



Lesson 20: *The God of All Comfort* 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Paul’s personal greetings

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 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. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 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. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

1:8 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. 9 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. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 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.

▲ Apostolic leaders

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

▲ Addressees listed

1:1 To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

▲ Another letter

1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

► First visit	50-52 AD	the founding visit	Acts 18:1-18
► First letter	52-55 AD	the previous letter*	1 Corinthians 5:9-11 (written from Ephesus)
► Second letter	52-55 AD	1 Corinthians*	1 Corinthians 1:1 (written from Ephesus)
► Second visit	52-55 AD	the painful visit	2 Corinthians 2:1
► Third letter	52-55 AD	the severe letter*	2 Corinthians 7:8 (written from Ephesus)
► Fourth letter	55-56 AD	2 Corinthians**	2 Corinthians 1:1 (written from Macedonia)
► Third visit	57 AD	the last visit	2 Corinthians 12:14; 2 Corinthians 13:1; Acts 20:2-3

*written from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8) — **written from Macedonia (2 Corinthians 1:16; 2:13; 7:5)

Praise to God

▲ He is a condescending God

1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

▲ He is a compassionate God

1:3 the Father of compassion

▲ He is a comforting God

1:3 and the God of all comfort, 4 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.

▲ He is a God who calls comforters

▼ God uses our calamities to help others

1:5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation;

▼ God uses our comfort to help others

1:6 if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

▼ God uses our camaraderie to help ourselves and others

1:7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

Powerful protection from God

▲ We’ve endured great pressure

▼ Paul’s hardships

1:8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure,

- Acts 19:8-9 — persecution from the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus
- Acts 19:13-16 — spiritual warfare and spiritual counterfeits at Ephesus
- Acts 19:23-41 — the city-wide riot against Christianity at Ephesus
- 1 Corinthians 15:32 — “I fought wild beasts at Ephesus”

▼ Paul’s helplessness

1:8 We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure,

▼ Paul’s hopelessness

1:8 We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.

▲ We’ve experienced God’s power

▼ Our educational experience

1:9 But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

▼ Our extreme examples

1:9 God, who raises the dead.

▼ Our excellent expectations

1:10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

▲ We’re enlisting God’s people’s prayers

1:10 On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers.

▲ We’re expecting great praise

1:11 Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

1) Almighty God is Creator of all that exists and of life itself. God breathed into man the breath of life that caused him to become a living being (Genesis 2:7).

- ▶ Human life, then, is in God's hand. It can only be given by God, and therefore it is sacred and precious. God created mankind in his own image (Genesis 1:27).
- ▶ Thus, Christians proclaim the sanctity of life and despise the sins of murder, abortion, suicide, and euthanasia, and hatred.

2) Human life is brief. Scripture declares that life is like a vapor (James 4:14), like a flower of the field (Psalm 103:15), like the withering grass (1 Peter 1:24).

- ▶ Human life is a preparation period, a short time to prepare for an endless eternity. An Old Testament prophet cried, "Prepare to meet your God!" (Amos 4:12).
- ▶ Man is destined to die and then to face God (Hebrews 9:27). Thus, death will come to every human as long as Jesus delays his coming (1 Corinthians 15:51).
- ▶ And for the believer, death is an immediate entrance into God's heavenly presence (2 Corinthians 5:8). The Apostle Paul declared, "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).
- ▶ Paul further explained that "as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6).
- ▶ It is incomprehensible, then, that a believer who is "away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8) would want to return to that previous state.

3) Eventually, the bodies of all humans who have ever lived on earth and died, both good and evil, saved and unsaved, will be raised from the dead (Acts 24:15).

- ▶ First, the bodies of dead Christians will be raised when the living church is raptured. This rapture and resurrection may happen at any moment (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- ▶ Then, the bodies of the Lord's two witnesses, martyred during the Tribulation on earth, will be raised from the dead amidst the Tribulation (Revelation 11:11).
- ▶ Then, the bodies of Christians who have died during the Tribulation will be raised at Christ's second coming, seven years after the rapture (Revelation 20:4).
- ▶ Finally, the bodies of the rest of the (wicked) dead, will be raised at the end of Christ's thousand-year reign on earth to face final judgment (Revelation 20:5,12-13).
- ▶ Old Testament saints believed in this eventual resurrection of the dead (Job 19:26; Daniel 12:2), though their understanding was limited.

4) The raising of the dead in this age is rare. It is the exception, not the rule.

- ▶ Even those raised from the dead in Scripture eventually died again and went out into eternity (except, of course, for Jesus himself).
- ▶ The Bible provides nine specific examples of these temporary resurrections from the dead.
 1. a widow's son at Zarephath during the ministry of Elijah – 1 Kings 17
 2. a Shunammite woman's son during the ministry of Elisha – 2 Kings 4
 3. a man whose body touched Elisha's bones – 2 Kings 13
 4. Jairus' daughter during the ministry of Jesus – Matthew 9
 5. a widow's son at Nain during the ministry of Jesus – Luke 7
 6. Lazarus at Bethany during the ministry of Jesus – John 11
 7. saints raised at Jerusalem at the moment of Jesus' death – Matthew 27
 8. Tabitha (Dorcas) at Joppa during the ministry of Peter – Acts 9
 9. Eutychus at Troas during the ministry of Paul – Acts 20

- ▶ He was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again, "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).
- ▶ As the Son of God, Jesus participated with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in his own resurrection from dead.
- ▶ Jesus said (John 10:18), "No one takes *my life* from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again."
- ▶ The apostles preached about Jesus that "God raised him from the dead" (Acts 2:24; Acts 3:15; Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30; Romans 10:9).
- ▶ Paul wrote that if the Holy Spirit "who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you," he "will also give life to your mortal bodies" (Romans 8:11).
- ▶ The Father has committed resurrection authority to Jesus the Son. Jesus announced, "The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and...live" (John 5:25).

6) When God sees fit, He can and will and does raise people from the dead. Such resurrections no doubt have specific purpose in the Mind of God.

- ▶ During his earthly ministry, Jesus sent out the twelve to "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons" (Matthew 10:8).
- ▶ God, who is omniscient and omnipotent, could prevent death in any case, thus eliminating any necessity for resurrection.
- ▶ Thus, resurrections from the dead may very well fall into the following categories in the purpose of God (we suspect, we do not presume to know):
 - ▲ Unbelieving dead may be raised to spare them, mercifully, from hell and to provide witness to the living of the reality of eternity;
 - ▲ Believing dead may be raised to provide witness to the living of the reality of eternity;
 - ▲ The dead may be raised as a sign to the living of God's sovereign power over death;
 - ▲ The dead may be raised as an accompaniment to the preaching of the Gospel to demonstrate the authority of Jesus Christ as God's Son;
 - ▲ The dead may be raised as an expression of God's compassion to the grieving living.

- ▶ Timothy had been added to Paul's team about 7 years earlier (in **49AD**) at Lystra (Acts 16:1-5).
- ▶ Timothy's Jewish grandmother Lois and mother Eunice had become believers before him (2 Timothy 1:5).
- ▶ Timothy was well-trained in the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-15).
- ▶ Timothy was very young here, perhaps 18; fifteen years later, Paul would write to him about his youthfulness (1 Timothy 4:12).
- ▶ Though very young, Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1-5).
- ▶ Timothy's ministry calling was marked by the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1:6).
- ▶ Timothy's ministry calling was confirmed by prophetic words (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
- ▶ Timothy would travel with and for Paul extensively (Acts 17-20; 1 Thessalonians 3:2-6; 1 Corinthians 4:17, 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Romans 16:21; Philippians 2:19).
- ▶ Timothy would become a vital partner in Paul's apostolic ministry throughout the remainder of Paul's life (Philippians 2:22).
- ▶ Paul would list Timothy as co-author of six of his letters: 1 and 2 Thessalonians (**50AD**); 2 Corinthians (**56AD**); Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians (**60-62AD**).
- ▶ Paul would call Timothy *my fellow worker* (Romans 16:21), *my dear son* (2 Timothy 1:2), *my son whom I love* (1 Corinthians 4:17), and *my true son in the faith* (1 Timothy 1:2).
- ▶ Timothy would deal with insecurities (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Corinthians 16:10) but would press through them to be used by the Lord in longterm ministry.
- ▶ Timothy would be present with Paul at Rome during Paul's first Roman imprisonment from **60-62AD** (Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1; Philippians 1:1).
- ▶ Timothy would receive two letters from the Apostle Paul (**62-65AD**); the second would come from Paul's second Roman imprisonment (1 and 2 Timothy).
- ▶ Timothy would serve for a number of years as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).
- ▶ Timothy would deal with frequent stomach difficulties (1 Timothy 5:23).
- ▶ Paul would urge Timothy to come to Rome to see him before his execution in **65AD** (2 Timothy 4:9,21).
- ▶ Timothy would be imprisoned at some point in his life (Hebrews 13:23). We do not know the date or the author of Hebrews.

