

Give God Your Hurts and God Will Give You His Healing

The Gift Exchange, Week Two

Welcome to week two of *The Gift Exchange*! We're talking about the gifts God gives us in exchange for the humility of opening up to him and trusting him with our biggest hurts, habits, and hang-up's.

What is the worst day you ever had in your life? For someone it was a distant memory, for another it was a family tragedy that happened suddenly and without cause, still someone else says my worst day was today just getting my children and myself ready for church today.

Whatever the issue, at the end of it all, we would agree that we want and need something better, something that will bring us back to a place of security and stability, ultimately, to that wonderful place of healing and hope.

Jesus began his ministry with strong words to his disciples, words that would serve them well as they set out to emulate his teachings and provide an example for others to follow. **Matthew 5:11-12** ends the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount with these chillingly prophetic words, "***Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***"

In our story today the Apostle Paul had some pretty bad days...and it was not what happened to him that mattered most but how he responded to what happened to him that mattered most.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 NLT

²³ I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴ Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. ²⁶ I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. ²⁷ I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

How did Paul get through that kind of stuff?

He wrote about it at the beginning of his second letter to the Corinthians and that's the passage I want us to look at today...

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 NLT

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. ⁴ He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. ⁵ For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.

⁶ Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. ⁷ We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

Two Big Challenges When You're Overwhelmed with Trouble

1. When you give your problems to God, he will give you his comfort.

Paul speaks of God with a sort of title or nickname: he's the "God of all comfort."

And Paul says God comforts us in **all** of our troubles. "Troubles" is a general word for affliction, annoyance, inconvenience.

None of the problems you face are too small for God to care about.

And none of them are too big for him to handle.

He has all comfort, for all troubles.

2. When God gives you his comfort, you can give comfort to others.

When you walk through troubles and trust them to God, receiving his comfort, it's like going to school and learning how to be a comfort to others.

If you want to know what comforting someone looks like, look at the life and ministry of Jesus.

Write your troubles down and bring them to the altar for prayer. Let's pray for the God of all comfort to give us his healing!