

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

**Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.**

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-11 (TNIV)

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **THE FATHER OF COMPASSION AND THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT**, ⁴who comforts **us** in all our troubles, so that we can comfort **those in any trouble** with the comfort **we ourselves** receive from God.

⁵For just as **we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ**, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶If 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. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as **you share in our sufferings**, so also you share in our comfort.

⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about **the troubles** we experienced in the province of Asia. We were **under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself**. ⁹**Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.**

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰He **has** delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he **will** deliver us again. **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**.

— PART 3 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

① “³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” —

I love the fact that when Paul begins this narrative of his intense and intensive “troubles” that he experienced “in the province of Asia” — he starts, not with his **troubles**, but with a description of **the character of God!** Actually, it is more than simply a **description**, it is a **blessing** of God!

Paul Barnett writes that **Paul here “christianized...the Jewish blessing of God**. Those who attended the synagogue of that time would pray, ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord our God and God of our fathers.’ **The re-shaping of this prayer, now directed to ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’, gives some indication of the impact of Jesus as the Son of God on early Jewish Christian believers like Paul and Peter [Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3]. The christianization of...the blessing as [an] expression [of] Jewish religion [is] evidence for the profound conversion to Christianity of the Hellenistic Jew, Saul of Tarsus.”**

PAUL W. BARNETT, *2 Corinthians* (The Bible Speaks Today)

And what Paul has to say about God's character is profound: he says that he is "***the Father of Compassion and the God of All Comfort***"!

(a) "THE FATHER OF COMPASSION" — Paul blesses God because his mercy and compassion helped Paul survive the "great pressure," "deadly peril" and "sentence of death" he endured. Paul tells us that one of God's names is "Father of Compassion" — in other words, that **compassion is who God is!** It's his identity! And as THE FATHER OF COMPASSION, he is the **source** of all compassion and mercy.

PSALM 103:13 (NIV)

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him...

LUKE 1:78 (J.B. Phillips)

...the heart of our God is full of mercy towards us...

JAMES 5:11 (GNT)

For the Lord is full of mercy and compassion.

And **compassion is who Jesus is!** It's his identity!

MATTHEW 9:36 (The Passion Translation)

When he saw the vast crowds of people,
Jesus' heart was deeply moved with compassion,
because they seemed weary and helpless,
like wandering sheep without a shepherd.

MATTHEW 20:34 (NASB)

Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes;
and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

"When Paul describes God as the Father of compassion, he is again drawing upon his Jewish literary heritage in which **the compassion/mercies of God are frequently celebrated and invoked** (e.g. Neh. 9:19; Ps. 51:1; Isa. 63:7; Dan. 9:9; Wis. 9:1). However, Paul's appreciation of the compassion of God had been deepened by an understanding of God's saving action in Christ (Rom. 12:1 uses the expression 'God's mercy' to denote the great saving acts of God in Christ as described in Rom. 1 – 11). It is noteworthy that **the apostle uses both the noun, 'mercy', and the verb, 'to have mercy', more than any other writer in the New Testament, and this reflects how important the mercy/compassion of God was to him.**"

COLIN G. KRUSE, *2 Corinthians* (TNTC).

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God, we **believe** you are the "THE FATHER OF COMPASSION," that you are "**full of mercy and compassion,**" and that "**the heart of our God is full of mercy towards us!**" And we **praise** you for being who you are! So we **ask** you to pour out your compassion and mercy on us, and on all your children in this world! We need your mercy! Protect us. Deliver us from this deadly virus. Stop the coronavirus in its tracks. Heal this sick. Comfort the grieving. Fill us with your compassion and mercy, and mobilize us your church to love, pray for, and serve our neighbors and community!

Pastor Doug