

Rely Not on Ourselves But on God

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

Gregory Garrison

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.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.⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7: Three Summary Observations

1. There will be **afflictions** and **sufferings** when living for Christ. *“sharing in Christ’s sufferings”*
2. And as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, we will share abundantly in His **comfort** too.
3. God comforts His people *through* **Christ** and through **believers**. As *“the Father of mercies and God of all comfort”*, God is the ultimate **source** of comfort.

*For Paul, suffering is not intrinsically good, nor is it a Christian virtue. Rather, suffering is a **page in the textbook** used in **God's school of faith**.*

Scott Hafemann

2 Corinthians 1:8

*For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were **so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.***

Severity of Paul's affliction

so utterly burdened

NASB – “burdened excessively”; NKJV – “burdened beyond measure”;
NIV – “under great pressure”

Greek – literally, “weighed down to an extraordinary degree”

beyond our strength

RSV/NRSV – “utterly, unbearably crushed”; NIV – “beyond our ability to endure”

2 Corinthians 1:8

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

Paul's reaction to his affliction

we despaired of life itself

Greek – literally, “without a way”. No way out.

2 Corinthians 1:9

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.

Notwithstanding that the resurrection is a future event, God shows that it happens every day; for when God raises up again a man whose life is despaired of, and who has been brought to the very gates of hell, He shows nothing other than a resurrection, snatching from the very jaws of death the one who had fallen into them.

Philip Hughes

2 Corinthians 1:10

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.

Three actions

Past action: *He delivered us from such a deadly peril ...*

Immediate future: *... and He will deliver us.*

Ultimate future: *On Him we have set our hope that He will deliver us again.*

2 Corinthians 1:11

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.

You also must help us

NASB – “join in helping us”

Greek – literally, “join in serving”, “cooperate”

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