



Open Heart: Living in Christ With Nothing to Hide
Are We Comfortable?
2 Corinthians 1:1-11 | October 11th - 17th, 2015

Warm Up: Suffering is a common denominator for all humans, *including* followers of Jesus. In fact, “**Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**” - 2 Timothy 3:12. Since suffering is inevitable, learning to suffer well is essential. How would you explain to someone what it means to suffer well?

- ❖ The Greek word for *comfort* means “with fortitude.” How does this meaning differ from how you are typically inclined to think about “comfort”?
 - Read 2 Cor. 1:3-7 substituting *comfort* with words like *fortitude* and *strengthen*. How differently do you read these verses when you make this substitution?
- ❖ Often times suffering comes into our lives from our own doing. Either we are careless, disobeying God, or simply making bad decisions that lead to pain. Yet we also suffer when there is no connection to our stupidity or sin. We don’t know why bad things happen to “good” people, but we do know that God uses suffering for His glory and our ultimate good.
 - Can anyone summarize the storyline of the **Book of Job**? After you’ve done this, have everyone read **Job 40** silently. How does this chapter (and the book as a whole) deal with the “why” of suffering? How does this instruct you as you think about your own trials?
- ❖ Read 2 Cor. 1:5-7, 1 Peter 4:19; Galatians 6:2; and John 16:33 aloud. According to these verses what are we instructed to *do* with our suffering? Why?
- ❖ Suffering will lead us in one of two directions: We will either become *bitter* or we will become *better*. The only difference between these two words is the letter “i”. When we put ourselves at the center of our pain it leads only to bitterness.
 - How have you seen this to be true in your life or the lives of those around you?
 - Give an example of someone you know who seems to consistently choose “better” over “bitter.” In what ways do they inspire you specifically?

Wrap Up: There are few things that will open our hearts to God and others like hardships, afflictions, and suffering. As believers in Jesus Christ we are assured of God’s exceeding fortification in the struggle. We *must* share our stories of God’s power to fortify each other in the midst of life’s battles. Who do you know who is walking through a season of hardship? In what ways might you be able to come alongside them specifically? Pray for these things as you close.