

2 Corinthians Bible Study – 2 Corinthians

1:1-2:4

Begin by reading 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:4. If possible, read this passage in several translations. You can access different translations online at sites like biblegateway.com. On your phone or tablet, the app YouVersion offers many different translations.

2 Corinthians 1:3-14

Paul wastes no time in addressing one of his main concerns in this letter, which makes it such a timely and appropriate study for us. Human pain and suffering are real, including among believers. Paul is no stranger to suffering, though he does not go into detail about what has happened. N. T. Wright says it is like watching a friend go into a building whole and well and emerge a short time later bloody and beaten. Rather than tell you what happened, your friend tells you how s/he has coped with the pain. That is what Paul is doing here – offering the Corinthians and us a way to understand and cope with human pain and suffering.

- What is Paul’s understanding of how to deal with our pain and suffering?
- Paul uses the Greek word *paraklesis* ten times in these verses. Look at the different translations of this passage and note the way they translate this word. Possibilities include “comfort,” “console,” “encourage,” and “help.” To which word are you most drawn? Why?
- Think of a time when you needed comforting or consoling. What helped you?

2 Corinthians 1:15-2:4

Another theme in this letter is the relationship between Paul and the congregation in Corinth. There appears to be a feeling in Corinth that Paul is not being honest with them. Paul asserts that he wasn’t engaged in human planning; rather, he was obedient to the leading of God, and God is faithful.

- How would you have responded to Paul’s reasoning, if you were a member of the church in Corinth?
- We live in uncertain times with messages from leaders that can appear contradictory, inconsistent, and confusing. How do Paul’s words about God and God’s faithfulness help us live with the uncertainty?