

SYNC: The God of All Comfort

(2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

Introduction

A) Story of comfort

B) Introduce the sermon series, SYNC.

Today, we begin a new sermon series entitled, SYNC. In the technology world, SYNC refers to connecting more than one device through cords or clouds in order to ensure that they all have the same information. For example, I use a cloud to SYNC my contacts between my laptop, my tablet, and my phone.

SYNC is short for synchronization. If you are old enough, you remember television programs in which soldiers or other characters synchronized their watches. You are familiar with the Olympic sport of synchronized swimming. When a marching band is synchronized or in step, there is great beauty.

Paul's desire was that the Corinthian church synchronize their lives with the will of God, the word of God, and the plan of God.

C) Contextualize 2 Corinthians 1:1-11.

Paul began the church in Corinth somewhere around 52 or 53 A. D. He stayed there for about a year and a half; then he went to Ephesus, where he remained for a few weeks, and then he went on a quick trip to Jerusalem, returning again to Ephesus.

Paul became aware of several problems in the Corinthian church and wrote a corrective letter to them entitled 1 Corinthians. Evidently that letter was not received well and its purpose unfulfilled. There was a bad reaction to it. Paul made a quick trip back to Corinth, but that too did not go well. He called it "painful." So when he returned to Ephesus, he sent another brief letter, in the hands of Titus, to Corinth to see if he could help them. That letter is 2 Corinthians in your Bible.

In 2 Corinthians we see the heart of the Apostle in an up close and personal way. He is real, he is raw, he is as authentic as anyone can be in 2 Corinthians. With all that is in him, he desires the Corinthians to be in SYNC with God in their lives and in their church.

Paul introduces his writing by talking about "The God of All Comfort".

I. The Promise of Comfort (1:3-4a)

Principle: God has promised to strengthen us in proportion to the pressure life exerts on us.

A) Timing of His comfort (1:4) - “afflictions”

“Affliction is what we today would probably call pressure, or stress. It is what many of you, perhaps, are feeling right now when you think about going to work tomorrow. It is whatever ties knots in your stomach and makes you feel anxious or troubled about what lies ahead. It is what makes for hectic days and for sleepless nights. It gnaws continually at your mind and threatens your well-being; it refuses to go away and leave you alone; it depresses you and darkens the future with forebodings of disaster. Now that is pressure, stress, and we all live in it. But they were not any different in the 1st century. They lived under pressure and stress just as we do. Paul experienced it as well, but along with it he experienced the comfort of God” – Ray Stedman.

B) The nature of His comfort (1:4) - “comfort”

“Comfort is more than just a little cheer or friendly word of encouragement. Paul does not mean that. The word basically means “to strengthen.” What Paul experienced was the strengthening of God to give him a peaceful, restful spirit to meet the pressure and the stress with which he lived. That is what Christianity is all about. “Strengthen,” in the Greek, is a word that is used also for the Holy Spirit. Your Bible frequently calls him “The Comforter,” but really it is “The Strengthener,” the one who strengthens you. This is God’s provision for affliction” – Ray Stedman.

C) The extent (1:3) - “all comfort”

In the phrase “Father of mercies and God of all comfort”, Paul sees everything in life as having purpose – especially the difficulties.

II. The Purpose of Comfort (1:4-7)

Principle: Affliction and comfort, two apparent opposites, are the means to greater maturity and ministry for the believer.

A) Teaches us what God can do (1:5).

B) Matures us in our faith (1:6).

C) Prepares us to serve others (1:6).

D) Demonstrates our connection to one another.

III. The Picture of Comfort (1:8-11)

A) The peril (1:8)

B) The deliverance (v. 10a)

B) The power (1:9)

C) The hope (1:10-11)

Conclusion