

## The Staying Power of Mercy

2 Corinthians 1:3-11 - NCBC, May 1, 2022

Main Point: **God's comfort supernaturally empowers ongoing ministry through overwhelming suffering.**

- The comfort of God's person (3)
  - The Father of undeserved compassion
  - The God of all strength alongside
- The comfort of God's provision (4-5)
  - Sharing abundantly in Jesus' comfort
  - Sharing abundantly in Jesus' suffering
- The comfort of God's purpose (6-7)
  - Salvation through suffering
  - Strength through weakness
- The comfort of God's promise (8-10)
  - Deeper death to trusting in self
  - Confident hope in God's deliverance
- The comfort of God's people's prayers (11)
  - For necessary help
  - For multiplied glory

Communion: **Remember God's abundant comfort to you as you keep comforting others in overwhelming suffering.**

---

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3:1-2

## Opening Announcements:

- **TODAY** all of our Adult Elective Classes will meet in the Family Center at **9:30a for a special panel discussion** on how God's people can best encourage and support those directly involved in orphan care.
- For May 2022, our **Resource of the Month is *12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You*, by Tony Reinke**. This book helps us cultivate wise digital habits so that we can maximize the blessings and avoid the pitfalls of smartphone connection. Complimentary copies are available in our Resource Center.

<<How Deep the Father's Love>>



That's such good news! Our ransom was paid, and we were set free from sin's grasp by Jesus' sacrifice in our place. God now loves us as His adopted children forever.<sup>1</sup>

Today we open our Bibles to **2 Corinthians chapter 1** to focus on **verses 3 through 11**. While this passage doesn't directly mention orphans, and while Paul was

certainly not thinking about orphan care when he wrote this to the first century believers in Greece, **2 Corinthians chapter 1** actually has a powerful application for anyone connected to orphan ministry.



If you do not have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand as the ushers come by. We sincerely desire for you to have a Bible open in front of you as we walk through this passage.



So before I read this Scripture, let me briefly explain why I choose this passage for our Orphan Sunday focus.

Because although **2 Corinthians chapter 1** isn't directly focused on adoption or foster care or compassion ministry to orphans... **2 Corinthians chapter 1** is about God's comfort in overwhelming suffering.

So no one gets to check out of this sermon. You can apply this sermon to any kind of Christian ministry you are doing. All Christian service requires "The Staying Power of God's Mercy" in order to fulfill the ministry God's called us to.

But today I'm going to apply **2 Corinthians 1** to the *specific application* of ministering to hurting and vulnerable children. After all, the suffering of orphans is often overwhelming. Their afflictions of grief, rejection, abandonment, abuse, and shame can be soul-crushing and unspeakable. Trying to navigate your own survival and wellbeing apart from the care and support of a compassionate and competent parent is profoundly overwhelming! And anyone who personally loves a child who is suffering in this way understands how sacrificial and disorienting such love can be. To really love orphans like God loves orphans is to enter a roller-coaster ministry of extreme highs-and-lows with frequent unexpected twists and turns that often threatened us to give up, despair, or become jaded and cynical.

My point is this: fostering and adopting God's way is hard. It necessarily immerses you in suffering. Therefore we need to hear **2 Corinthians chapter 1**. We all need to remember God's abundant comfort to us if we are ever going to keep comforting others through overwhelming suffering.

So if you're able, please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word, as I read the ESV translation, from **2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 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.*

*8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. 11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

**This is the reading of God's Word. Let's Pray.**

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.adoptioncenterofillinois.org/adopting-a-child/documents-and-fees/>; [https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-life-adoption-tax-credit-](https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-life-adoption-tax-credit-20180709-story.html)

Loving orphans the way God loves orphans is very costly. To adopt one child domestically in Illinois can cost between \$10,000 and \$50,000 dollars with an average cost exceeding \$30,000.<sup>2</sup> But of course the greatest cost of adopting love is not financial.

Adoption requires countless hours of paperwork and legal proceedings that can take months if not years. Loving orphans the way God loves orphans painfully opens your own heart to the brokenness of sin and the brokenness of our courts and social services systems.

And further, this tireless ministry of personal sacrifice has no promise of reciprocation. Far too often a beloved child willfully rejects loving help. And of course the pain of watching a child you dearly love continue to make self-destructive choices runs so deep that only God Himself can truly relate with such sacrificial love.<sup>3</sup>

To love orphans the way God loves orphans requires such overwhelming suffering that we could ask, "Why would anyone voluntarily give themselves to such costly suffering?" "What keeps a foster or adoptive parent serving with such sacrificial love when it is so hard?"

Today we discover the answer to these questions in **2 Corinthians chapter 1**, where Paul's main point is that,

[20180709-story.html](https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-life-adoption-tax-credit-20180709-story.html)

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 1:2, 30:1



God's comfort supernaturally empowers ongoing ministry through overwhelming suffering. God's comfort is the answer to why Christians don't give up when they are overwhelmed with suffering. God's comfort is the fuel or the power that keeps Christians loving ...even when their love is rejected, or the cost of their love becomes far greater than they could have ever anticipated.

So if you are currently involved in orphan ministry, or you are praying about getting more involved in orphan ministry... or frankly... you desire to serve our God in any significant Christian ministry... then you must know the comfort of God. For only God's comfort *to you* will supernaturally empower your ongoing ministry *to others* through overwhelming suffering.

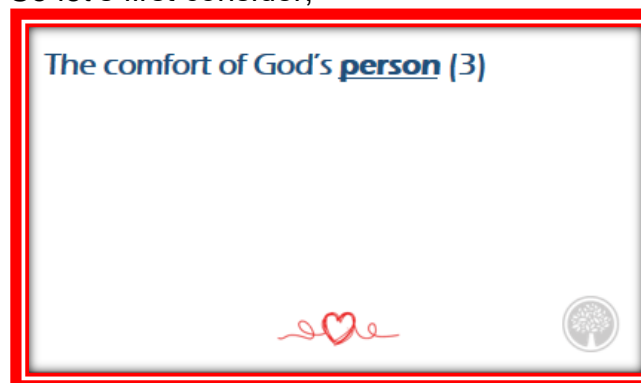
So here's what we're going to do: We're going to race through **verses 3-11**, noting the comfort of God's person, God's provision, God's purpose, God's promise, and the comfort of God's people's prayers. And then we're going to respond by taking Communion together...

---

<sup>4</sup> C.f. John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 2:5, 3:16; Hebrews 2:17

remembering Jesus' sacrifice for us to provide the greatest eternal comfort our souls could ever receive.

So let's first consider,



The comfort of God's person in **verse 3**, which empowered Paul to keep suffering for others' eternal joy.

**Verse 3** reads,

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,*

Now there's so much here. Look at the text carefully.

Paul begins praising or blessing God as the *God* of Jesus, and the *Father* of Jesus.

This is a veiled reference to how Jesus took on human flesh, added a human nature to His divine nature, and became the eternal God-Man who alone is qualified to save us from sin.<sup>4</sup>

You see, since Jesus was human, God was Jesus' God. But since Jesus was also divine, God was Jesus' Father.

Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man – and then notice in the text, He is Lord – meaning the sovereign ruler over all, and He is the Christ – meaning He is God's anointed Messiah – the promised deliverer of God's people.

So just in this opening phrase of **verse 3**, we've already learned that Jesus is the perfect God-Man who is both our Lord and Savior.

Don't miss the comfort of Jesus, friends! The first way God empowers you to suffer for Him is by saving you from your sins. You'll never persevere through the suffering that all ministry requires if you're still trying to pay for your own sins.

Do you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Have your sins been washed away by Jesus' death? Are you trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection alone for your relationship with God?

After all, the only way to really know God is through faith in Jesus. Trusting Jesus and His bloody sacrifice is the only way to we can come to personally experience God's comfort.<sup>5</sup>

Only after we are born again by God's Spirit, and we begin to love and trust Jesus, will we ever truly

---

<sup>5</sup> John 14:6

experience the comfort of God's person. For notice the 2 ways Paul describes God at the end of **verse 3**:

*The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.*

This is beautiful. This literally means God is,



The Father of undeserved compassion and He's the God of all strength alongside.

Notice loved ones, this is not just what God does...this is *who God is*! Our God is the Father of mercies. The source of all compassion and favor that is undeserved. He is the well-spring of compassion, He is the fountain-head of pity. He is the eternal, inexhaustible source of mercy! His mercies never fail, His lovingkindness never ceases...His mercies are new every morning!<sup>6</sup>

He is the God of all *comfort*. Now listen, because this word "comfort" shows up 10 times in **verses 3-7**...so it's really important that we understand its biblical meaning.

<sup>6</sup> Lamentations 3:19-24

When we think of “comfort” today, we tend to think peaceful cuddly thoughts, right? But the word “comfort” in this chapter translates the word, “*Paraklete*.”<sup>7</sup> It literally means “to bring strength alongside.”

So notice, God is the source of all strength that helps you in ministry. God is the source of all encouragement and grace that you need to keep loving through painful suffering.<sup>8</sup>

So “comfort” doesn’t mean “relief.” No Christian ministry will ever be “comfortable.” Biblical comfort refers to an ever-present help in time of need.<sup>9</sup> Biblical comfort is the staying power of God’s mercy that keeps us pouring out even when it is so painful and sacrificial. For through faith in Jesus, Paul has come to know that God Himself is source of all help and strength that his ministry requires.

That’s the comfort, or strength of God’s person. Now, in **verse 4-5**, Paul describes,



The comfort of God’s provision or portion.

Because, notice in **verse 4**, it is God who comforts and strengthens us in all our affliction or crushing pressure.

Our primary energy for sacrificial ministry doesn’t come from sleep, recreation, friends, or motivating books or conferences on Adoption and Orphan Ministry – as important as all those means of grace truly are. God Himself is the source of our strength. He is our portion. Our provision is God Himself.

After all, here’s the wonder of God’s salvation of sinners: when we are saved from our sins, our life becomes hidden with Christ in God.<sup>10</sup> We become new creations in Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Our identity changes, so that now our very life is united with Jesus and His life so that we can actually say with Paul, “To live is Christ, and to die is gain!”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> This is the same word Jesus uses when He refers to the Holy Spirit as the promised “Helper” or “Comforter” that would be sent to His disciples after his Ascension.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 1:19, 3:7; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 1:29

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 46:1; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Hebrews 13:6

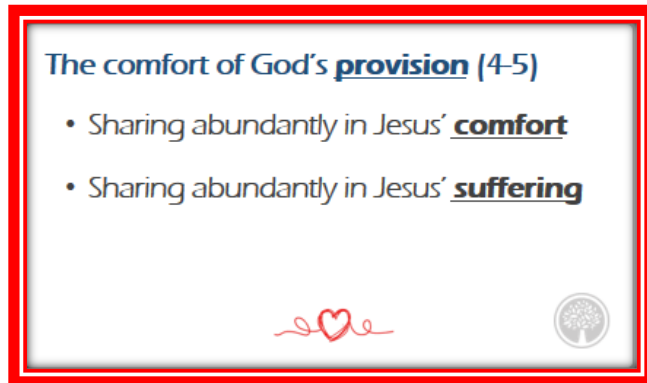
<sup>10</sup> Colossians 3:3-4

<sup>11</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>12</sup> Philippians 1:21; c.f. Galatians 2:20



Why do I point this out? Because notice **verse 5** teaches how all Christians are:



Sharing abundantly in both Jesus' comfort and Jesus' suffering. Paul is rejoicing in God's abundant and overwhelming comfort and help that comes to him through his faith-union with Jesus. But why is Paul emphasizing our spiritual oneness with Jesus here?

I think it's because we need to remember that Jesus also suffered. Therefore, following Jesus will always require suffering.<sup>13</sup> When we look like Jesus, live like Jesus, and love like Jesus, we ought to expect that we are going to suffer like Jesus.

We should not be surprised<sup>14</sup> when our sacrificial love is spurned or rejected... for so also was Jesus! We ought not to despise when we are mistreated for doing good, for so was Jesus!<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Luke 9:23-24

<sup>14</sup> 1 Peter 4:12-19

<sup>15</sup> 2 Timothy 3:12

<sup>16</sup> Romans 5:3-5; Philippians 3:10; James 1:2-4

In fact, when we find ourselves experiencing the crushing pressure of affliction in Christ-like ministry... we ought to rejoice that we are able to share in the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings, and wait eagerly for His resurrection power to strengthen us for continued mercy and love.<sup>16</sup>

Paul wants us to be confident of this: as we share in Jesus' suffering, so we will also share in His glorious comfort! Jesus' suffering resulted in eternal glory. So likewise when we suffer for Jesus, we are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us!<sup>17</sup>

God Himself is our portion. The life of Jesus – with all its suffering and glory – is our provision. So then rest in God's supernatural comfort ...understanding after all that God's comfort to us is not the ends, but the means to a greater end.

We see this clearly back in **verse 4**:

Look there. Why does God comfort us in all our affliction? *So that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction.*

O I love this church! God gives us grace *so that* we might share His grace.<sup>18</sup> God blesses us, *so that* all the nations of the earth would be blessed.<sup>19</sup> God comforts and strengthens us, *so that* we might comfort and strengthen others!

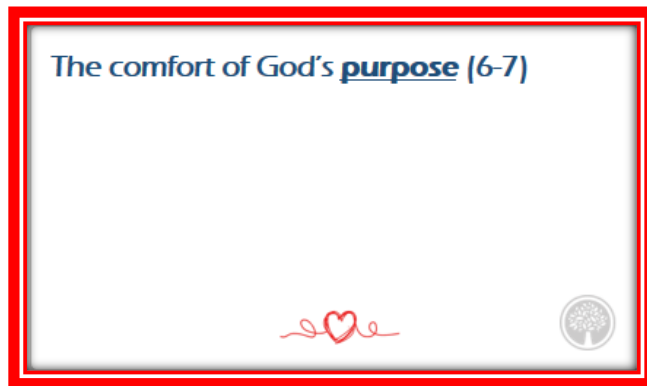
<sup>17</sup> 1 Peter 4:14

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 10:8; 2 Corinthians 9:8

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 67

We must never hoard God's comfort like foolish stewards.<sup>20</sup> Instead we receive God's supernatural strength and help in all our suffering so that we may share God's strength with those in *any* kind of suffering...even if their suffering is far outside our own experience or comfort zone.

And this leads us to,



The comfort or strength of God's purpose shown in **verses 6-7**. Look now at **verse 6**, and ask the question: "What is God's purpose for all of Paul's suffering in his ministry? What divine purpose lies underneath all our pain whenever Gospel ministry to others starts to cost us far more than we believe we can give?"

**Verse 6** says, *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. Our hope for you is*

---

<sup>20</sup> Luke 12:13-21

*unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.*

In other words: whenever Christian ministry takes you far beyond the limits of your own resources, and you're overwhelmed ... know that God desires to use your suffering to serve His salvation of others! And when God's Spirit strengthens you to keep enduring through painful ministry, know that God is comforting you ultimately so that others may be comforted through you.

Translation: your life is not about you! God has a grander purpose for your life than your own temporary relief or emotional wellbeing.



**Verses 6 and 7** teach that God often brings Salvation through our suffering, and Strength through our weakness.

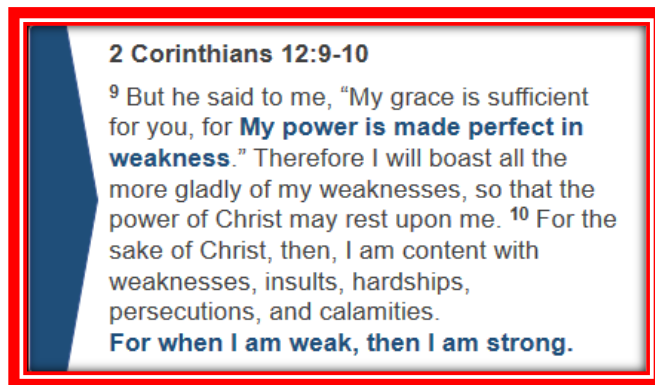
In order words, our momentary light affliction is chained to an eternal weight of glory.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:16-18



O when you put it like that, Paul... there's no Gospel ministry that could ever cost too much. There's no personal weakness that I don't want God's strength to overcome... for the eternal joy of my loved ones.

So then, we ought not to despise the overwhelming suffering and profound weakness that we experience from following Jesus in our ministry to others, right? For Paul understands that often it is through dying to self that God brings Himself the greatest glory.<sup>22</sup>



Just as Paul writes in **chapter 12**,

*God's grace is sufficient for you, for God's power is made perfect in your weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

<sup>22</sup> John 12:24

<sup>23</sup> I highly recommend Paul Miller's book, *J-Curve – Dying and Rising with*

Loved ones, sometimes the greatest obstacle to our ministry is our delusion of strength. So if you are only willing to engage in ministry that you feel you can handle, then fear will prevent you from fulfilling God's ministry purpose.

This is the miraculous "J-curve" of following Jesus.<sup>23</sup> The way up, is first the way down. Whoever seeks to save his life, will lose it.<sup>24</sup> Only after you lose your life for Jesus' sake, will you experience the satisfied life, as God Himself saves and strengthens by His power alone.

So we're learning how God's comfort supernaturally empowers our ongoing ministry through overwhelming suffering. We've already noted the comfort that comes from God's person, God's provision, and God's purpose. Now **verses 8-10** reveal,



The comfort of God's promise.

*Jesus in Everyday Life* for further study in Christian discipleship.

<sup>24</sup> Matthew 10:39; 16:24-26; Luke 9:23-24, 17:33; John 12:25

Paul writes, *For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia.*

We don't know for sure what specific suffering or overwhelming pressure Paul is referring to here.<sup>25</sup> But Paul vulnerably explains the affect of this pressure on his own soul when he goes on to write,

*For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.*

The suffering and pressure of Paul in Asia was so severe that Paul became so depressed that he was suicidal. He felt there was no way out. No escaping death and ruin.

Now loved ones... can you relate with Paul here? Have you ever lost hope, or wondered if all your ministry was for naught? Has the pain of your ministry to others ever taken you past the point of tears to just severe numbness and despair?

Paul understands...and Paul wants to give you unshakable hope now as he writes in **verse 9**,

*But that was to make us rely not on ourselves by on God who raises the dead.*

O church – whenever you follow God's calling for ministry in your life your obedience will necessarily take you to the end of yourself, so that you have no means of self-

---

<sup>25</sup> C.f. Acts 9:15-16; 2 Corinthians 4:8-12, 6:4-5, 7:5-6, 11:23-28

reliance anymore, but can only rely on God's resurrection power.

You see, the comfort of God's promise is that,



He purposefully uses overwhelming suffering to bring us into a deeper death to trusting in self. One of God's purposes for painful suffering is to wean us from our self-reliance...all so that we may have a more,



Confident hope in God's deliverance!

**Verse 10** triumphs,

*For God delivered us from such a deadly peril* – that's past tense – *and He will deliver us* –that's present tense – *On Him we have set our hope that He will deliver us again* – that's future tense!

In other words, God is faithful. He's the Father of tender mercies, and the God of all strength and resurrection. He is more concerned about making us holy and more satisfied in knowing Him, than He is in preserving our emotional serenity.

So yes... orphan ministry – just like all true Christ-centered ministry – will cost you much loss to your own pride, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. But when you approach such ministry depending only on the God of resurrection,<sup>26</sup> this death to your self-reliance will yield a bountiful harvest of joyful confidence in God's powerful deliverance.

So allow the comfort of God's purifying promise to supernaturally compel your ongoing ministry through overwhelming suffering. And then receive as well,

---

<sup>26</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:5-6



The comfort of God's people's prayers, in **verse 11**.

For there's truly no such thing as independent Gospel ministry in Jesus' church. Even the apostle Paul understood that God's comfort and strength came to him in the form of the church's prayers.

So he wrote in **verse 11**,

*You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

In other words, if you are currently engaged in any kind of Gospel ministry...if you are engaged in any kind of Christlike adoption or foster care ministry, God intends to bring you comfort and strength through people's prayers...

### The comfort of God's people's prayers (11)

- For necessary help
- For multiplied glory



Both for your necessary help and for His multiplied glory.

There's just simply no way to endure in any significant ministry through overwhelming suffering apart from the fervent prayers of God's people.

Any engagement in orphan ministry absolutely requires the prayer support of your church family. Paul says this is a must.

So loved ones, if you are engaged in the overwhelming suffering of any ministry, are you asking your life group or your church family to pray for you? Do you see the weekly prayer request forms and weekly prayer email as the joyful invitation to God's comfort that it is?

And then isn't it interesting that Paul is asking for prayers so *that* many will give thanks for how God supernaturally answered their prayers.

In other words, Paul was seeking prayers so that God would get more glory from all who were joined with his ministry in prayer. The main concern of Paul's prayer

request was to get more of the church family a personal experience with God's active grace, all so that God would be greater glorified as prayers were answered and His ministry was miraculously sustained through overwhelming suffering.

So that's the point of this text, loved ones:

### Main point

orphan  
sunday

God's comfort supernaturally  
**empowers ongoing ministry**  
through overwhelming suffering.



God's comfort supernaturally empowers ongoing ministry through overwhelming suffering.

There's only one reason that weak and inadequate people like you and me can endure and persist in the often overwhelming suffering of Gospel ministry. And that's God's comfort and help.

His supernatural help comes to us in the form of His person, His provision, His purpose, His promise, and His people's prayers.

Therefore, be encouraged on this Orphan Sunday to,



Remember God's abundant comfort to you as you keep comforting others in overwhelming suffering.

If God is calling you and your family to enter a God-glorifying ministry to orphans, then do so with great dependence upon the comfort of God.

If you are already engaged in Orphan Care, or some other Gospel ministry, but you are tempted to give up or walk away because the sacrifices are just too painful to continue... then hear the apostle Paul triumphing in the Staying Power of God's mercy, and renew your mind with God's abundant comfort to you as you keep sharing His comfort with others through overwhelming suffering.



After all, isn't this what our regular observance of Communion is intended to accomplish for our hearts?

Every two months we set aside time in our worship services to drink juice and eat crackers... simply as a physical reminder that it was Jesus' death that made us all one together at New Castle Bible Church.

The juice reminds us of Jesus' blood that was shed to cover our sins. The cracker reminds us of Jesus' body that was broken in order to give us eternal life. This ceremony reminds us that Jesus' sacrifice and cross-bearing is the foundation to our entire life and ministry together.

Jesus died ... to give us life... so then we could share His comfort with those who are in any affliction.

So now I'd invite those of you who have been born again by God's Spirit to prepare to eat the cracker together by peeling off just the top clear packaging on the lid of the communion cup.

If you haven't yet trusted Jesus' death and resurrection for your salvation, or if you are persisting in a known sin of unrepentance... please repent of your sins and turn from your self-reliance before you would eat or drink judgment on yourself.<sup>27</sup> After all, eating and drinking of this symbolic meal is supposed to be a living object lesson of your true participation with the suffering of Jesus.

But if you are unwilling to follow Jesus into the suffering of self-denial and sacrificial love, then you are not joined with Jesus, and you ought not to act like you are by partaking of this ceremony.

So for those who have been united with Jesus' death and resurrection by faith in Him, let's remember now how God brought abundant life and strength to our souls through the death of Jesus.

For on the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said,

*This is my body which is for you.*

Jesus died to pay for your sins, church! He was the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to satisfy God's anger against our stubborn rebellion and unbelief. Can you see Jesus giving up his last breath in love for you?

*Do this in remembrance of Me.*<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:27-32

<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-24

Let's eat together.

<<Cracker>> Amen.

Now peel off the purple lid to prepare to drink the juice, which represents Jesus' shed blood.

Isn't it humbling to realize the overwhelming suffering that Jesus endured just so that sinners like me and you could be adopted and made a part of God's forever family?

Have you thanked Jesus for your salvation today? Are you thankful that He's the Father of mercies who runs to meet the repentant prodigal?<sup>29</sup> Have you thanked Jesus today for dying in your place, so that you could live the rest of your life for Him?

In the same way also Jesus took the cup, after supper, saying,

*This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*<sup>30</sup>

Let's drink together.

<<Juice>> Amen.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 15:20

<sup>30</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:25-26

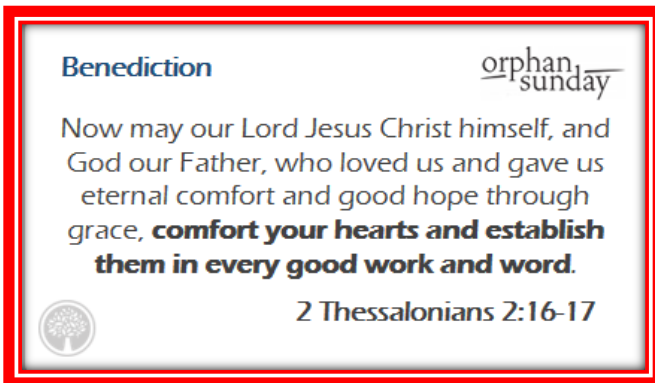




May God help all of us remember His abundant comfort to us as we keep comforting others in overwhelming suffering.

Let's pray.

<<Take My Life and Let it Be>>



Let's pray out our benediction now from **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.**

*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and*

*good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.*



*Please show this slide immediately after the conclusion of the Benediction in both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> services for 2 minutes; then after 2 minutes, you can transition to other slides, etc. Thank you!*

### **Recommended Resources on The Staying Power of Mercy:**

- Deuteronomy 10:17-19
- Psalm 94:19
- Lamentations 3:19-24
- Matthew 16:24-26; 17:14-20
- Romans 15:4-6
- 2 Corinthians 4:8-12, 16-18; 6:4-5; 7:5-6; 12:9-10
- Philippians 1:6; 3:10
- James 1:2-4, 27
- 1 Peter 4:12-16; 5:7
- Hebrews 4:15-16; 12:2
- <https://lifesong.org/2022/04/adoption-grants/>
- <https://lifesong.org/2019/04/adoption-supposed-hard/>
- <https://safe-families.org/>
- <https://www.bethanycommunitychurch.org/ministries/home.asp?id=515>
- *A Passion for the Fatherless*, Daniel Bennett
- *J-Curve*, Paul Miller
- *Give Them Grace*, Elyse Fitzpatrick & Jessica Thompson

### **Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions**

1. Identify the different titles used for God in 2 Corinthians 1:3 and Romans 15:5. Is this how you think of God? Why or why not?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:4 and respond to the common thinking that “you can’t truly help someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes.” What does Scripture teach here about our ability to truly help anyone in any trouble?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8 and 11:23-28. (c.f. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10; 6:4-5; 7:5-6) What is the worst pressure you’ve ever experienced while seeking to help others? How did God use this overwhelming suffering to bring deeper death to your self-reliance, and greater hope in God’s deliverance?
4. Have you ever wondered if God is calling you and your family to the sacrificial ministry of foster care or adoption? How does God’s comfort encourage you in this desire? Who could you talk with to learn more about next steps for honoring God with this desire?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 1:11. Write down a list of everyone you know who is currently actively involved in the ministry of orphan care. Pray through your list, and make a commitment to regularly pray for these people this week for God’s comfort and His glory to be known in their lives.