

THE PERFECT SALVATION

TEXT:

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;

The **Second Book of Corinthians** opens with a most gracious salutation. It bears the message of comfort in a manner most impressive. I'm inclined to feel that the whole Book catches the flavor at its very beginning. Paul was making clear that real comfort and help in distress comes when we trust our Deliverer.

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I am ready to say, after experience in the ministry, that the prime test of genuine Faith in Christ is its ability to comfort another. The Apostle Paul was close to his very best when, with his great pen dripping the flavor of his soul's richest knowledge, he wrote these great verses.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4:

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.

Paul's words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, come down through the ages in constant accumulation of its beautiful meaning. I remember well when I first came to realize its worth. One of the memorable challenging moments of my life took its stand right here.

The Story:

A big strong man had fallen by a sudden stroke. A large family had depended on this man's strong service. The mother and nine children

were left. It hurt us all as we gathered in the stricken home, and we eagerly sought to be as helpful as we knew how.

Two weeks later the mother, in the prime of a yet multiplied motherhood, broken in her grief beyond the demand of her strength, likewise fell sick. There stood those huddling children alone.

They lived on a farm. There was a heavy mortgage clinging to it. On that difficult day, I turned to this great verse and sought some words that I could say as merely a Christian thing.



All the crowing farmer folk who came pressing into that grief-filled house were broken of heart, but determined of soul. Not one hand was withheld. Not one heart was unmoved. We did try to comfort them with the comfort we too had found.

It challenged all the religious helpfulness we had. I went to see the man who held the mortgage. It was a heavy mortgage for such a farm. He was a Christian. This same great verse was ringing in his soul. He said to me as I opened the door of his office and before I could tell my mission he said to me, *“Don’t worry about that mortgage.”*

And that fine group of grief-bound children, strengthened by the offered comfort of those to whose faith had been helpful, worked their way out of it all to a great victory. They paid that mortgage. They preserved their home. I never rode down that country way and failed to look toward that farm and pray for them.

Out across the years comes this fine passage laden with such comfort and blessed by accumulated memories.

This is that was in the heart of the author of our text when he wrote this whole Book saturated with comfort about the God of all Comfort.

Then the author goes on to tell of a most desperate experience through which they had just passed.

2 Corinthians 8-9:

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:

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

Then he writes in this very great and refreshing verse. Through all this he declares he learned to trust in God.

2 Corinthians 1:10: Who delivered us from so great a death and doeth deliver; in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us;

Note the statement of the Perfect Salvation which God has prepared for those who trust Him. Who did deliver us The Testimony of our memory, the mere evidence from the past . . . **that HE will yet deliver us!**

- **The satisfied declaration of experience**
- **The evidence of the present**
- **The confidence of future deliverance**
- **That He will yet deliver us.**
- **The assurance of our hope.**

It would be impossible to find a verse more beautiful, self-analyzed, or filled with such homily. It is a perfect statement of our satisfactory faith - The Perfect Salvation.

- ♥ **The God Who did deliver us,**
- ♥ **Who does deliver us,**
- ♥ **Who will deliver us.**
 - ♥ **For the past, I am grateful.**
 - ♥ **For the present, I am satisfied.**
 - ♥ **For the future, I am confident.**

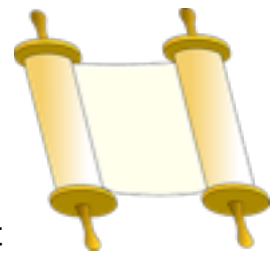
I would write this great fact in terms of real experience into all our lives.

WHO DID DELIVER US?

Thank God for the vigorous testimony brought by memory in confirmation of our faith out of an eloquent past. If it were confined to personal terms in the telling of this great story, I could confirm my standing by the past. So was Paul building his great hearing message to all Christians upon the satisfactory experience through which he had passed. **He saved me.**

But there is always a way in which every personal thing leaps over every personal horizon and becomes a great declaration for general testimony.

When one speaks of the past in terms of a person's faith-filled religion, he must cover a large range of people over a long period of time. There are countless testimonies of the satisfactory service of a God Who did deliver. God's faithfulness to deliver has been confirmed by the prophets and saints of old. It takes its place in an unbroken line of people, going all the way back, and including all that has passed.



Thank God for the faith that has come down through the ages to bring us assurance now that **God delivers!** How nobly it has come. Nothing has been able to turn it back. When we speak of the past out of which triumphantly our faith has come, we cannot imagine any test that has not already been met by those who have gone before us. We read, and read, and read again those never-tiring, always refreshing and heroic chapters of the Bible with their convincing stories of truth that spans across the ages.

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;

By Faith Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Moses, and Gideon, and Samson, and David; oh — whose names are such a great and inspiring army — all are Victors across life's most severe trials. They:

- **Subdued kingdoms,**
- **Wrought righteousness,**
- **Obtained promises,**
- **Stopped the mouths of lions**

- Quenched the violence of fire,
- Escaped the edge of the sword,
- Out of weakness became strong,
- Waxed valiant in fight,
- Turned to flight the armies of the aliens,
- Received their dead raised to life again,
- Were tortured not accepting deliverance,
- Thus obtaining even a better Resurrection,
- Had trials of cruel mocking and scourging,
- Were bound and imprisoned,
- They were stoned.
- They were sawed asunder.
- They were tempted.
- They were slain with the sword.
- They wondered about in sheep skins and in goat skins.
- They were destitute, afflicted tormented.
- The world was not worthy of these.
- They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

All of these had a good report, through Faith, but they did not receive the promise of God while they were still alive. Yet they saw the reality of God's promises from a distance and continued on, longing for a better country — a heavenly one!

Thus, we read the heroic chapter of **Hebrews 11** and refresh our faith today in the fadeless story of yesterday. We thank God for the great list, this side of which we take our stand with a courage that draws new strength from all those who have gone before us.

We do not believe this great chapter was completed when the list, as recorded in the Book, was made. We believe the very same inheritance of that very same experience has been recorded right down along the unbroken story of the Church of God. The same deliverance that was made glorious by their stories has not failed even until now, and we tune our song to all the saints forever — for all the saints, who from their labours . . .

Oh, Church of God, we should make sure to write the unbroken list of triumphant deliverance right down to our own day. Thanks be unto God Who did deliver us. On every page of the great story thus far written stands the unbroken record of this thrilling fact.

Oh, Church of God, we should make sure to write the unbroken list of triumphant deliverance right down to our own day.

We cannot read into it without the quickening pulse of our own purpose being roused within us.

WHO DOES DELIVER US?

Our salvation is not a mere matter of memory. It does not ground itself into the past. It is not a salvation of preservation. It is an experience — now. HE does deliver us presently.

We have never been able to recognize the real value and power of history as it is being written. Today never seems as wonderful and conclusive as does yesterday. Now it does seem so alluring or full of hope as does tomorrow.

There is a strange tendency in all of us to look behind or ahead of us for real inspiration. Remembering things that are gone, and pressing toward those things that are before us, we easily forget that we are engaged in the actual encounter of today.

- These streets we know are so hard.
- These days are so strenuous.
- These heart-aches are so very painful.
- These sorrows are so real.
- These temptations are so very trying.

Oh today, today is a heavy struggling hour for sure.

- 🌿 Our feet are weary.
- 🌿 Our hearts are heavy.
- 🌿 Our souls are bowed down.

We are actually engaged with life, just as it is. There is always some sweet forgetfulness of the past which seems to bury, from our real appreciation, much that made it hard, and to leave for us to cherish only the residue of helpfulness of it all. But today — with its hardness — seems to lack the romance of those same days in the past because of the rigid reality of its difficulties and pain. We know it so well — the sun of noon, the weariness of the flesh, the strain of the soul. This is life just now.

This great verse . . .

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;

was stuck in here from the immediate triumphant experience of Paul, and was offered to his brethren at that time. This encouraged them — as it would the multitude of believers who would come after them — that they had this precious possession as the Church; God would deliver them at their exact point of need.



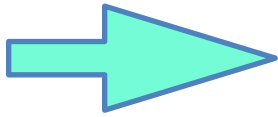
My God doth deliver me now. That is, exactly up to the last minute, faith- filled immediate help. No excuses are made. No reservations are required. Life is met just as it is. There can be no more vital word to be said in this day of ours than that.

Our faith-filled religion is not a mere matter of history, neither is it a matter of persistent hope. For history and hope, both and each, we are grateful.

But experience, as the present opportunity of life, we are glad for. We are in step with life now.

♥ **God is still with His people,**

- ♥ **A mighty fortress with His people,**
- ♥ **A bulwark never failing.**



Almost every great forward-movement of the Church's history has been founded upon the strong emphasis of this immediate experience — **God does deliver us now.**

The theology which has attended the great Revivals, has always been that which has been cast into the refining process of experience. It has been tried by the hard challenges of life. It demands a creed that can accompany courage. It must stand victoriously in the midst of life.

The Story of Sam Hadly:

One night Sam Hadly, whose rugged and wonderful work among men whose lives had been broken, was speaking to a large gathering of poor wrecks which had come into the doors of this mission hall. A trained physician sat among the men as an observer of a condition which drew him merely out of curiosity.

The vigorous appeal of the preacher for these men to make an immediate decision for a new life finally so impressed the physician that he could not restrain the protest of his scientific objection to it all. He arose — and speaking feelingly — said,

“Mr. Hadley, you have been appealing here with a glowing passion to these drunkards for a new and made-over life. I speak as a physician to say that you would not talk to these men thus if you had ever seen what the inside of a drunkards stomach looks like.”

As quick as a flash, and based upon the experience which was the basis of all the great mission worker's preaching, Mr. Hadly replied,

“Sir, I had a drunkard's stomach, and Jesus Christ saved me from it, and saves me from it now.”

How eloquently does genuine experience always meet us in life! We have a salvation that meets life, actually. We challenge the whole world with the testimony of this salvation. It is the most convincing peace we may have. Oh for the witness of the Church — Your experience. Don't leave it out. **Who doth deliver us?**

We are not compelled to make an exception.

Matthew 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye . . .”

Oh, write that across life.

- Write it across life everywhere in terms of your own experience.
- Write it against hardships.
- Write it against ease.
- Write it against old age.
- Write it against Joy.
- Write it against death.

Who doth deliver us?

- Thank God, He does!

Who will deliver us? — Hope and the Future.

We have already learned enough to warrant us to arrive at the on-reaching conclusion that we will not turn back from these truths, no matter what it is we may have to face in life in the future.

We have read enough history to vindicate the confidence we profess. The race has certainly come on through convincing experience. We have, ourselves individually, met life in such complicated situations that we feel sure of our right to draw our conclusions.

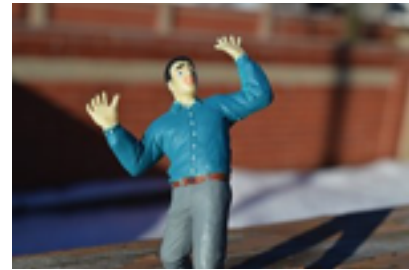
We lift, now, our facts toward the great tomorrow. We are not troubled. We are not afraid. **HE will deliver us!** This is the face-forward confidence of our faith-filled religion.

We have a very satisfying privilege of being able to look back upon our life and what it has meant to us thus far. We have God’s Word covering it all. I thank God every day of my life for what I have safely come past.

Thus far, the Lord hath led me on.

*Thus far, His power prolongs my days;
And every evening shall make known,
Some fresh memorial of His grace.*

There is likewise a secure confidence I feel in the fact of today's experience. I know Him as my Salvation now! This is indeed a testing day. Life runs at me as a flood now. Dangers are all about me. Life does require the genuine power of a real faith to stand victorious now. But I am confident in this very significant day and hour to announce that this Christ in me is sufficient.



Upon all life has been and is, I have built up in my soul an unshakable faith for the future — **HE will deliver me!** I believe I know some that the meaning of such a declaration as that.

There is much ahead. Life may even yet have tests for me that are fiercer than anything through which I have had to pass thus far. I have passed out of my youth and have come into middle age — “the noon time”. It has been a time of struggle, a trying hour. Many of life's worst tragedies I know had come in the “afternoon”.

There is something about that cry of the Psalmist for the defense from the pestilence that was at that noonday, that makes me feel that he, too, had been in the hard task of the “noon of life”.

Psalms 91:6 : Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

I approach the battle that is hard. I have seen fine young fellows, as brave as any soldier, lose control of themselves as they came up to the battle. It is a great test. **HE does deliver me!** But, I know there is yet to be the test of the evening time.

I read, with very great interest in our news column recently, an account of a man who had been conducting some experiments of hypnotism over wild beasts. He had just cowed a powerful lion unto unconsciousness, and turning to speak to the wondering spectators, that



great beast recovered itself and leaped fiercely upon the trainer and tore his arm into shreds.

As I look to the future, I am not haunted with the liability of a nearly-hypnotized past that will come again with all the clamor of its fierce threatening. I go straight on to the evening time of my mortality in the assurance of the fact that all the dangers of my past life have not been hypnotized, but forgiven and blotted out by His Blood, never to be remembered.

Psalms 103:12: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Jeremiah 31:34: And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

In my later years, I realize that awaiting me will be death. But, **HE will deliver me!** I can write these words with confidence across every phrase of my life — from the beginning to the very end. Thus, when the night of death shall come, and my flesh shall rest beneath the ground, I will wait for Thy voice to rouse the tomb with sweet salvation in the sound.

1 Thessalonians 4:16: For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

John 6:40: And this is the Will of Him Who sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

I write these words immediately upon my return from the grave where we left the mortal remains of one of the most heroic Christian young men I have ever known.

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