The God of All Comfort

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Key verses: “May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be blessed! He is the compassionate Father and God of all comfort. He’s the one who comforts us in all our trouble so that we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble. We offer the same comfort that we ourselves received from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Our God is known for many things and by many names. But one of the most striking phrases that the Bible uses to describe God is the “God of all comfort.” In His great love, God is able to comfort His children “in all our trouble.”

God is able to comfort us in all our trouble because “He is the compassionate Father.” Like the best of parents, God longs to give comfort to His children when we are hurting. “Just as a Father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:13).

In fact, God loves us so much that, in Jesus Christ, God became human. In Christ, God felt all of the hurts we humans feel. So, God is able to empathize with us in every kind of human loss, hurt, and suffering.

“I could never myself believe in God if it were not for the cross,” wrote John Stott. “In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I turn to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness. That is the God for me. He set aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death” (from Stott’s book, The Cross of Christ).

So, whatever trouble, grief, or pain we may be experiencing, we can receive comfort from our “compassionate Father,” the “God of all comfort.” God is able to comfort “us in all our trouble.”
But the comfort that we receive from God is meant to be shared with others. God is “the one who comforts us in all our trouble so that we can comfort other people who are in every kind of trouble” (v. 4).

Here’s how it often works. When we go through a time of trouble, illness, grief, etc., and God “comforts” and strengthens us, we are then uniquely equipped to minister to others going through a similar trial. God never wastes our pain. When we go through a trial, God will use it to grow our faith, make us more like Jesus, and *equip us to minister to others with empathy and compassion.*

When 13-year-old Lauren Blackmore was diagnosed with cancer, she heard a sermon at her home church that inspired her to have a ministry with other cancer kids. She said, “I can give them hope by telling my story.”

Lauren had a rare and deadly form of cancer. But after 14 rounds of chemotherapy and 25 radiation treatments, Lauren’s recovery was considered a miracle.

Throughout her battle, Lauren found comfort from a gift she had received at birth—a blanket. A neighbor named Mildred had made a pretty, multi-colored quilt as a baby gift for Lauren. This “Miss Mildred” blanket was always Lauren’s favorite. She snuggled in it through childhood and then through the nausea, fatigue, and sleepless nights that came with battling cancer.

After Lauren’s dad visited a children’s cancer ward in India, he came home and told Lauren about the cancer kids he’d met in India. As a result, Lauren began to raise money by speaking at Rotary Club meetings, schools, and churches. Her goal was for every child to have a “Miss Mildred” blanket because “chemotherapy makes you cold all the time.” Through Lauren’s efforts, each child in that Indian cancer ward is warmed by a “Miss Mildred” blanket.

“When I was first diagnosed with cancer, I knew God had a plan for my life,” said Lauren. “This is part of that plan” (from *The Southeast Outlook*, 11-24-05).

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