

Salvation is HERE

He restores us.

These last few weeks have been especially difficult because of all the carnage and meaningless deaths we have come to witness. For me especially, I have conducted a funeral service of a 28 year old lady that left behind a three months old baby and a heartbroken husband.

We witnessed the carnage in the city recently where people old and young, innocent and guilty were caught up in a deadly exchange between the rioters, the looters and the brutal force of the police.

We are witnessing the global crisis and an "end of days" feel across the continents where a common enemy has overwhelmed hospitals and health facilities and has plunged super powers into despair.

We have seen our young people, your friends and your loved ones slide into a depression the grips from which it has been hard to snatch them. We have seen the rising levels of addictions and destructive behaviour, thought patterns and attitudes. A steady degradation of morals and ethics. Doing good no longer matters. Doing evil brings momentary pleasure.

Then there is the Christian amidst all of this. There is you , who puts your trust in something beyond this broken and tattered world. There is you who Hopes in spite of all that seems lost. You who believes in the good even where there is evil all around.

Last week Manzi taught on sin and How Jesus saved us from it. He spoke of the penalty, the power and the presence of sin. And how it eroded our world. He spoke of How we are depraved and in need of a savior... why we must commit our lives to this Saviour there by identifying ourselves as Christians.

What does a Christian who believes in a God beyond imagining, a God of light, the Good and perfect God of glory think about all this? How does one respond to all this chaos ?

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalms 34:18 NIV

<https://psalm.bible/psalm-34-18>

it may seem like this is a good saying and wishful thinking because of all the craziness around. Is the Lord truly close to the broken hearted ? Does he understand their pain and their plight ? Does he know what it means to have your spirit crushed under the weight of disappointment, despair, unmet hopes, and unfulfilled dreams? Does he know what it is like to feel dead inside ?

It would seem that Paul would answer these daunting questions to the affirmative. He appeared to understand God in a way that made him say this :

Praise be to the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, the **Father of compassion** and the **God of all comfort**, who **comforts us in all our troubles**, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as **we share** abundantly in the **sufferings of Christ**, so also **our comfort abounds through Christ**.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 NIV

<https://bible.com/bible/111/2co.1.3-5.NIV>

There are aspects of this portion that speak to Paul's understanding of God. His experience seemed very profoundly convincing , considering he could never have written anything of this nature about 10 years before. Something changed.

Paul calls him the **Father of compassion**.

Paul calls him the **God of all comfort**.

Paul says of him, that he comforts us in all out troubles.

What led him to say this?

Paul knew that this God he referred to was the father of our Lord Jesus. Jesus was the atonement of our sins who suffered greatly in life and in his death that the penalty of our sin may be paid in full. First, He suffered first, in becoming the perfect human being that obeyed God in all ways and became the representative of righteousness. He suffered the temptations(Matt.4), he suffered the human plight of being limited , he suffered ridicule from the Pharisees, and betrayal from his beloved. His life was truly a life of sorrow and riddled with grief as Isaiah prophesied (Is.53:3)

Secondly, he suffered a gruesome and what seemed a pointless death. Death on a cross. It would take one in first century Rome to truly understand what this pain meant When as Mark Shortly put it, "they crucified him".

Grudem, a theologian reports it this way.

A criminal who was crucified was essentially forced to inflict upon himself a very slow death by suffocation. When the criminal's arms were outstretched and fastened by nails to the cross, he had to support most of the weight of his body with his arms. The chest cavity would be pulled upward and outward, making it difficult to exhale in order to be able to draw a fresh breath. But when the victim's longing for oxygen became unbearable, he would have to push himself up with his feet, thus giving more natural support to the weight of his body, releasing some of the weight from his arms, and enabling his chest cavity to contract more normally. By pushing himself upward in this way, the criminal could fend off suffocation, but it was extremely painful because it required putting the body's weight on the nails

holding the feet, and bending the elbows and pulling upward on the nails driven through the wrists. The criminal's back, which had been torn open repeatedly by a previous flogging, would scrape against the wooden cross with each breath. Thus, Seneca (first century A.D.) spoke of a crucified man "drawing the breath of life amid long-drawn-out agony" (Epistle 101, to Lucilius, sec. 14).

To labour further on this is to beat a dead horse.

It is through the murkiness of this dreadful event that ironically, we find our hope. It is because of this grim and horrid carnage of the sweet and innocent Jesus, that in him we have a saviour and victor over the sin that separated us, alienated us and made us enemies of God, and vessels of his wrath.

We are now restored. We are reconciled to this God who was Compassionate toward us, comforted us and made us whole again by sharing in the sufferings of Jesus and thereby experiencing also, his resurrection and victory

Even you. In your space. Whether at home or at school. Where ever you are find comfort in the restoration that Jesus provided for us at the cross.

God Bless You.