

Spending Time with Jesus in 2 Corinthians Chapter 1

Invite Jesus to speak to you as you read this week.

1st: read I or II Corinthians (read the one you didn't read last week) all the way through, the whole book, imagining you are Paul saying this to the church in Corinth. To help you remember and ENJOY what you are reading, read out loud for at least 15 minutes each time (longer would be even better.)

2nd: read 2 Corinthians chapter 1 by itself to remember what it is about.

3rd: read 2 Corinthians chapter 1 again and write down what stands out to you.

What do you notice?

1)

2)

3)

Third read through, answer questions as you go:

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Think of the sweetest Christian you know, someone who radiates God's love, someone who overflows with the joy of the Lord no matter what is going on with them. I hope you know several people like that and get to know many more. I'll fill you in on a secret: what makes those Christians so sweet is that they have gone through really, really tough times trusting Jesus minute by minute. Ask them about it. Let them tell you how God walked with them through their darkest circumstances. It's those experiences that made them "sweet" Christians.

Something terrible happened to Paul after he wrote 1 Corinthians. While we don't know what that was, we do know that he suffered greatly! How does he look back on all he has gone through?

Through the lens of the gospel! Look back at I Cor. 15:3-4 for the gospel in a nutshell: Christ _____ for our _____ according to the _____, he was _____, and he was _____ from the _____ according to the Scriptures.

This good news isn't just some information Paul teaches. It is at the core of his being. It is the glasses through which he sees the world, his circumstances,...and especially his suffering. **Our Lord Jesus is alive and reigning**, and Paul knows that **we will share in Jesus' resurrection for all eternity**. All the suffering he was experiencing is temporary, and his Lord is with him through it all!

Paul starts this letter with the usual heading of who is writing and to whom...and a customary blessing of grace and peace. A good Jew would say this comes from God alone. Who does Paul say grace and peace are from? _____ the _____ and the _____ Would that be considered remarkable? If so, why?

How does Paul begin to let the Corinthians know about the tough things he has been going through? Look at the first word of verse 3: _____. This is a command. Who do you think Paul is commanding to praise God, even in the midst of everything going wrong?

What does Paul call God in this verse? The _____ and _____ of our _____ Jesus Christ, the _____ of _____ and the _____ of _____. (Hmmm...how much comfort? _____.) In verse 4, what does Paul say that God does? He _____ in our _____. Why does God do that?...so that _____ in _____ with the _____ ourselves _____ from _____.

Read verses 3-7 again. Does Paul seem surprised that he and Timothy have been suffering? _____

What if you could say to Paul, “That’s great that you had God comforting you, but be real, Paul. Was it worth it to go through those awful times?” What do you think he’d say?

In verses 8-9a, what stands out to you most?

In verses 9b-11, what stands out to you most?

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

What does “we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially in our relations with you with integrity and godly sincerity” mean?

How we “conduct ourselves” is how Paul and Timothy choose to act. “Our relations with you” refers to how they treated the Corinthians and the attitude they had toward each person in that church; this showed the Corinthians what kind of relationship Paul and Timothy were willing to have.

Your turn: What is integrity?

What is godly sincerity?

Having integrity and sincerity is extremely important to Paul. He'll bring this thought up over and over in 2 Cor. Look in the concordance and list other verses that talk about sincerity and other similar words (i.e. truth, truthful, commend, "purify ourselves", "taking pains to do what is right", etc.) How many can you find?

2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. :

2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. :

2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. : 2 Cor. :

What do you notice about where these verses are in this letter? Are they clustered together or spread throughout?

Paul is confident that the better the Corinthians get to know him, the more they will see his (and Timothy's) sincerity and then will boast about them. Then he says that he and Timothy will boast of the Corinthians in the day of the Lord Jesus. The "day of the Lord Jesus" is a way of referring to when Jesus returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and brings justice and restoration to the world. What would it be like to have Paul boast about how Jesus has worked through you on that day?

In verses 15-24, we find out that Paul had visited the Corinthians once after sending them 1 Corinthians. It didn't go well. *At all.* He'd made plans to visit them again but didn't. In their culture, having a guest arrive was a very big deal, especially if they were well known. So as a guest, you wouldn't dare just not show up...that would dishonor your hosts. So Paul has to explain why he never showed up.

Read 2 Cor. 1:23-2:1. Why did Paul just send a letter this time instead of coming for a visit?

We will find out later that Paul has enemies that are telling the Corinthian church to not trust Paul. These "super-apostles" (as Paul will later call them) are making him look bad, saying things like, "Why listen to Paul? He isn't a good speaker. He has been in prison – how shameful! He has nothing to boast about. And don't forget: he didn't visit when he said he would so he shouldn't be trusted...and neither should his preaching."

Look back at verses 15-17. What do you think about Paul's plans? (Look up "fickle" if you need to.)

It is critical that the Corinthians understand that what Paul, Silas and Timothy are preaching isn't wishy-washy. God doesn't promise one thing and then do another.

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ."

Can you think of some promises God made in the Old Testament? List them here:

All God's promises are "yes" (fulfilled) in Christ. Can you see how this is true in the promises you wrote above?

What does "Amen" mean?

What do you think it means that because these promises are "yes" in Christ, we say "Amen" through Christ to the glory of God?

In verses 21-22, who makes us stand firm in Christ? _____ How has He done this:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

When did He anoint us?

How do you feel about God setting (putting) His seal of ownership on you?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says that we are not our own...in other words, we don't own ourselves. We were bought at an EXTREMELY high price. What was that price?

If you follow Jesus as His disciple, how do you feel about God having ownership of you? Relieved? Worried? Joyful? Other: _____ ? All of the above? Why?

If I pay a deposit for a car or a house, how does that deposit \$ serve as a guarantee that I will finish paying all the rest? (In other words, how does my deposit show that I am trustworthy to pay the rest?)

Having the Holy Spirit in our hearts is a HUGE deposit. What does that say about "what is to come"?