

Title: Blessed Sentence of Death  
Text: 2 Corinthians 1: 9  
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**2 Corinthians 1: 9: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:**

Have you suffered trouble so that you felt like there was nothing you could do? Maybe someone here is suffering such a trial now.

**Proposition:** If we are a child of God, God gives us the sentence of death in ourselves, to teach us not to trust in our selves, but in God.

**Title:** Blessed Sentence of Death

**2 Corinthians 1: 3: Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4: Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**

We as believers ought to regard all our trouble as God giving us a great privilege. Because by bringing us to the end of our strength and by delivering us by his strength then we can speak from experience—"that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

**2 Corinthians 1: 5: For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.**

We are made to really know Christ by tasting a little of the sufferings he suffered for us. Then we get the spiritual reality of the gospel down in our hearts as he brings us to see Christ is our only Strength. Christ's consolation always abounds much than our light afflictions.

**2 Corinthians 1: 6: And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation...[last part of verse] or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.**

Paul is speaking of his own affliction and comforts and that of his fellow preachers.

**Illustration:** You hear of pastors or some member of their family suffering. It causes that pastor great affliction. But Christ comforts that pastor so that he knows by experience that Christ really is All. Why? "It is for your consolation and salvation"...that the preacher might be able to preach to you by experience that God's grace really is sufficient.

**2 Corinthians 1: 6: [now the middle part]...which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer:...**

The consolation—the reality of Christ's abiding presence—is made effectual in our hearts by us enduring—by us going through these sufferings.

**Illustration:** One of my brethren has suffered a burdensome trial for a long time. Recently, I told them what God taught me through a similar trial. God blessed it to their comfort.

They responded to me, “I am so thankful and blessed to have you for my pastor and I thank God for that. You are just such a great comfort to me.”

And when they wrote that to me, this scripture came to mind. It made me realize that my own trouble, which I suffered years ago, and the comfort given me of the Lord during that suffering, was for the very purpose of being able to comfort that believer just recently. Then by that believer’s kind letter, saying “thank you” God comforted me all over again.

Brethren, “Thank you” is so needful for one another. It made us realize, God has brought glory to himself in a manifold way. He did that through a trial. He made me to know our hope is sure.

**2 Corinthians 1: 7: And our hope of you is steadfast; knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye also be of the consolation.**

Our hope that God will give this comfort to his child, is sure and steadfast. As you partake of the sufferings, so shall you also partake of the consolation. And all is for the purpose of God receiving praise, “thank you”, and of our hearts being united with our brethren who God uses to comfort us.

Brethren, when you can give comfort, give comfort. And when you are on the receiving end, never let pride keep you from receiving. Pride makes us hard and bitter in the trial. Pride will make us separate ourselves from hearing the gospel. Pride will make us separate ourselves from our brethren. The purpose of the trouble is not to lift us up in pride but to humble us under God’s hand.

James 4: 6: God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble.

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

**2 Corinthians 1: 8: For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble, which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.**

What a blessed placed to be: “pressed out of measure” with no strength left. Why is that a blessed thing for a believer?

**2 Corinthians 1: 9: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.**

**Divisions:** 1) The sentence of death in ourselves; 2) The purpose of God toward ourselves--“That we should not trust in ourselves.”; 3) The purpose of God toward God—but that we should trust “in God which raiseth the dead.”

## **I. THE SENTENCE OF DEATH IN OURSELVES**

We think we have strength in ourselves, wisdom, life and so on. We get lifted up in pride, even in pride of grace. We sometimes think we manage our affairs better than others and we start to look down upon them. There are number of ways we begin trusting in ourselves. So God graciously brings us into a situation beyond our control.

Then we start trying to fix it. And we choose foolish ways to try to fix it. Sometimes we even separate ourselves from the gospel or separate ourselves from our dearest loved ones and our brethren or look to some worldly pleasure to find comfort.

It is God's hand causing us the trouble. But we try to run from the hand of God. But God will not let his child go. Everywhere we run, God is there and as we use our little hands to build up some refuge, some comfort, but God tears is down. God makes it so that we can't find peace by our hand.

This sentence of death can even sometimes make us feel spiritually dead. We can't make his word speak to us. We can't make ourselves feel any of the comfort and consolation we had in Christ. We can't even make ourselves seek mercy. Sometimes it's like we've become lost all over again

**Illustration:** The surgery on my elbow—painful, but needful. Likewise, this operation God performs is painful. But it is needful for our good and God's glory.

Now, if you are a child of God, hear this. If you have been suffering in a trial, or have, consider who gave it. Consider why it was given?

## **II. THE PURPOSE OF GOD TOWARD OURSELVES**

### **2 Corinthians 1: 9: that we should not trust in ourselves.**

If we are God's child, God does this to make his child not trust in ourselves. Our salvation—both spiritual and temporal—is of the Lord.

God keeps his chosen and loved child separated from self-trust by always keeping us in his hand. We were in his hand when God the Father chose us unto salvation in Christ before he made the world. God our Father entrusted us into the hands of his Son, Christ our Surety.

By his hand, Christ has fulfilled the law for those given to him. Christ has redeemed us by shedding his blood for us. His hands did all the work. His hands paid the purchase price and all his redeemed children are his purchased possession—purchased with his own blood.

We are in the hand of God the Holy Spirit. He brought the gospel to us, not we ourselves. He regenerated us, not we ourselves. The Spirit taught us not we ourselves. The Spirit continues to guide us into all truth, not we ourselves. The Spirit renews us and makes the comforts of Christ abound in our hearts, not we ourselves.

Do you believe this gospel? Do you believe you are saved eternally by the mighty hand of God and not by the strength of your own hand? Then, in this trial you are in:

1 Peter 5: 6: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Then eventually, God revives our inner man by his Spirit. He gives us the cry for mercy. Maybe we went through the motions of prayer through the whole trial, but then we really pray.

Real praying is not some might in you, not because you are some mighty prayer warrior. Real prayer is when you have the sentence of death in yourself and cease trusting yourself, when we confess to God our utter nothingness, our total inability, and cast all our care into his hands to do with us as he will. God alone is able save us from us.

Our flesh is so deceitful that even after God turns us again to Christ, flesh soon enters in. We start saying, "I won't let that happen again. I will watch. I will be cautious. I will walk better." So we start looking to us—

flesh comes right back again. Believer, by all means do those things, but do it by looking out of ourselves to Christ.

The religious world makes a lot of money off of the deceit of the fleshly heart. They speak of man's faith, man's hope, the love of the believer. They focus on man getting it, man sustaining it, man growing it and man expressing it in his daily life. So the poor sinner is always looking at himself.

Matthew 7: 16: Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Believer, we will never find the fruit of grace looking to this thorn tree called our body of death!

**Illustration:** I have hundreds of sermons started, some finished. You would think I could go to them at any time and preach them. But they are dead letters. Someone laughed at me once for spending all night Saturday into Sunday preparing—as if I wait till the last minute. That's not it at all.

Each week, God forces to beg God for the message, to give the very word that only he knows his people need, to make his word alive in my heart. Then I ask him to deliver me here then deliver it through me then make it effectual in your hearts.

Why? Why does God not let it get any easier? Why does he give that sentence of death each week? That I might not trust in myself: so that I am reminded not only of the nothingness in me, but also your need. So that I must look out of myself to God for both me and for you!

It amazes me how God uses everything: my own trials together with your trials which you express to me, to give his message for the hour and even in the process, teaches us “that we should not trust in ourselves.”

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF GOD TOWARD HIMSELF—THAT WE MIGHT, TRUST**

#### **2 Corinthians 1: 9: in God which raiseth the dead:...**

There is no better way for us to really learn and be brought to believe God than for him to raise us up inwardly after we have had our bones all broken and scattered with the sentence of death upon us. There you are with the sentence of death upon you. You are just dry bones. But God does what he showed Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 37: 5: Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6:...and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 7: So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. [here we are today, he has brought us here together, each members of his body] 8:...but there was no breath in them. 9: Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. 10: So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

No man can bring the dry bones together. No sinner can breathe life. As much as I would like to help, I can't raise to life you who suffer in your trials. But my God can. And through his gospel, the living Word breathes life into our hearts and once again his comforts abound and console us.

That is how we are brought to eat his flesh and drink his blood and have life within us. It is how he makes us know our union with him is real and inseparable. This is how he comforts us in time of need. Bringing us to our utter weakness is how he is made our strength, how his grace is sufficient for us. This is how he makes

us to know his presence is with us. It is how he brings us to give him all the glory for making us to trust in God, rather than in ourselves. Then we say with Paul...

**2 Corinthians 1: 10: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;**

I don't know how to say it. It is a paradox of grace. A sinner cannot know our need of Christ and be brought to rest in Christ without some feeling of dire need in our hearts. Yet, we must never look to the feelings in our heart. The feeling which is truly of God, is that feeling which makes us realize we cannot trust self, which makes us look away for all sufficiency in Christ.

Oh, what a paradox the believer is: when we are nothing Christ is All, when we mourn Christ is our joy, when we are weak then we are strong.

So brethren pray for one another. Comfort one another with the comfort wherewith you are comforted of Christ. By his wise working, God brings many thanksgivings to himself, for his grace to us, and for our brethren whom he uses to minister his grace to our hearts. What a God!

**2 Corinthians 1: 9: We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God.**

Amen!