

II Corinthians 1:3-5

³ **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;** ⁴ **who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.** ⁵ **For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.**

A person need not have great spiritual discernment, to look and see that we are living not only in the 'Last Days', but on borrowed time. Everywhere you look, there are wars and rumors of wars; global disasters are upon every continent, violence and decadence are common place. People are facing more fears and unknowns than at any other time in history. The church has been in either one of two camps; the prosperity camp, or the unbelief camp. In the prosperity camp, far too often people have been trained to seek only the goodies from God. Not that I disagree with faith at all, but only when it is taught for selfish reasons. Then in the other camp, faith is dead! So the church has often swung between one camp seeking only the Hand of God, or the other who doesn't believe that God's promises apply to today. The faith camp would say that something is wrong with you if you are sick or lacking in your life. The unbelief camp would never seek God for their needs or sufferings, because they believe that miracles ended with the original twelve Disciples; yet here in these scriptures, we are told that **"the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance."** That, **"our comfort is abundant through Christ."** Have you ever considered that the suffering and lack that you are facing today, might very well be training from your Heavenly Father to prepare you for what is coming to this nation in the days ahead? How effective will the church be when a great disaster, whether natural, financial, or one brought on by terrorists, comes to this great land? Unless the Lord prepares His church to minister through trials and tribulations today, then we will be as weak as the rest of the world when it does happen. Have you met someone who tried to explain how to parent, when in fact they have never raised a child of their own? The church would have the same effectiveness had we not been prepared.

The problem with most believers is that we are so concerned with getting out of our times of trouble and distress, that often we miss the purpose of the training. Instead of seeing our situation as an opportunity for God to move in our lives, all we can see is our personal pain and discomfort. Instead of allowing the Lord to mature and build our spiritual muscles, we have learned to simply opt out of the training. The scriptures talk of a great falling away in the "Last Days". It goes on to speak about the 'remnant' remaining. According to the American Dictionary, the word remnant means, "Residue; that which is left after the separation, removal, or destruction of a part". Are you willing to allow God to prepare you through pain, sufferings, and lack, in order to be able to give comfort to others who will suffer in the days ahead? Or, are you constantly looking to get out of your present trials, because they are beyond your own level of pain tolerance? Understand that God never intended you to go through this without Him. The only way we will have any comfort to share with others tomorrow, is if we can learn to suffer through Christ today. The cross is an instrument of death, for Christ it took His life physically; but it was also designed to give us life, spiritually. Are you willing to suffer in abundance with Jesus Christ, or are you seeking a path less radical?