

OIC Message
October 5, 2008
Beauty from Pain

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

(2Co 1:5-11)

I. Introduction

A. 9-year-old Sam has an episode which reveals his hemangiomas

1. Long road which continues today
2. Why do we have problems or challenges in life? Why don't we have an easy life when we turn to God through our faith in Jesus?
 - a. Sin?
 - b. Fallen world?
 - c. Glory to God?
 - d. Growth?

B. Verses give another answer

1. comfort others going through same situation
2. opportunity for prayer by which many will give thanks

II. 2 Corinthians 1:5-11

A. Reason Paul wrote this

1. persecution & trials in Asia
 - a. specifically Asia Minor (Turkey)
 1. those who vehemently opposed him and what he was teaching (1 Corinthians 15:32)
 2. riot excited by Demetrius in Acts 19,
 3. ambush by the Jews against him (Act 20:3)

B. v. 5: For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

1. as Christians we are expected to share in Christ's sufferings
 - a. opposition, contempt, persecution, trials
 1. examples of opposition, contempt, persecution
 - a. witnessing to our family
 - b. witnessing to our co-workers, classmates
 2. examples of trials
 - a. Sam
 1. At 9 years old
 2. At 11 years old
 - a. Epileptic-like seizure that left him in the hospital for two weeks
 3. At 18 years old
 - a. Persistent headache which said the large hemangioma was bleeding
 - b. Surgery to remove it

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1. risks
2. but we can share in His comfort
 - a. Jesus was comforted by the fact that His suffering was momentary compared to eternity
 - b. He was comforted because He knew the outcome of the suffering
 - c. We, just as Paul was, can be comforted because
 1. of His presence,
 2. of His grace, and
 3. of His love
 4. examples
 - a. Sam
- C. v. 6: If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.
 1. when Christians suffer, they are better able to comfort others who have or are experiencing the same type of suffering
 - a. example
 1. during Sam`s operation, many people in the same ward undergoing similar operation
 - a. brought light to the ward and hope to some
 - b. most obvious when he went back during a recent check-up
 2. What?!? I`m suffering so that I can offer comfort to someone else?!?
 - a. Examples
 1. Jesus
 2. Paul
 3. you
 - a. family situation
 - b. financial situation
 - c. job situation
 - d. how are you dealing with it?
- D. v. 7: Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.
 1. Corinthians were enduring sufferings, trials, persecution, opposition similar to what Paul endured
 - a. Paul is saying that he has hope in their salvation and edification
 1. By the peace Jesus gives to those who are children of God, Paul hopes that
 - a. those who are not yet saved in the church there will be
 - b. those who are saved will grow more in their faith and trust in God and His promises
 - b. with faith in Jesus, in His promises, His power, and His spirit living inside of them, they would be able to receive the comfort that Paul received
 - c. same for us today
 1. we can empathize with each other
 - a. not sympathize or have pity but truly understand what another person is going through
 - b. being able to comfort because we have been comforted by God, our Christian brothers & sisters
 - c. example – while Sam was recovering from his surgery
- E. vs. 8, 9 - For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we

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despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

1. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to be aware of his situation so that they can participate in his deliverance from it by praying for him
 - a. we should not be afraid or ashamed to share our struggles with our brothers & sisters
 1. we can be comforted by those who have undergone the same thing
 2. we can invite others to pray for us, thereby being partakers of God's grace & faithfulness
 3. our attitude through the trial can build up the faith of others
 - a. if we just complain, then we are promoting a "poor-me" attitude, one of self-pity
 - b. if we trust God, then others may see and be encouraged to trust Him themselves
2. the words Paul uses are intense in their meaning
 - a. the situation was beyond what Paul and his companions could naturally bear
 1. the threat of death may be coming
 - a. directly from the situation they are facing
 - b. from their inability to know what to do
 - c. from within because they are ready to give up
 - b. there are times when we face trials that we can become depressed
 1. we question or complain to God about our situation
 2. with our natural eyes, we don't see anyway out of it
 3. our prayers are going unanswered or answered contrarily from what we want
 4. we want to give up and call it quits
 - c. personal examples
 1. my times of wanting to give up and go to Him in heaven
 2. even Christians get depressed enough to commit suicide
3. Paul identifies the true source of strength and assurance through this trial
 - a. When we become depressed, we focus on anything BUT God
 1. He has is able to
 - a. help us through the situation
 - b. give us the resources we need to make it through
 - c. bring alongside of us brothers & sisters to help us along
 - b. when we realize that God has the power to carry us through, WE CAN STAND!
 1. 2 Timothy 1:7
 - a. for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
 2. Joshua 1:9
 - a. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
4. what are you despairing about today?

F. v. 10 - He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

1. notice the tenses in the verse
 - a. past
 1. Paul tells us that just when all hope seemed to be gone and he and his

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companions were going to die, the Lord appeared for them, and delivered them

- b. Present
 - 1. But not only did Jesus deliver them from the trial they faced, but Paul has full confidence that He will deliver them from the present trial, too
 - c. Future
 - 1. God did it once, He can do it again!
 - 2. this is the hope that Paul has regardless of the trial
 - 2. what do we do? What should we do?
 - a. Personal experience
 - G. v. 11 - You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.
 - 1. during Sam's surgery
 - a. sent regular updates with prayer requests
 - 1. received replies from people almost all around the world who were praying for us
 - a. encouraged us
 - 2. with praises
 - a. encouraged others to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for His work, faithfulness, mercy, grace, and love
 - 2. this is an example of what Paul was experiencing
 - a. and what we should experience when we share with others
 - b. just as important to share praises & answers to prayers so that our brothers & sisters can be encouraged
- III. Conclusion
- A. We will face trials
 - B. By the way we come through these trials can be a source of comfort and encouragement to others who have or are going through the same thing
 - C. We may get depressed from the trial BUT we must remember that God, Who raises the dead, can deliver us from "death"
 - D. We should not be ashamed to ask others to pray for us
 - E. When He does deliver us, we need to share it with others so that they may be blessed and give thanks to God, too