

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times
"How God Works in Our Suffering" # 2
2 Cor. 1:8-11
4-17-16 Sun AM

Paul was under intense persecution and suffering. False apostles were deceiving the church, attacking Paul's character and motive in ministry. They said Paul suffered way too much to be a legitimate apostle.

Last week we saw that we are to remember certain truths about God when suffering- Who God Is, What God Does for You and What God Does Through You [vv. 3-7].

Some facts about God and the believers suffering:

1. God allows suffering in our lives.
2. God tests the validity of our faith.
3. God wants us to depend on divine resources.
4. God wants our focus on heaven.
5. God wants us to trust his sovereignty.
6. God wants to teach us obedience.
7. God displays his comfort thru our suffering.
8. God wants us tested and refined for greater service.
9. God allows suffering so we can comfort others.

It is with this backdrop, that Paul shares his own suffering and how God worked in his suffering.

TT- How Does God Work in our suffering?

I. vs.8-10a- God Teaches us to Trust Him.

v. 8: Paul reminds the Corinthians of a life-threatening situation from which God delivered him.

This certain incident is unknown and not recorded in Scripture, but possibly involved beating and imprisonment based on 2 Cor. 11:23-25.

They apparently were aware of the incident Paul was talking about. He was burdened and crushed to the point of depression and fear for his life. He saw "no way out" of the situation.

v. 9: God had a purpose for allowing Paul's suffering: to teach him not to trust in himself or own resources.

He learned that God's grace is sufficient and he is strong in weakness.

v. 10b: God is faithful and will comfort and deliver his children until our time to go to heaven.

2 Tim. 4:7-8, For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (7) I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

I. vs.8-10a- God Teaches us to Trust Him.

II. v. 11- God Works Through the Prayers of His People.

Yes, we trust a sovereign God, but we are asked to help by praying for the person or situation.

James 5:16b-18, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (17) Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Paul believed strongly in intercessory prayer:

Paul urged believers in Rome to strive together in prayers to God for him (Rom. 15:30).

To the Ephesians he asked them to pray and petition at all times in the Spirit on his behalf (Eph. 6:18-19).

Paul understood the balance between God's sovereign purpose and the believer's responsibility to pray. The only thing we can do is render practical assistance and pray.

By praying we cast ourselves at the feet of divine omnipotence. We must remember that we pray not to manipulate God but to exalt his power and sovereign will.

When God answers prayer many would praise God for his gift of healing. We join in prayer and then rejoice in thanksgiving for deliverance.

Q- What can we learn about God's purpose in our suffering and deliverance?

1. God is at work in our suffering to accomplish his divine will.

Eph. 1:11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"

Act 2:23, Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Act 4:28, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

2. God wants to teach us to trust him in the hard times. It is easy to rejoice and trust him in the good times.

3. The believer's part is to intercede in pray because we can't do anything about God's sovereign will.