

## The Book of 2 Corinthians

### Session 15: The Second Category of the Sufferings of Christ

Even though this is session 15 in our study of 2 Corinthians, this will be our first study in 2 Corinthians on a Sunday. Previously, we covered 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and we did an overview of chapter 2.

In chapter 1, Paul dealt with four accusations: 1) he was duplicitous, 2) insincere, 3) he was a disappointment, and 4) arrogant. Paul answers these accusations in chapter 1 and he reveals how he dealt with these “fiery darts.”

In chapter 1, Paul is making the case that how he is dealing with the Corinthians is patterned after the faithfulness of God Himself.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. <sup>21</sup> Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God; <sup>22</sup> Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

I would like to step aside for a moment and talk about the four things in verses 21-22 as genuine issues of prayer.

Recall what we know prayer is:

1. Prayer is responding to what God has said in His word
2. Prayer is talking to God about what He is doing
3. Prayer is talking to God about His revealed will
4. Prayer is talking to God about what He will do
5. Prayer is talking to God about what He has done

There are four things listed in these verses, which God has done for us, by His Spirit. He has “stablished us in Christ,” He has “anointed” us, He has “sealed” us, and He has given us “the earnest of the Spirit.”

While we could just mention these four things in a prayer of thanksgiving, and there is nothing wrong with that, but in order for our prayers to become

transformative, we need to take our prayers a little deeper. In order to get used to this process so we can do it off the top of our head, I am suggesting that we take the time to build a framework for our prayer. We start by listing the four things in verses 21-22.

Now, ask yourself the question, “What do each of these mean?” (If you are having trouble identifying these, go back and look at the 2 Corinthians notes from sessions 12 and 13.) Fill in the meaning under each issue. By doing this, you are building a framework for your prayer.

You could start your prayer with thanking God for these four promises, which He has kept.

*Heavenly Father, thank you that You are faithful to keep Your promises. You have stablished me in Christ, You have set me apart for Your purposes, You have given me proof that I belong to You, and You have given me the earnest of Your intention to redeem my body one day. And not just me, but these are promises that You either have kept, or will keep, with every member of the body of Christ.*

Okay, we mentioned these four; we have identified what they are about; and we have praised God for His faithfulness to keep His promises. Now we want to take our prayer deeper, where our relationship with God is impacted and changed. To do this, we need to take one of these and focus on the details connected to it. Where will we find these details? In the scripture. And we will get there by asking ourselves some questions.

For an example, we are going to deepen our prayer by working on the details of being stablished in Christ. We are going to ask some questions and then we are going to look at some verse references to help us build our prayer.

So, let’s look at what it means to be “stablished.” When we look up the word “stablish,” here is what we get:

Oxford English Dictionary: stablish

2. 1439 – To set (a person, etc.) permanently in an office, dignity, or condition.

According to 2 Corinthians 2:21, the condition in which we have been set is “in Christ.”

2 Corinthians 1:21 Now he which **stablisheth us** with you **in Christ**, and hath anointed us, *is* God;

Applying the definition of “stablish” to 2 Corinthians 1:21, Paul is saying that God has permanently positioned us in Christ; we are firmly fixed in Him.

*Thank you for stablishing me in Christ by Your Spirit; I am permanently and firmly positioned in Your Son.*

Now we need to ask another question: If we are “in Christ,” what does that mean, what does that do for us? To get to the answer, think about verses that talk about being “in Christ.” For example, 2 Corinthians 5:17, where Paul says that to be “in Christ” means we are a new creature.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore **if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature:** old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Look at the verse and ask yourself what it is saying. When I look at it, it obviously says there are some old things that have been replaced with some new things. What are these things? These are the things of our identity before God. Our old identity in Adam has passed away, and we now have a new identity in Christ.

*From the moment I was stablished in Christ, I was made to be a new creature. That means You have changed some things about me. Thank you Father that I am no longer identified in Adam, but now I am permanently positioned in Christ and identified with Him.*

What are the components of our new identity? There are three major components, so you can either mention all three, or you can choose one of them to focus on. The three major components of our new identity in Christ are our Justification, Sanctification and Exaltation. For our example, we will choose one to include in prayer: Justification. Our justification also has three components so we can include all three or just focus on one. For our example, we will mention all three (Forgiveness, Imputed Righteousness, and the Atonement).

Now, add these to your prayer. As you do, you are talking to God about something He has done in accordance with His will. As we mention these three components of our new identity in Christ in connection with our Justification, think of some verses that might talk about these and quote or include them in the prayer.

*Father, I am so grateful I have been forgiven of all my sins, past present and future. Although I will never have to face them again, I know that my forgiveness is not a license to sin. (Do you see what I am doing here? I am thinking of Romans 6:1-2). Thank You for making a way for me to be forgiven. Romans 5:8 says that You demonstrated Your love toward me in that while I was a sinner, and Your enemy, You sent Your Son to die on the cross to pay for my sins. Not only did You forgive all my sins, I am now righteous before You because the righteousness of Jesus Christ has been imputed to me. That is my standing before You every day since you stablished me in Christ – how wonderful! No wonder Paul chose this to be one of the things that he reminded the Corinthians of. Because you kept Your promise and gave me Your Spirit, I am justified unto eternal life and You have made me to be “at one” with You. When I think of all You have done for me, Father, it causes me to love you more, and appreciate what it took to provide all this for me.*

You can go further or you could have taken this a dozen different ways, and all of those prayers would have been legitimate sonship prayers. This exercise is designed to do a couple of things: 1) to get us to think more deeply about the original thing we are giving thanks for (stablishing us in Christ) by adding depth to our prayers, and 2) to become practiced at using the scriptures to fill out and guide our prayer life.

At this point, we could actually run references on forgiveness, on imputed righteousness, on atonement. If we were doing this, we would add these things to our prayer as well.

What we have done here is provide a framework for prayer that goes beyond the surface; prayer that has depth to it because we have taken the doctrine we know

and additional verses to flesh out our prayer. The more we do this, the easier it will be and the more comfortable we become in praying this way.

Okay, enough of that for now, let's continue with the brief introduction I was giving you from chapter one.

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