Sent by Divine Will

SCRIPTURE

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in Achaia:" 2 Corinthians 1:1 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The Apostle Paul opens his second letter to the Corinthians by establishing his credentials, but he does not point to his education, his intellect, or his religious zeal. He identifies himself simply as an "apostle." An apostle is literally a delegate, a messenger, or one who is sent with specific orders. Notice the foundation of his calling: he is an apostle "by the will of God".

Paul did not wake up one morning and decide it would be a good career move to preach the Gospel. He was not volunteering for a position. He was drafted by the Sovereign Will of the Universe. He was sent with orders. This truth is deeply grounding for the believer today. When you surrender your life to Jesus Christ, you are no longer operating on your own agenda.

You are where you are—in your specific workplace, your specific neighborhood, your specific family—by the will of God. You are His delegate. When we face opposition or hardship, our natural tendency is to question our calling. We wonder if we made a wrong turn. But if you are walking in obedience, you can rest in the certainty that you are there by His design. The God who sent you is the God who will sustain you. You are not a spiritual freelancer; you are an ambassador of the King of Kings. Today, ask the Lord to direct your steps and trust Him to provide what you need to fulfill His calling.

PRAYER

Father, I surrender my own plans and ambitions to You today. Thank You for calling me and sending me. Help me to remember that I am Your delegate in this dark world. Give me the courage to carry out Your orders with faithfulness and joy. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Acts 9:10–16
- Galatians 1:15–16
- Ephesians 4:1–3
- Romans 5:1–2
- John 14:27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does recognizing God's calling change our attitude toward ministry?

2. Read Acts 9:10–16. How does this passage deepen today's understanding of God's work in our lives?

3. What would it look like for you to seek God's will before making a service commitment?

The Source of Grace and Peace

SCRIPTURE

"Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 1:2 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

In almost all of Paul's epistles, he uses a specific, repeated greeting: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ". Have you ever noticed who is extending this grace? It comes directly from the Father and the Son.

Often, we read this as just a polite, religious "hello," but it contains profound theological truth. Grace is not just an unmerited favor that pardons our sins; it is the divine power that transforms our lives. Peace is not just the absence of conflict; it is the deep, abiding wholeness of a soul at rest. And these two vital necessities originate from the very throne of God.

But how do this grace and peace actually reach us? While the Father and the Son are the divine source, the Holy Spirit is the power by which that grace is manifested and delivered to our hearts. Just as Jesus promised in Acts 1:8, we receive "power" after the Holy Ghost comes upon us.

You cannot manufacture your own grace, and you cannot force your own peace. If you are exhausted from trying to hold your life together with your own willpower, you are looking to the wrong source. Look up. The Father and the Son are actively sending grace and peace to you today. Open the avenues of your soul to the Holy Spirit, and let Him deliver the power you so desperately need.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I am tired of striving in my own strength. I need Your grace to overcome my sins, and I need Your peace to calm my anxious mind. I receive the gift You and the Father are sending me today through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Romans 5:1–2
- John 14:27
- Philippians 4:6–7
- Acts 1:8
- Acts 9:10–16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are grace and peace rooted in God rather than circumstances?

2. Consider Romans 5:1–2. What does this passage add to the main lesson of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to bring one anxiety to the Father in prayer?

The True Face of the Father

SCRIPTURE

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" — 2 Corinthians 1:3 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

There is a dangerous and deeply rooted misconception in the Christian world regarding the character of God. Many people subconsciously believe that the God of the Old Testament is a harsh, wrathful, and vengeful dictator, while Jesus in the New Testament is the nice, loving, and merciful Savior. They view Jesus as a shield who protects us from the angry Father.

This is a totally false picture. Jesus came to this earth specifically to reveal the true character of the Father. When you see the compassion of Christ, you are seeing the exact heart of God the Father. Paul shatters this false dichotomy by declaring that God the Father is the "Father of mercies" and "the God of all comfort".

Part of the reason we struggle to see God this way is because our view is often distorted by our earthly fathers. None of us have had a perfect earthly father. Our human fathers are flawed, sinful, and sometimes harsh, distant, or entirely absent. Without realizing it, we project the failures of our earthly fathers onto our Heavenly Father. But God is not like broken men. He is the originator of mercy. He is tenderhearted toward your suffering. He does not sit in heaven waiting for you to mess up so He can punish you; He is actively drawing you with cords of lovingkindness. Today, ask God to heal your distorted view of Him. Let the truth of His merciful character wash over your soul.

PRAYER

Father of mercies, forgive me for the times I have viewed You as a harsh taskmaster. Heal the wounds left by earthly failures, and show me Your true face. Thank You for loving me with an everlasting, tender love. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- John 14:7–11
- Psalm 103:8–14
- Exodus 34:6–7
- Romans 5:1–2
- John 14:27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Christ reveal about the Father's heart?

2. How does John 14:7–11 help clarify the spiritual principle in today's reading?

3. What would it look like for you to replace a fearful misconception about God with a biblical truth?

The God of All Comfort

SCRIPTURE

“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

When tragedy strikes, where do you turn for comfort? We often seek solace in the distractions of the world—in entertainment, in food, or in the sympathy of friends. In our theology, we rightfully acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter," but we often forget the origin of that comfort. Paul explicitly calls God the Father "the God of "all" comfort.

The Father is the source of all true consolation. When you are weeping in the dark, the Father is not distant or indifferent. He is the God of "all comfort", meaning there is no sorrow so deep, no grief so agonizing, and no tribulation so intense that His comfort cannot reach it.

But notice the profound purpose behind the comfort He gives. He comforts us in our tribulation "so that" we may be able to comfort others who are in any trouble. Your pain is not pointless. God does not waste your tears.

When you go through a devastating divorce, when you lose a child or loved one or when you face a terrible, life-altering trial, God meets you in that dark valley. He binds up your wounds and gives you a comfort that defies human logic. Then, in due time, He will bring someone into your path who is walking through that exact same darkness. You will be able to put your arm around them and say, "I know exactly what this feels like, and let me tell you how the Father comforted me." Your greatest misery will become your greatest ministry.

PRAYER

God of all comfort, thank You for drawing near to me when my heart is broken. Help me not to waste my trials. Teach me the lessons of the dark valleys so that I can be a vessel of Your comfort to others who are hurting. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 2 Corinthians 1:3–7
- Isaiah 40:1–11
- Romans 12:15
- John 14:7–11
- Psalm 103:8–14

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can comfort received from God become comfort offered to another?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3–7. What connection do you see between this passage and today's Scripture?

3. What would it look like for you to reach out to a person experiencing a difficulty you understand?

Pressed Out of Measure

SCRIPTURE

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:" 2 Corinthians 1:8 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

We often hear the well-meaning phrase, "God will never give you more than you can handle." While that sounds nice, the problem is we often underestimate what we can and cannot "handle". The Apostle Paul—a giant of the faith—admits his circumstances were more than he felt he could endure. He writes about a trial in Asia where he was "pressed out of measure, above strength".

Paul was squeezed so hard by his circumstances that it broke him. He reached the absolute end of his physical, emotional, and spiritual endurance. It was so agonizing that he "despaired even of life". Paul literally wanted to die. He had hit the wall. Have you ever been there? Have you ever felt so overwhelmed by financial ruin, failing health, or relentless attacks that you felt you simply could not take another step? Have you felt "pressed out of measure"?

Do not feel guilty for reaching your limit. God sometimes allows us to be brought to a place where our own strength completely evaporates. He allows the pressure to exceed our human capacity. Why? So that the illusion of our self-reliance is finally shattered. When you have absolutely nothing left, you discover that His grace really is sufficient. You learn that when you are weak, then you are strong. Do not fear the crushing pressure; it is the very thing God uses to produce the oil of the Spirit in your life.

PRAYER

Lord, I confess that I often feel pressed beyond my strength. I feel like I cannot go on. In these moments of absolute weakness, be my strength. Hold me up when I cannot stand, and teach me to rely entirely on Your power. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 2 Corinthians 4:7–9
- Psalm 42:5–11
- 1 Kings 19:4–8
- 2 Corinthians 1:3–7
- Isaiah 40:1–11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What encouragement does Scripture offer when suffering exceeds our strength?

2. What encouragement or instruction does 2 Corinthians 4:7–9 offer in light of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to seek support and take one honest need to God?

The Sentence of Death

SCRIPTURE

"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:" 2 Corinthians 1:9 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Following his confession of despair, Paul explains the divine purpose behind the unbearable pressure. They had the "sentence of death" in themselves.

Why did God allow His faithful servants to endure such terrifying extremity? Paul gives the clear answer: "that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead".

Our default setting as human beings is self-reliance. We trust our bank accounts, our intelligence, our doctors, and our connections to solve our problems. As long as there is a human solution available, we rarely cast ourselves fully upon the mercy of God. God loves us too much to let us trust in things that will eventually fail us. So, He brings us to situations where human ingenuity is utterly useless. He brings us to the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army behind us. He brings us to the "sentence of death."

It is only when we are forced to look at a dead end that we learn to trust the God who raises the dead. If God can bring life out of a sealed tomb, He can bring life out of your dead marriage, your dead career, or your dead dreams.

Stop trying to find a human escape route. Let the sentence of death do its work, and watch the Resurrection and the Life step into your situation.

PRAYER

Father, I lay down my self-reliance. I admit that I cannot fix my own problems. I place my complete trust in You—the God who raises the dead. Breathe resurrection life into the dead areas of my spiritual walk today. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 2 Corinthians 1:9–10
- Romans 8:11
- Psalm 62:5–8
- 2 Corinthians 4:7–9
- Psalm 42:5–11

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can helplessness teach us to depend on the God who raises the dead?

2. How does 2 Corinthians 1:9–10 support or expand the lesson we have considered today?

3. What would it look like for you to entrust a situation beyond your control to God?

Sabbath Summary & Reflection

SCRIPTURE

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." — 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (KJV)

SABBATH REFLECTION

This week, we have explored the profound depths of A Father's Comfort. We learned that we are called by the will of God. We dismantled the false idea of an angry Old Testament God, realizing that the Father Himself is the "God of all comfort". We discovered that God comforts us so that we can become comforters to others. Finally, we faced the hard truth that God allows us to be "pressed out of measure" so that we will stop trusting in ourselves and learn to trust in the God who raises the dead. His comfort is not merely for us; it equips us to comfort others.

PRAYER

Lord of the Sabbath, I rest in Your everlasting consolation today. Thank You for not leaving me comfortless. Establish my heart in every good word and work. Let my life be a channel of Your grace to a hurting world, until the day when You wipe away every tear from our eyes. In Jesus' name, Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Hebrews 4:14–16
- Romans 15:4–5
- 2 Corinthians 1:9–10
- Romans 8:11
- Psalm 62:5–8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How has this week's study changed your understanding of God's comfort?

2. How does Hebrews 4:14–16 bring together the spiritual lessons of this week?

3. What would it look like for you to share a promise of comfort with someone who needs it?