

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient Greek temple ruins. Several tall, fluted columns stand in a row, supporting a large, rectangular stone entablature. To the left, a tree with green and yellowing leaves is partially visible. The ground is a mix of dirt and rocks. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

“The God of All Comfort”
2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Curt Deming
Melbourne Community Church
July 28, 2019



Leo Tolstoy:

“It is by those who have suffered that
the world has been advanced.”



What will we learn?

- ❖ Suffering brings comfort from God.
- ❖ Suffering produces “patient endurance.”
- ❖ Suffering and comfort equip us for ministry.

New Testament

- ❖ History
 - ❖ 4 biographies of Jesus
 - ❖ 1 history of the early church
- ❖ Letters
 - ❖ 13 by Paul
 - ❖ 8 by others
- ❖ Revelation



Paul's letters

- ❖ To churches
 - ❖ Romans
 - ❖ 1 & 2 Corinthians
 - ❖ Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
 - ❖ 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- ❖ To individuals (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

History of Corinth

- ❖ Greek city with a temple to Aphrodite and a reputation for immorality
- ❖ 146 BC – destroyed by Romans
- ❖ 44 BC – re-established as a Roman colony by Julius Caesar



Romans 1:21

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.



Romans 1:22-23

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Romans 1:24-25

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

Timeline:

- ❖ AD 51-52: Paul in Corinth
- ❖ AD 53-55: Paul in Ephesus, writes “previous” letter and 1 Corinthians
- ❖ AD 55: Paul’s second “painful” visit; Paul writes “severe” letter and 2 Corinthians
- ❖ AD 56: Paul returns to Corinth, writes Romans

Corinthian correspondence:

- ❖ “Previous” letter from Paul to church
- ❖ Letter from church to Paul
- ❖ 1 Corinthians
- ❖ “Severe” letter from Paul to church
- ❖ 2 Corinthians

Tools for epistles:

- ❖ Read it in one setting.
- ❖ Remember that it's someone else's mail.
- ❖ Look for the occasion.

Issues of 2 Corinthians:

- ❖ Continued problems from 1 Corinthians
- ❖ Problems arising from second “painful” visit and “severe” letter
- ❖ More recent issues



Major themes:

- ❖ Centrality of Jesus
- ❖ Apostolic ministry
- ❖ Hope of glory



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 his holy people throughout Achaia:



Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”



2 Corinthians 1:2

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

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 receive from God.



William McDonald:

“We are not comforted to be *comfortable*
but to be *comforters*.”



2 Corinthians 1:5

For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.



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 Corinthians 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.



2 Corinthians 1:8

We 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.

Acts 19:23-24

About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there.



Acts 19:25

He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business.



Acts 19:26

“And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all.



Acts 19:27

“There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”



Acts 19:28-29

When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together.



Acts 19:30-31

Paul wanted to appear before the crowd,
but the disciples would not let him.
Even some of the officials of the province,
friends of Paul, sent him a message begging
him not to venture into the theater.

Acts 19:32-33

The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him.

Acts 19:33-34

He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"



Acts 19:35

The city clerk quieted the crowd and said:
“Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world
know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian
of the temple of the great Artemis and of
her image, which fell from heaven?”



Acts 19:36-37

“Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.



Acts 19:38-39

“If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly.



Acts 19:40-41

“As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.



Acts 20:1

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 1:9-10

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. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again.

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

On him 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.



N.T. Wright:

“We are not to be surprised if living as Christians brings us to the place where we find we are at the end of our resources, and that we are called to rely on the God who raises the dead.”



Marilynne Williamson:

“God takes the side of sufferers
against those who afflict it.”



History = His story

- ❖ Creation
- ❖ Providence
- ❖ Redemption

Past / Present / Future

- ❖ The Lord rescued us.
- ❖ We can persevere through suffering.
- ❖ He will deliver us.

What have we learned?

- ❖ Suffering brings comfort from God.
- ❖ Suffering produces “patient endurance.”
- ❖ Suffering and comfort equip us for ministry.





Are you being called?

- ❖ To receive Christ
- ❖ To become a member of Melbourne Community Church
- ❖ To pray / to receive prayer
- ❖ To affirm or reaffirm a commitment
- ❖ To receive the Lord's Supper

