

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Cor 1:3). I praise you today as the God who comforts me in my affliction. “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him” (Ps 103:13). You remember that I am only dust, and your lovingkindness is always on me! Glory to God!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me the first part of Paul’s fourth letter to the church at Corinth (called 2 Corinthians). When Timothy delivered Paul’s second letter (called 1 Corinthians), some in the church refused to submit to Paul’s discipline. Instead, they maligned his motives and sought to undermine his authority in the church. Timothy returned to Ephesus with the bad news, and Paul decided to make an emergency trip to Corinth (cf. 2 Cor 2:1). The visit turned out to be painful and distressing, for an individual in the church openly resisted his apostolic authority and the rest of the congregation did not support him (2 Cor 13:1–3). Paul returned to Ephesus (sometimes retreating is better than staying and fighting), and he wrote the Corinthians a third letter in “anguish of heart and with many tears” that called on them to confront the offender (2 Cor 2:2–4). Paul then asked Titus to deliver the letter and do what he could to resolve the situation (sometimes using an intermediary is best). Before Titus could return, Paul was forced to leave Ephesus by Demetrius the silversmith. He made his way to Macedonia, and Titus met him there with the good news that the church longed for reconciliation (2 Cor 7:5–9). Paul was greatly comforted by Titus’ report, and he wrote this fourth letter to express his joy over their repentance. He began the letter by praising you for your comfort in all his afflictions, and he told the Corinthians that they shared with him in both the suffering and the comfort of Christ. This teaches me to patiently endure the sufferings that come my way, for your comfort will enable me to be a blessing to others in their afflictions. Paul told the church what happened to him in Ephesus, and he encouraged them to pray for him. He did this to strengthen the ties between the Corinthians and himself, for he knew that we grow to love those for whom we pray. He then explained the changes he had made to his original travel plans (cf. 1 Cor 16:5–9). The effort he put into his explanation teaches me how important it is to maintain a reputation for truthfulness and dependability. Fickleness on my part can bring reproach on the name of Christ. He went on to urge the church to forgive the one who had “caused pain” and comfort him lest he be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. This teaches me the importance of restoring those who have sinned, for Satan will always try to take advantage of such situations.

Reflection

Paul said, “For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you” (2 Cor 1:12). Can I make the same boast? Do I have a clear conscience before God and man?

Request

Father, help me to imitate the example of Paul, who was committed to a life of simplicity and godly sincerity. May my ministry always be one of honesty and integrity.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, in whom all your promises find their Yes! He is the radiance of your glory and the exact imprint of your nature. I say, ‘Hallelujah, what a Savior!’

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[The Sun Behind the Cloud](#)” – Barney E. Warren.

Meditation Verse: 2 Corinthians 2:11.