

St Mark's
Malabar

SERMON NOTES AND
STUDY QUESTIONS



2 CORINTHIANS

Radical Discipleship

My

SERMON NOTES

'for Christ's love compels us ...' 2 Cor 5:14

The Father's nature is our comfort

1. What brings you comfort in times of trouble?
2. Read 2 Cor 1:1-11. Underline/highlight repeated words and ideas.
3. The possible background to 2 Cor 1 are the events described in Acts. Read Acts 19:23-41. What caused the disciples' suffering?
4. In what ways is God, 'the Father of compassion' and, 'the God of all comfort'? Back up your response with Scripture.
5. According to this passage, how does Christ bring comfort?
6. What did the troubles teach Paul about reliance on God? What truths in particular helped?
7. How does our knowledge of God's nature help us to comfort others?
8. What role does 'hope' play in being comforted?
9. When praying for comfort for another believer, how should we pray and what should we specifically pray about?
10. Who do you know (or have heard of) that needs comfort at the moment? Without betraying trust, explain the situation.
11. During your group prayer time, let the theme of 'comfort' dominate.

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Christ's triumph is our motivation

1. Are you comfortable with offering a controversial opinion? Why or why not?
2. Read 2 Cor 2:12-17. Verse 12 to 13 describes Paul's recent itinerary. Ephesus (Acts 20:1) to Troas (2 Corinthians 2:13) to Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7:5). What did Paul experience in each of those stops?
3. Why did Paul have no peace of mind? (v13) Why would he reveal this piece of personal information to the Corinthians?
4. What great battle did Christ win?
5. Who did Paul identify with in Christ's triumphal procession? What does this say about his ministry?
6. How are bearers of the gospel like an aroma?
7. What is it about gospel ministry that makes Paul exclaim: "And who is equal to such a task?" (v16)
8. What are the temptations we face because the gospel is so divisive?
9. In the midst of such temptations, how might Christ's triumph motivate us to wear the gospel with pride?
10. How can we share the gospel with sincerity?

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The Lordship of Christ is our message

1. When do you feel discouraged as a Christian?
2. Read 2 Cor 4:1-6. What do the charges against Paul say about his ministry? (v1-2)
3. What truth does Paul want his readers to see clearly?
4. Why was this truth difficult to accept for those who insisted on the old covenant? (See also 2 Corinthians 1:19-20, 3:7-9)
5. Ultimately, what stops unbelievers from understanding the truth?
6. How can anyone come to a knowledge of the truth?
7. How does the truth shape the character and content of Paul's ministry?
8. How might we be tempted to resort to the methods mentioned in verse 2 to see church growth?
9. How does this passage challenge our convictions and character as we partner together in gospel ministry?
10. How does this passage encourage us to persevere in sharing the gospel when often it feels like it falls on deaf ears?

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2 CORINTHIANS 4-5

The gospel is our treasure

1. How do most people deal with their mortality?
2. Read 2 Cor 4:7-18. How does the Apostle Paul view mortality?
3. In verse 7, what is the treasure and what is the jar? How is this a useful analogy?
4. What saves the believer from despair?
5. According to vs 13, what is the result of faith?
6. Why does faith in the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus matter?
7. How can 'outward wasting' cause a person to lose heart? (vs 16)
8. Read v 17. How does this passage encourage you? Could Paul be criticised for trivialising our troubles?
9. Read vs 18. In a practical and daily sense, what does it mean to, 'fix our eyes on what is unseen'? Is Paul being ironic?
10. What awaits you in eternal glory?

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2 CORINTHIANS 5

Christ's love compels us

1. What would compel anyone to share the gospel?
2. Read 2 Cor 5:11-21. What did Paul's detractors take pride in?
3. In contrast, how does Paul provide an opportunity for the Corinthians to take pride in him?
4. How does knowing Christ's love radically change a person?
5. How do we see that radical change in Paul?
6. To whom has God entrusted the message of reconciliation?
7. What does it mean to be Christ's ambassadors?
8. Do you see yourself as Christ's ambassador? Why or why not?
9. What is one way you can be involved in the ministry of reconciliation?
10. How can we remain compelled by Christ's love and live for him who died for us?

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2 CORINTHIANS 8

Jesus' generosity is our example

1. Discuss the power of generosity.
2. Read Acts 11:27-30. How does this provide background for Paul's command to the Corinthians?
3. Read 2 Cor 8:1-6. In what ways was the Macedonian Church exemplary?
4. Read 2 Cor 8:8-9. In what ways was Christ exemplary?
5. In what ways is Christian generosity distinctive from general benevolence?
6. Read 2 Cor 8:10-15. How can greater 'equality' be achieved?
7. What motivates you to give?
8. What do you dislike about certain appeals for money?
9. Is it right for people in need to ask? Is it right for others to ask on their behalf?
10. How do you ensure that you are generous with your money? What systems/tools do you use?

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2 CORINTHIANS 10

Christ is our boast

1. What is a 'humble brag'? Why would someone do it?

2. Read 2 Cor 10:1-6. The Apostle Paul gives hints as to things that were being said about him in Corinth. List these.

3. What are the strongholds, arguments, and pretensions that needed to be demolished?

4. What strongholds, arguments, and pretensions in this age need to be demolished?

5. What are the implications of vs 3-4 when it comes to gospel ministry?

6. Read 2 Cor 10:7-11. How were the Corinthians judging Paul's ministry?

7. Read 2 Cor 10:12-18. What is the danger in comparing ministries or churches?

8. Read vs 17. How do we do this today?

9. Why is ok to boast in the Lord?

10. How should we boast in the Lord to non-believers?

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SERMON NOTES

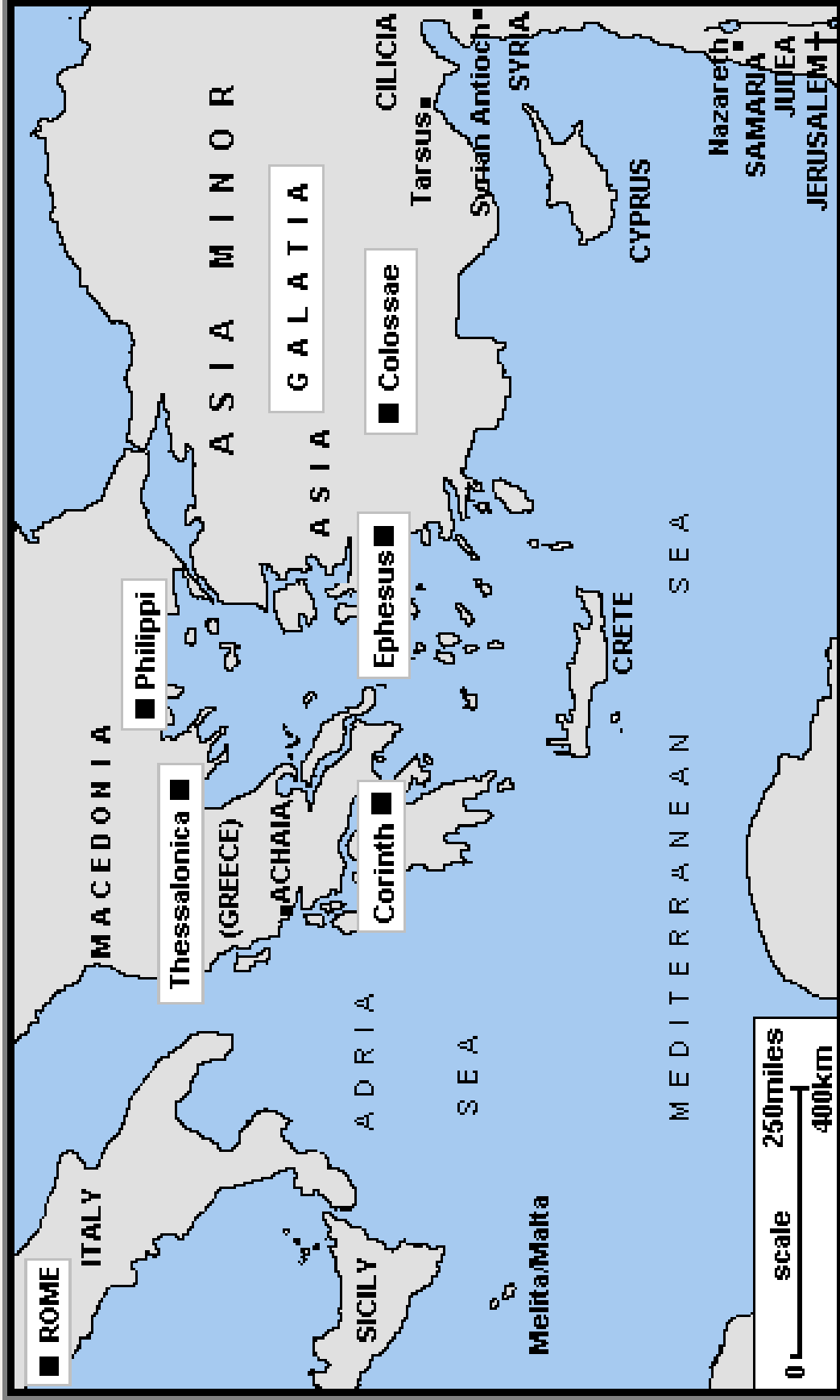
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2 CORINTHIANS 12

Christ's grace is sufficient

1. What does unanswered prayer feel like?
2. Read 2 Cor 12:1-5. How would you explain Paul's tone? What point is he making?
3. Read 2 Cor 12:6-9. What could the 'thorn' be that Paul was referring to?
4. What was the disadvantage of having a 'thorn'?
5. What was the benefit?
6. Read vs 9. What did the Lord mean by this answer to Paul's pray?
7. Read 2 Cor 12:10. What is meant by, 'when I am weak, then I am strong.'
8. What role does weakness have in our discipleship?
9. What are you asking God to remove from your life at present?
10. If God responded to your prayer the way he did in vs 9, would you struggle to accept that?
11. How can this inform the way we pray?

MAP OF AREA DURING BIBLICAL TIMES



Source: <https://www.ccel.org>

Background

It is believed that 2 Corinthians is Paul's fourth letter to the church and is therefore a part of ongoing correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians.

Paul first preached the gospel to the Corinthians in the synagogue but had to change venue when the Jews opposed him (Acts 18). He then continued his ministry next door and stayed with them for 1 and 1/2 years while also working as a tent maker.

2 Corinthians reveals a relationship rift between Paul and the church. He wrote this letter in an attempt to win back the Corinthian's loyalty.

He refuted certain things that were said about him, reminded them that he was an authentic Apostle and urged them to reject the intruders.

Paul was criticised for being indecisive (1:17), cowardly (1:23), weak in speech (10:1, 10), ill and powerless (12:1, 11-12).

He could have responded in many ways but surprisingly he agrees that he is weak, 'when I am weak then I am strong' (2 Cor 12:10).

He boasted about Christ, not his own strength.

This letter provides a distinctive understanding of Christian discipleship. We don't look within for our strength but to Christ. We boast not about ourselves because we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord (2 Cor 4:5).

Such a letter saves us from triumphalism and a 'showy' style of ministry. Rather we humbly look to God for our comfort, strength, hope, example, compulsion and hope.

Radical disciples are weak.

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