



## Sunday Sermon Transcript

Pastor Philip Thomas, March 12, 2023

2 Corinthians 1:1-11 – Comfort

### ***This morning, as we're beginning our study of Second Corinthians...***

...you'll remember when we started studying First Corinthians last May, I mentioned that Paul had written at least one letter to the Corinthians before writing what we know as First Corinthians. So, there was a letter before that, then the one that we know as First Corinthians, and there was most probably another letter between First and Second Corinthians. So, there were probably about four letters -- some suggest there were even more. But in any case, we have these two letters, these two epistles, these two books of the Bible that we have.

I said it at that time in May of last year, and I'll repeat it now: **that the Lord, in His providence, has seen it fit for these two letters to be preserved for our illumination and our instruction.** So, His word is always complete for us. It gives us everything we need for love, for life, and for godliness. And so, we can be confident that these two letters that have been preserved for us give us those things that we need to apply for life and godliness.

#### **Now, in First Corinthians:**

- Paul corrects,
- he exhorts,
- he encourages, and
- he warns,
- but all of it with deep compassion and
- love for the people.

**He says, "I'm doing this because I care for you," and it's very clear that he sincerely cares for the people,**

- even though they are opposing him,
- even though they're going in all sorts of different ways,
- even though they are living in sin or
- doing whatever it may be.

He's NOT, first and foremost,

- attacking, condemning, sort of correcting.

He is, first and foremost,

- **expressing his love for them,**
- his deep compassion for them.
- And from that, he says, "Here, this is what needs to be set right."

**Now, as we read Second Corinthians, we'll see that although the Corinthians have dealt with some of the issues that Paul addressed, there are still many issues remaining.** And at least some of the Corinthians were continuing to question Paul's apostleship and his authority. And Paul gets very personal in this letter as he defends himself and his calling. He continues to be deeply concerned about the well-being of the Corinthian believers. He pours himself out on their behalf, sharing the word of the Lord, which ultimately benefits every believer who hears and does what the word says.

So, let's hear from the Lord by reading Second Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 1 through 11:

2Co 1:1 NIV 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:

2Co 1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2Co 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

2Co 1:4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2Co 1:5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

2Co 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.

2Co 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.

2Co 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.

2Co 1:9 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.

2Co 1:10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

2Co 1:11 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.

**Paul's opening remark is not a casual statement.** He is reinforcing his identity, his calling, and his authority when he states that he is an apostle of Christ Jesus -- a person who is called directly by the Lord to serve as the Lord's representative, not by the will of others, or even by his own will -- (he was persecuting the church; he was not going according to the will of God) -- and it is only -- he says -- it is only by the will, or the purpose, and the plan of the Lord that he is an apostle. He is an apostle commissioned by the Lord Himself, just as the twelve were.

So, you can see that he's speaking about his calling, his position, his authority. He opens that way. But what -- having sort of restated his position and his authority -- what does he immediately do? He doesn't launch into correction and rebuke. He doesn't say, "I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ; now let me tell you what you're doing wrong, and let me correct you." He doesn't do that.

***The first thing that he does is he speaks the word of comfort.***

**He emphasizes that God is compassionate.** God is the Father, the source, and the one who defines, who gives form and substance, to all compassion, and all comfort.



**Now, why is this important?** Why does he open this way? Why does he even say this? And why did he close First Corinthians the way that he did when he says, "You know, there's a great door open for ministry for me, and there are many who oppose me"? Why does he say that? And why does he say what he's doing over here about comfort?

Because believers in Christ Jesus, the children of God, who is the Father of compassion, will share abundantly -- not just sparingly but abundantly -- not in blessings, (but) in sufferings. That's what he says. He says,

***"We're going to share abundantly in Christ's sufferings."***

Wouldn't you have preferred it to be, just a little bit? Just a little taste? "I've had my share. I have had my share of sufferings. I'm done with that. I'm good. Now I'm awaiting the blessings."

**But no. Paul says, "You're going to share abundantly."** We want joy abundantly; we want blessings abundantly; we want peace abundantly. We don't want sufferings abundantly. But he says, "You're going to share in Christ's sufferings abundantly. And when that happens, we will need abundant comfort."

**What better place, what better source, than to go to the God of all comfort?** When sufferings come -- and we know that they will come -- and we need comfort, what better person to go to, than the one from whom comfort originates -- that He's defined in that way?

If you have something that needs to be done, to be fixed, you want to go to the best person that can address that. You want to find the best mechanic for your car, the best tech for your water heater -- you want to find the right person for your needs. **When you are in suffering, and you need comfort, the Word says you need to go to the one who is the God of comfort -- ALL comfort.**

Now, when we think of comfort, we think of physical and mental freedom from pain or constraints. You know if you ask somebody, "Are you comfortable? How are you doing? Are you okay?" what is the first thing we think of? Am I free from pain? Am I free from constraints? Even just to think about our clothing -- we say, "If I take off a tight thing and put on a loose one, oh, I feel more comfortable."

**We don't want to be constrained. We don't want to experience pain.** We say, "Oh, if I'm free from those things, then I'm in comfort." We seek to alleviate feelings of grief or distress. We say, "Oh, you're feeling distressed, you're feeling grief, you're feeling depressed -- oh, let me comfort you. Let me do something. Let me -- comfort food -- let me give you some tea, let me do something to ease your suffering, to ease your pain."

When we comfort others by saying, "It's okay," or, "It will be okay," what we mean is that whatever's causing you pain right now will either be removed or it'll be forgotten. And we say, "Okay, it'll be okay. It'll be okay."

**But you'll notice in this passage that the Bible doesn't speak of comfort in those terms.**

- It doesn't say, "The God of all comfort will just remove all the pain."
- It doesn't say, "The God of all comfort will cause you to forget all the pain."
- It doesn't say that all these things will just be eliminated.
- Instead, the Bible describes the comfort of God in the midst of suffering,
- in the midst of deep distress,
- in the midst of great grief,
- in the midst of unendurable pressure.

**Paul says, "I felt so much pressure, we didn't think we could even endure it."**

He's not saying, "Oh, life's a breeze, we're going through, we're happy, everything's good, God is with me." He says, "We felt so much pressure that we felt we couldn't even endure it. We were walking through the valley of the shadow of death. We were at the point of death. **We were in such deep discomfort. And yet, we experienced the comfort of God.**"

**So, the question becomes: What is God's comfort?** If it isn't all the removal of pain, if it isn't what the world would describe, if it isn't what we think of just as default -- what is the comfort of God?

**Well, God's comfort, first and foremost, is to encourage.**

The most common meaning of the word "comfort" in the Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testaments, **is to encourage.** It's to say, "Keep going." Encourage to do what, though? To keep going in what? **To keep going in the call that the Lord has already placed on our lives.**



It's to say, "No," -- even when it gets difficult -- keep going. Even when you think that something is really tough, keep going. Even when you say, 'Oh, I don't know how I'll bear this, I don't know how I'll handle this,' let me encourage you in the Lord. Let me equip you. Let me show you how you can encourage yourself in the Lord.

**Let me tell you why encouraging you to persevere is important:**

- ➔ We want to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.
- ➔ We want to keep believing.
- ➔ We want to remain faithful.
- ➔ We want to persevere till the end."

The encouragement is what we're doing.

**And so, when we come alongside somebody in that way, and when we're encouraging somebody, you can't say to them:**

- "I encourage you just to hold out for five more minutes, because then the pain will go away.
- Just to hold out for five more months.
- Just to hold out till your child gets a little older.
- Just to hold out."
- **These are the things we say.**
- We say, "Just, just, just -- just be patient.
- Just be patient.
- You'll forget about this.
- Just be -- just deal with it for now." Or,
- "Be a man, buck up, just deal with it."

**But that's not what the Bible is asking us to do when we say, "Come and be comforted in the Lord." The Lord of comfort, the Lord who encourages us, says, "Keep going. Keep going. Look to Jesus. Persevere."**

And I'm moving quickly through these first few points here because I want to get to our point of application and **to really encourage you to stand on these words that we are reading here.**

Because what happens is, when God gives us His comfort and He's asking us to keep going. What He's also doing -- because, you see,

***God's comfort is to come alongside and to assist.***

The word that is used here in Second Corinthians -- the Greek word that is used here -- **extends the meaning of "encouragement" to describe a "calling," "summoning," someone to your aid.**



***You're calling out and you're saying:***

**"Lord God,**

- I need Your help.
- I need Your assistance.
- I need Your comfort."

**And so, the word here that is used, when Paul says, "The God of all comfort 'comforts us'," it is that:**

- He comes alongside us.
- He assists us, and
- He is there with us. And
- He pours out of Himself for us. And
- when we are there, we are able to see that the Lord deals with the situations in front of us.

Now, as part of that coming alongside and assisting us, the Lord does remove barriers. The Lord does remove obstacles from before us. The Lord does remove the pain and the things that we are going through. He knows what we can bear. **And so, it is right for us to pray and call out to the Lord in that way: "Lord, come and take this from me." Jesus, (in Gethsemane), cried out to the Lord, "If it were possible, take this cup from me."**

***It is necessary for us to cry out to the Lord in that way.***

"Lord, I'm suffering. Lord, I'm feeling this. Lord, this is real. I'm not denying it, I'm not minimizing it, I'm not pushing it to something else. I'm getting the help that I need. I'm getting people to come alongside and assist me. And I'm really depending on the Lord to come alongside and assist, to do something in this regard that will make a difference, that will make a change in my life. **I'm coming to the Lord and saying, 'Lord, I need Your comfort.'**" **God is promising to do this,** which brings us to this important point that:

## **God's comfort is to give us Himself.**

God's comfort is to encourage us to keep going. God's comfort is to come alongside and to be there -- and to assist us. **And most importantly, God's comfort is to give us of Himself.**

When Moses said, "I can't go and speak to Pharaoh. Who am I? What can I do? What can I do?" -- God didn't say, "I will go before you, and I'll change the Pharaoh's heart, and I'll do this thing, and I'll do these mighty miracles." I mean, He speaks to Moses about all of that. He reveals His will to him. But the first thing that He says to Moses is this: "I will be with you."

### **"I will be with you."**

When Abraham is given his promise, but he is doubtful, he doesn't know how to appropriate this, he doesn't know what will come of this, God's promise to Abraham is, **"I will be with you, and I am your exceedingly great reward. I am the one who will be with you. I'm giving Myself to you."**

**So, rather than saying,**

- "Lord, make me comfortable.
- Give me comfort,"

**The encouragement that we have, is to say,**

- "Lord, let me be closely related to,
- closely connected to,
- closely in proximity with the God of all comfort."

**Because then the comfort that He gives**

- will be complete,
- will be sincere,
- will be appropriate.
- It will make the change.

**We try to say to God,**

- "I want this to happen.
- Lord, I want this pain to cease, and
- I want this door to open, and
- I want this person to do this."

**God says,**

- "Come to Me.
- Desire Me. And
- when I am with you,
- when I give Myself to you,
- then you will see what is there --
- what is the comfort that you need."

Now, quite interestingly, the same word that is used for comfort -- or translated into English as comfort -- from Second Corinthians chapter 1, is used in Luke chapter 2. So this -- Jesus is born; we're reading that gospel account -- we studied this some time ago -- but in that story in Luke chapter 2, it says in Luke chapter 2, verse (25):



Luk 2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation (the comfort) of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

Luk 2:26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

And you will notice, in many of your translations, that this word "console" or "consolation" shows up in the same verses that have the other word "comfort." This idea that there is a consolation -- a way to calm our fears and a way to, deal with our grief, and so on.

### ***And what was the consolation that the children of Israel were waiting for?***

They were under oppression. They had been in exile, and came back, and never regained the glory that was there before. And now the Romans had conquered. Everything was looking very bleak. And there had been all these promises that the Lord was with them and that He would send the Messiah -- the King, the King of kings, and so on.

**And so, the children of Israel were in desperate desolation.** They were in grief, looking to be consoled. And so, here we see Simeon, who says -- or of whom it is said -- "he was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him."

**When you're waiting on God for that depression to lift,** that situation to ease, that comfort to come -- all of these kinds of things -- and I'm saying to you, the Lord needs to be with you. He has to be the one that is giving Himself to you and that you need to see Him there with you.

**That is happening through the person of the Holy Spirit.** We're not walking physically with Jesus today, and we're not experiencing the Father's glory in all of its glory, all of its fullness. **We are experiencing the presence and the power and the person of the Holy Spirit.**

### ***But one of the ways that Jesus described the Holy Spirit was as "the Comforter." He said, "The Comforter will come."***

The Comforter will come. And when the Holy Spirit is with us, when the Holy Spirit is able to speak, when the Holy Spirit is able to guide and direct, and we are listening attentively -- and if the Holy Spirit is speaking right next to your ear, then you will hear a lot more clearly than if the Holy Spirit is very distant.

But when the Holy Spirit is close to us, we're able to hear that voice of comfort -- that voice of consolation, that voice that reassures. **Nothing may have changed in the present circumstances, but we are able to hear His voice.**

And then, further down in Luke chapter 2, verses 29 through 32, we read of how Simeon reacts to Mary and Joseph bringing the baby Jesus to the temple. They are coming to do something that is just part of the Jewish custom, to dedicate the child and to honor the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice and do all of that.

But Simeon, who is in the temple, who is filled with the Holy Spirit, who is waiting -- because he's been promised, he's been told -- God, the Holy Spirit, has spoken to him and said, "You will see the Messiah. You will see the Messiah."

Nobody else had had this kind of, experience or expectation. But here is this man, waiting in the temple. and we don't know much more about him, but we know that he was just faithful, kept persevering, kept waiting, was patient.

And now, when Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus to the temple, he takes the baby in his arms, and he says:

Luk 2:29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

Luk 2:30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

Luk 2:31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

Luk 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

The baby was probably eight days old. He didn't see what Jesus was about to do in His ministry. He didn't see Jesus go to the cross. He didn't see Jesus rising from the dead. He didn't see the church being established. He didn't see the work of God going through the centuries.

***But he saw in faith because he knew that the consolation, the comfort of God, had come. And he says, "Oh, now I can die in peace."***

What had changed? The Romans were still in charge. Nothing in his external circumstances had changed. Nothing. And the people around him were still doing all the wickedness that they were doing. **But he says, "Now I can go in peace." Why? Because the Lord had given Himself. The Lord had brought Himself to bear into the equation.**

***I'm waiting for the comfort of the Lord.***

**Where are you looking for the comfort?**

- To your job?
- To your family?
- To your friends?
- To your resources?
- To the ability that you may have through your money or other means to make your life more comfortable?
- Is that where you're looking?

***Or do you look to the Lord, the God of all comfort?***

**See, God gives Himself. God gives Himself to us -- Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.**

- And He says, "Do you want comfort?"
- Do you want the alleviation of suffering?
- Do you want to be free from pain?
- ➔ **Turn your eyes away from all of that and look at Me. Look at Me. Look at Jesus."**

You see, when we go through all of these things and understand these truths, we have to respond and apply by comforting others, with the comfort we have received from the Lord.



**What I'm saying to you is this:**

- If that's the call of God,
- the commission of God to us,
- the directives of God to us --

**"Go, comfort others with the comfort you have received from the Lord" -- then you need to receive the comfort from the Lord.**

- You can't get comfort from anywhere else.
  - You can't get lasting peace from anywhere else.
  - You won't be able to deal with all of the pressure of your circumstances from any other source, any other way to handle it.
- **You have to go to Jesus.**
- **You have to be able to say, "Lord, I need You. I need You."**

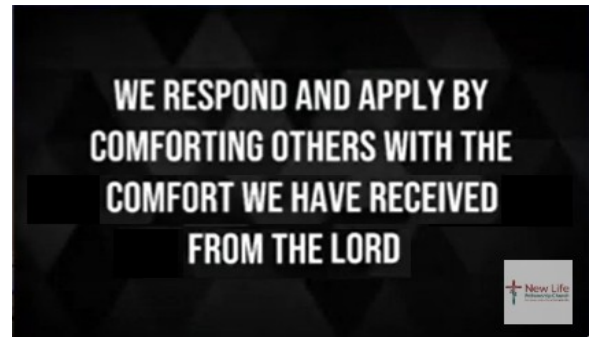
You see this idea of receiving and then being able to give -- and Paul's speaking in these terms.

**You know, when we were studying the book of Acts about two years ago, we read in Acts 9 of the dramatic conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus.** You

remember that story. Paul was persecuting the church; he's coming against the church; he's doing all these things. And then, on the road to Damascus, the Lord confronts him directly. The Lord speaks to him, and he says, "Who are You?" **And the Lord says, "I am the one that you are persecuting.** You're hurting Me." He doesn't say, "You're hurting My children." He doesn't say, "You're just affecting the church." He says, "You're hurting Me. You're persecuting me." And He confronts Paul directly.

And Paul then is blinded. He goes -- he's taken by the hand and led into the city. And the Bible says for three days he didn't eat or drink; he's just there. And at that time, **God sends this man of God, Ananias, to go and pray for Paul.** He says to Ananias, "Go and pray. This Paul is, here in the city, and you need to go and pray for him." **Ananias is quite surprised, quite afraid maybe even. He says, "Paul? Paul's the one who was persecuting the church!** He came here with orders to destroy the Christians. You want me to go and pray for him? You want me to go and encourage him? You want me to come alongside him and assist him? **You want me to tell him about Jesus, about the risen Lord?" And God says, "Yes,"** because He says -- God, this is God speaking to Ananias -- **He says, "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."**

I've mentioned this before: I'm always surprised by some of these phrases in the Word of God. Don't we want that sentence to have read, "I will show him how much he will impact the world. I will show him how he will preach for Me, to kings and leaders. I will show him how mighty miracles, unusual miracles, will be worked through him. I will show him how I will give My word through him, and it will be the word of the Lord for the church for generations, for centuries -- until I return. I will show him how I'll take him and use him." No. **God says, "Go pray for him because I will show him how much he must suffer for Me."**



## ***You know why Paul writes about suffering in Second Corinthians chapter 1?***

**Because he received the comfort of the Lord. He knew what it was to suffer.** He said, "I have gone through this, and I have experienced the comfort of the Lord in the midst of all of this, so I can comfort you, and you need to now comfort others."

**I'm not asking you to go seek out suffering.** Sometimes we bring on suffering on ourselves because of the consequence of our own actions, our own sins, our own foolishness, our own disobedience, our own stubbornness, our own pride, our own folly, and we bring suffering on ourselves. I'm not saying go seek that kind of suffering -- just do whatever you want, and when you suffer, you can say, "Oh, I'm suffering for the Lord." No, you're not.

**The suffering that we endure because we are**

- doing the will of God and
- walking in the ways of God and
- listening to the voice of God

**is very different than if we suffer if we're listening to**

- our own flesh,
- the world, and
- the devil.

**So when we suffer, be discerning, be attentive.** Is this because the Lord has called me to do this, or because I just jumped off the path or the way that He wanted me to walk on? And I stumbled, and I fell, and I skinned my knees, and I broke my arm. And I can't say now, "Oh, I'm suffering for the Lord." No. I jumped.

**And now, "Oh Lord, heal me. Oh Lord, restore me. Oh Lord, let me get back on that way. Oh Lord, let me walk in Your ways alone.** Let me listen to Your voice alone. Let me be discerning of the voices that I'm hearing. Let me be faithful to You." But Lord, as I do that, and I walk in Your ways, and I listen to You, and I'm obedient to You, if anything comes up that is constraining, that is causing pain, that is uncomfortable -- oh, I don't have to worry about that.

***The confidence that we have when we walk on this earth according to the will of God is that no matter what happens, even to the point of death, we can say, "What have I to fear?"***

**What have I to fear? What do I have in dread?** What should I be dreading, or in sort of negative expectation? Oh, I hope that doesn't happen. I hope I can -- this won't go bad, this won't be a mess. I hope my children will be okay. I hope this will... " No.

**I say, "If I'm walking in the will of the Lord,** if I'm striving, if I'm seeking to obey Him and to stay faithful to Him and to be encouraged to endure, no matter what, **I have the comfort of the Lord.** I know that He will be with me. I know that He will listen to me."

**You know, my dad died about a little bit more than 33 years ago** at the age of 51. And when he died, I was -- you know -- I mean -- it was tough. And we went through all sorts of different things that were happening and everything else that was going on. But right at the time that he died -- and I spoke a couple of times, with different audiences, and then he died in the Middle East, and we took the body to India. And so there was a

service that was in the Middle East, in Dubai, and then another service in India. And at both those places, I shared from Second Corinthians chapter 1.

And I can't tell you that at that point in time I knew all the nuances or I understood everything there is to know about the comfort of God. I can't say that I understand all of that even today. **But I was very confident of this one thing: that the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our tribulations and in our sufferings and in our loss and in our grief and in our pain -- as real as they are -- when He does that, we're able to comfort somebody else.**

When I spoke at my dad's funeral in India, there was a gentleman there who listened to me, and he didn't come and talk to me at that point, but he made it known or communicated later; that he had been going through all sorts of different things, and he was struggling with stuff, and there was a whole broken relationship with his son, and so on. And he said, "I heard you talk about your father, and I heard you talk about the testimony and the life that he had lived," just as we've been reminded of missionary lives and so on this week even. And he said, "I was amazed that you could talk about your dad in that way, and I made a commitment that day that my son would have an opportunity to talk about me differently -- that at my funeral, my son would have an opportunity to speak like this about me. No regrets. Regardless of whether you die at 50 or 100, no regrets." That you would say, "Oh, Lord God, this was a man who walked in Your ways. This was a man who knew the comfort of the Lord even though he suffered in his body. This is a man who endured to the end, who persevered and was faithful."

You see, Paul ends this particular passage by saying this:

2Co 1:9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death (we felt we had received the sentence of death!). But this happened that we might (rely not) on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

You know what the comfort that **Abraham** had when he was taking Isaac up the mountain? He said, "**Even if -- even if -- I have to put him to death, God will raise him from the dead.**"

**Are you facing a situation** where you say, "I'm now in the sentence of death," and that seems like it's final, it's ultimate? **The Bible says God is able to raise from the dead.** The bleakest situation, the thing that seems the most daunting, the most final, the most ultimate -- death even -- **even from that, God can raise from the dead.** And so Paul says here:

2Co 1:10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

2Co 1:11 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.

***Church, we want to be a praying church.***

**Join the worship time on Sunday and everything else.**

- Join the time of prayer.
- Join the things that we're doing.
- Join all of that stuff.
- We have the prayer meetings on Wednesdays.

**Come to the Lord in prayer --**

- personally,

- collectively,
- in every way possible --

**to say, "Lord God, we want to pray.**

- We want to pray and say,
- 'Lord God, You move.
- You do Your work."

**And when we pray for others,**

- when we pray for the comfort of the Holy Spirit,
- when we say, "Lord God, I want to encourage that person.
- I want to come alongside that person.
- I want to come in assistance to them, and
- I want to pray for them.
- **I want to pray that You will be there close to them,**
  - that they would experience Your proximity,"
  - and there is no depression,
  - there is no discouragement,
  - there is no destruction,
  - there is nothing that can come against you,
  - there is nothing that can defeat you...
  - **...because the Lord, the God of all comfort, is with you.**

**Heavenly Father,** we just thank You. We praise You. We worship You. That, Lord, You describe Yourself as the God of all comfort. And You do it, Lord, not to say that "I will remove all your pain," but to say, "I will be with you in your pain." And I thank You, Lord, for that.

I thank You, Lord, that when we are hard-pressed on every side, Lord, when we face all sorts of calamities -- death and loss and grief and everything else -- we can indeed declare, "What a friend we have in Jesus." Oh, hallelujah! All our sins and griefs to bear, all our burdens to carry, all our load to lift. Oh, Lord God, we thank You, that You are our comfort, that You are our rescue, that You are the one that stands with us. You come alongside us; You assist us. Oh, Lord God, we thank You for that.

Father, we pray that we may press into You. We pray that we will know You, we would love You, we would honor You, we would worship You, we would be comforted by You alone. You alone would be our source of comfort.

**We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.**