

Finding Hope pt2

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Finding Hope / 2 Timothy 1:8–14; 2 Corinthians 1:3–7

Why?

In a season of hopelessness, that becomes the overarching question. If I knew why, then I could go on. If I could see the end result, then I could push forward.

Purpose matters.

When we strip someone of purpose, we are sentencing them to a slow death of hopelessness. It is Sisyphus. Forever condemned to roll the rock most of the way up the hill and then to have to start again.

In order to find hope, we have to find a reason.

Paul was confronted with this question a lot. He was always suffering, He could not go from one town to another without the threat of death or prison or torture. His whole life, after Jesus, was pain.

I don't think about that a whole lot because Paul seems so above it all. He writes as a man who is focused on a single goal- pleasing Jesus.

But it is in the writings of Paul what I began to discover the discussion of purpose. What if, where I am right now, is where I need to be for some greater purpose. What if there is a point?

So turn with me to [2 Timothy 1:8-14](#) and let's look at the last letter of Paul, from prison, before his death.

Verses 8-12a are one massive run on sentence. No kidding. Look at the punctuation! Paul had something he wanted to get out at the start of this letter and smack in the middle of it- in verse 10- is that word “purpose.”

He opens this letter as he gives thanks for Timothy and his faith and the legacy of his faith. And he reminds Timothy that he too is called to use his gifting to serve Jesus.

So, the “therefore” is a result of all of this and we get into this massive sentence. He wants Timothy to do all this IN SPITE of what he sees Paul suffering.

See he knows, that some of us, we are hesitant to serve God with our whole hearts because when we begin to do that hardship comes along. And the more we back off the less hardship we encounter.

We do not know if this is something Timothy is wrestling with, but we do know that Paul is determined HIS suffering is not going to be a deterrent. So he ties his hardship to God’s purpose in saving him.

1, 2 Timothy, Titus (2) A Readiness to Suffer (1:8–12)

Instead of Timothy’s feeling shame, Paul wanted him to suffer for the sake of the gospel. The power of the Holy Spirit can produce a strength that bears suffering. **Paul knew that divine help was available, and he wanted Timothy to use it richly.**

Look at verses 9-10.

He tells Timothy not to be ashamed of Jesus.

Church that can be our posture when we are hopeless. **We minimize Jesus-** to ourselves, to others. We struggle to acknowledge Him in the midst of being down. (award show losers never thank God)

Paul says when we suffer- even to the point of hopelessness- we are sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. (Garden of Gethsemane) And we do this, submit to it, because he saved us AND called us.

It is the calling where Paul begins to lean into this idea of purpose. He separates salvation from calling. **See, yes you are called to be saved, but that is the first call, not the last. God has a calling for you, beyond salvation. He has something for YOU!**

And He has it for us because He has a purpose for us. That purpose is a part of the grace He has for us. **And notice, that purpose existed BEFORE the ages began.**

1, 2 Timothy, Titus (2) A Readiness to Suffer (1:8–12)

The purpose of salvation is that each believer might produce a life of obedience and holiness to God instead of self. The basis of this salvation is the purpose and grace of God, not human merit.

God has known who you are and will be before the creation of the world. He was there way ahead of you.

1, 2 Timothy, Titus (2) A Readiness to Suffer (1:8–12)

The availability of God's sovereign grace through Christ would brace the wavering resolve of Timothy. **It was also important for Timothy to recall that God's saving purpose had been at work before the world was founded**

And to fulfill that purpose, God sent Jesus, because apart from Him our lives would have no purpose. **And look down at verse 12...see these words..."and that is why I suffer as I do."**

1, 2 Timothy, Titus (2) A Readiness to Suffer (1:8–12)

believers are called out of the world to begin a new experience of commitment in living fellowship with God and other believers.

When you are broken. When you cannot go on. When the end seems like a certainty. There is hope in your suffering, because it has a purpose. There is a reason.

So pause here, and turn with me to [2 Corinthians 1:3-7](#).

This is not the only place where Paul brings this up. Here he talks about the purpose, and he adds some context that we need to see before we go back to 2 Timothy.

Part of suffering is finding comfort in God. That is part of the purpose. No matter what else comes from suffering, we learn in the midst of suffering that God will be there for us...no matter what. **(Verse 3-4)**

Hope is renewed when we meet the comfort of God in our sufferings. And that is not thru any activity of our own. He arrives no matter our condition, because He is a God of hope.

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

The comfort that Paul has in mind has nothing to do with a languorous feeling of contentment. It is not some tranquilizing dose of grace that only dulls pains but a stiffening agent that fortifies one in heart, mind, and soul. **Comfort relates to encouragement, help, exhortation. God's comfort strengthens weak knees and sustains sagging spirits so that one faces the troubles of life with unbending resolve and unending assurance**

Now you may say, I don't see Him! Where is my comfort? **And I would ask you, can you hear the whisper over the scream?**

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

Thomas ñ Kempis wrote, "All human comfort is vain and short." Not so with God's comfort; it takes many forms but can always match the suffering. God can deliver us "out of affliction" or encourage us "in affliction" so that we can endure it

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

We also learn from Paul who the true source of comfort is. Affliction can come from many sources, but real comfort in every affliction can only come from God alone. **Abandoning Christ might seem to offer an escape from suffering, but suffering comes also to unbelievers, and abandoning Christ means that one has also abandoned the only source of comfort.** Lapidé observes that “the sufferings of the world are vinegar without honey, and as they increase, so do desolation and mourning and woe.” **God’s comfort does not always remove the affliction, but God gives us the grace to face it through**

He is there. Our focus is wrong. We are focused on avoiding the pain or fixing the problem. God is focused on us. And we need someone, to help us bear the burden so we can see the Lord.

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

The same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to comfort us

Look back at **verse 4-** “so that we might be able to comfort those who are in any affliction.”

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

Paul gives the reasons for his blessing God in the first half of this verse: “God comforts in all our troubles.” **In the second half he gives the purpose behind the comfort he receives: “in order that we can comfort others in every affliction.”** Paul does not theorize in general terms about God’s comfort. He has in mind specific incidences in which he experienced God’s deliverance from affliction

Some of us have suffered before, so we can comfort those who suffer in the same way now. But you cannot comfort until you have been comforted.

Church that is the other purpose- we have been suffering so we can be delivered and then go and deliver others. **Some of you have a testimony, but its purpose has not been fulfilled because you are not living the purpose of your suffering!**

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

Fourth, and most important, Paul's experience has taught him that God comforts him so that he can be a comfort to others. **God's comfort is not intended to stop with us. God always gives a surplus, and God intends it to overflow to others.** It is given not just to make us feel better but to bolster us for the task of fortifying others to face suffering

Look at **verses 5-7**. we are all sharing in Jesus' suffering- it saved us! So in the same way, our suffering can serve a greater purpose to lead others to comfort.

We find hope in suffering when we are able to see the higher purpose in our circumstances.

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

We can also experience God's comfort by witnessing its power in the lives of others. Kruse reminds us, "The testimony of God's grace in one's life is a forceful reminder to others of God's ability and willingness to provide the grace and strength they need." **It is a comfort to see those undergoing trouble reaching out to comfort others. Their valiant example emboldens others**

2 Corinthians 2. Praise to the God of Comfort (1:3–7)

We also experience God's comfort by caring for others even when we are in the midst of suffering. **Sometimes the sudden onslaught of affliction may tempt one to retreat into a shell, to shut oneself off from others. The suffering, however, then becomes purposeless. Those who focus only on themselves are the most miserable of people.** The persons who turn their pain to helping others can redirect and conquer that pain

So go back with me to 2 Timothy.

The second part of verse 12 and on to verse 14.

Paul is not ashamed, he is CONVINCED, that his suffering is endurable, because of Jesus and the purpose He has for what Paul IS enduring.
(This is in the midst of being imprisoned and facing death)

1, 2 Timothy, Titus (2) A Readiness to Suffer (1:8–12)

Paul stood convinced (same word as "persuaded" of v. 5) that divine power could preserve him. Paul knew that he had placed his faith in a living person who would never disappoint him

Why is he convinced? Because he has rejected the notion that his suffering is pointless and embraced that his suffering has a purpose and that God can and will sustain his faith thru the trial.

Church, you have a purpose. Your suffering has a purpose. There will be a testimony about God's faithfulness to you on the other side. Find hope in the purpose.