



THE CHURCH OF THE
ADVENT

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Summary: This week we began a new series in 2 Corinthians. The central theme of this letter is God's power in our weakness, which runs against our natural inclination to see weakness as an obstacle. Reading 2 Corinthians is a bit complex. It is a lot like reading a pastor's email inbox given Paul's complicated and often painful relationship with the church in Corinth. Broadly speaking Paul had four goals for his letter: restore his relationship with the church, defend the authenticity of his ministry, encourage their generosity, and challenge a minority that still opposed him.

Chapter 1 begins with Paul explaining how God's comfort strengthens us in times of trial and that our suffering is actually a way of experiencing communion with God. When we suffer, we have fellowship with Jesus on the Cross and we can take comfort in knowing that we have been united to Jesus' resurrected life and ascended glory (1:3-5). Paul continues by describing how our afflictions are not just an opportunity for God to comfort us, but that our experiences actually become means by which we can extend God's comfort to others. God doesn't just meet us in our suffering, but he actually uses it as a way of equipping us to become wounded healers (1:6-9).

- Questions:**
1. Reflect on the importance of context for 2 Corinthians. Discuss the background that Pastor Jeff introduced, and how it informs how we understand the letter in the weeks ahead.
 2. Read Romans 8:16-17 alongside 2 Corinthians 1:1-11. What does it mean to share Christ's sufferings? What does it mean to be united with Christ?
 3. How does Cross change how we think about suffering? What does Jesus' death show us about God? Where do we find comfort and hope in the Cross?
 4. How has God met you in your weakness in the past? How has God used your experience of weakness to minister and extend comfort to others?

Prayer: Pray that God would give you eyes to see the comfort he offers you in the midst of your weaknesses and how he may actually use your weaknesses to offer comfort to others.

Do: Read through the entire letter of 2 Corinthians in the week ahead. Reflect on the theme of power in weakness as you read. Pay attention to how this letter is connect to other passages or ideas in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and other New Testament letters.