

TITLE AND NUMBER: 120. Paul's hardships



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

LOOKING FURTHER: 2 Corinthians 1: 1-5; Romans 8:28; Jeremiah 29:11; Genesis 50:20

What does this Bible passage tell us?

There is a saying: 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going.'

Paul is writing his second letter to the Corinthians and in chapter 1 verses 1-7, he talks about the 'God of all comfort'. In today's passage, Paul lists the many things that have happened to him which might appear to contradict that statement. It has been tough for Paul but he still declares that, in spite of everything, God is faithful.

In our culture today, it seems that we all want - or even demand - an easy life. Perseverance in hard times is not easy. But, when we come through difficulties because of God's goodness to us, we have a story to share that may just be the encouragement that someone else needs. Paul told the Corinthians that he did not want to discourage anyone in their faith. But he told them about his experiences and encouraged them to persevere. In fact, as you read this passage, you see that out of the challenges came blessings, not only for him but for others, too. (See verse 10.)

Whatever challenges you are facing at this time, God is faithful to lead you through them. As Christians, we can be sure that what others may mean for our harm, God can turn around for our good. We do have a responsibility to share this Good News with others as everyone needs encouragement.

So, let's keep going, even when it is tough; not just for ourselves, but for the benefit of others, too. We have Good News to share, let our hope, perseverance and joy be evident to everyone.

Reflections:

- What challenges are you facing at this time? Tell God everything you are struggling with.
- How could you be an encouragement to others by sharing your story with them?
- Remember that things you may think are for your harm, God can use for your good.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



GOD IS FAITHFUL

Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

