to share in His image by redeeming our own suffering by comforting others with what we've received from God.

CONCLUSION: Why is it important that we comfort and give confidence in God to others?

Illustration: (The Rush Limbaugh Show Morning Update 05/02/18: “Godless America”)

The Rush Limbaugh Show Morning Update (05/02/18): “Godless America”

There is a new survey by the Pew Research Center. It says most Americans still believe in God, but not as many Millennials do. Only 43% of Millennials say they believe in the God of the Bible. Only 17% of them regularly attend church. Almost two-thirds of Americans over 50 believe in the biblical God. And 52% of them attend church services regularly. The bottom line is that an overwhelming number of young adults in America have been raised to be godless. If you've tried to figure out the root cause of hopelessness, despair, anger, and intolerance coming from Millennials, you might have just found the answer. Absence of God in their lives.

Remember the definition of comfort—**Comfort** (Greek: *paraklesis*) means encouragement or urging; coming alongside to help strengthen; *calling one to pursue a course of conduct that has prospects for the future*.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-13 “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.”

CLOSE: Let's counteract culture by praising, praying, and passing along the Lord's compassion and comfort so others may be confident in Him. It's God's plan for you.