
Say hello

Let us know that you're here on our live stream's live chat. Or connect with us at www.sle.church.

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Today's Service

Welcome and Singing	He is Our God The Power of the Cross I Asked the Lord that I Might Grow
Holy Communion	
Community News	
Bible Reading	Isaiah 40:1-5 2 Corinthians 1:1-11
Sermon	By Pastor Ben Ho
Song of Response	I Have a Shelter in the Storm

Financial Update

Last Week	\$16,529.75
Weekly Required (adjusted)	\$6,280.00
Shortfall 2020	\$0.00

Giving by Electronic Funds Transfer

A/C Name:	SLE Church
Bank:	National Australia Bank
BSB:	084-424
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SLE Church is a branch church of Chinese Christian Church Brisbane



19 April 2020 | Service Times: 9am & 11:40am

Welcome, we're glad you're here!

We are a church family committed to following Jesus Christ as Lord. We do this by getting to know him through his living Word, the Bible, which is why the sermon is the key part of our Sunday services. Find out more about us at www.slechurch.org.au.

**Authentic
Gospel
Ministry**

power in weakness

The Gospel of Comfort in Affliction

God's all-encompassing mercy and comfort comforts Paul and all believers, so that they can bring comfort to others. In our affliction, we receive comfort from God so that we can comfort others in affliction.

Pastor's Desk—Intro and Background to 2 Corinthians

It is with great excitement and trepidation that Steve and I begin preaching this 11-week sermon series on 2 Corinthians!

The letter is complex to read and understand. And when you do understand it, it is challenging and confronting.

One of the big reasons why it is complex to read and understand is because it feels like we're listening to one side of a conversation. Paul address issues throughout the letter without fully retelling what the issue is. It means we need to read 'backwards' from what he says to determine what he's trying to address. Thankfully though, there is much that we can work out from 2 Corinthians itself, and also much of the history of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church that we can glean from Paul's other letter that we have in the Bible to this church (1 Corinthians) as well as the historical accounts of Paul's movements in Acts.

Here's a summary of important things to know (and refer to) as we go through this series.

Paul first preached the gospel in Corinth during second missionary journey (Acts 18).

He was self-supported doing the work of a tent-maker, so as not to burden this very young church and create obstacles to them coming to faith. The ministry multiplied quickly, but so did opposition. Paul got greatly discouraged, but then received a vision from the Lord to stay, which he did for one and a half years.

Paul then moves onto Ephesus where he stayed for two and a half years. There he sends his first letter to the Corinthians addressing an issue of sexual immorality in the church, which he mentions in 1 Corinthians 5:9. We don't have this letter in the Bible. For reference, we can call this first letter 0.5 Corinthians – the letter before 1 Corinthians that we do have.

Sometime later, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in response to more issues in the church – division over leaders, sexual immorality, abuse of freedom and rights, disputes over spiritual gifts and worship, the resurrection.

He followed up this letter with a visit (1 Cor 16:5-12). When Paul did visit, things were bad in the church and the visit ended up being 'a painful visit' (2 Cor 2:1). Opposition against Paul had grown strong. Around that time, one or two leaders rose up in opposition to Paul and ridiculed his apostleship, which the church did nothing about to stop (2 Cor 2:5-8).

Whatever the reason, Paul decided to leave – perhaps to let things settle/give time for things to heal. Paul seemed to have indicated that he would return to visit again soon, but decided not to make another painful visit. This opened Paul up to the charge of being fickle and lacking resolve in his plans (2 Cor 1:16-2:4).

Instead of the visit, Paul sent a letter by the hands of Titus (2 Corinthians 2:4, 9). We don't have this letter either. For reference, we can call it 1.5 Corinthians. It was a letter that rebuked them and called them to deal with their problems, including punishing the ringleader who had most maliciously opposed Paul (2:5-9, 7:8-12). This letter came to be known as the 'severe letter'.

In the meantime, Paul is suffering greatly as he brings the gospel through severe opposition and frightening dangers. Paul also regretted sending the severe letter. But then he got news that some in Corinthian church had responded well to the letter and to him (1 Cor 7:6-7) and he was overjoyed! But clearly there were still big issues to deal with.

So Paul wrote his fourth letter (2 Corinthians) to address ongoing and new issues: 1) Problems that continued from First Corinthians - factionalism, unhappiness over Paul's refusal to be financially supported, criticism over Paul's poor rhetorical ability; 2) Problems associated with the 'painful visit' and the 'severe letter' (in place of an expected and promised visit); and 3) Three new problems that arose in that time (i.e. cessation of collection for the 'saints' in Jerusalem, accusing Paul of cunningly not accepting money, and the arrival of so-called 'super apostles').

Well done if you got through that! Do read it over a few times to get a basic understanding of the background, because it will greatly help you understand, appreciate and apply each section as we work through the letter.

In closing, I do want to impress upon all of us that 2 Corinthians is...

A very **emotional letter!** – there's big relational problems, unhappiness and anger and suspicion, frustration and heartache and tears, but there's also deep love and joy. Christian life and ministry is like this!

A very **theological letter!** - As Paul defends his ministry, he does it by really expanding on the gospel. He's doesn't write primarily to defend himself. He writes primarily to help the Corinthians properly understand the gospel, so Paul goes deep in explaining the gospel. It's only when they understand the gospel properly will they see that Paul's gospel ministry is exactly as it should be. They've got Paul wrong, they've got gospel ministry wrong, they've got gospel living wrong, because they've not understood the gospel properly. So Paul digs deep into the theology of the gospel.

It's a very **pastoral letter!** Second Corinthians is, to me, Paul's most pastoral letter. He writes because his heart aches for this church that he founded, for these Christians that he loves.

2 Corinthians 12:19-21 ¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. ²⁰ For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish--that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. ²¹ I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

2 Corinthians 13:5-6 ⁵ Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test! ⁶ I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.

Paul aches in his heart in hope that they will be built up

He wants so much for them to examine themselves and to make absolutely sure that they get the gospel right, that they get what gospel ministry really is about... the gospel and ministry that leads people to true faith.

Paul's pastoral heart beats through this letter like no other!

With all this in mind, I hope you can see how this letter is challenging and confronting.

Paul's great hopes of this letter extends to all believers: to gain proper understanding of the gospel and gospel ministry. Without it, we're lost and we're ignorant... we'll be in conflict, living in sin and error, and living for the wrong things. Worst of all, we might find ourselves not actually being in the faith.

So let's work hard together, not just to understand, but to be challenged and tested, and to be found genuine in our faith and authentic in our ministry and life.

1. The Gospel of Comfort in Affliction (2 Cor 1:1-11)

Introduction

- Our values: comfort and success

- The Corinthian Church

- Authentic Gospel, ministry and life

1. Affliction Cause Us to Praise the God of ALL Comfort (vv3-4a)

2. The Afflicted Share in Christ's Sufferings (vv5, 8-9)

3. The Afflicted Bring Comfort to Others (vv6-7; 4b)

4. Affliction Makes Us Turn to God