Bible Study Outline for homegroups – 11th September 2022

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

We are starting a new series in 2 Corinthians. Paul, after a terrible time in Ephesus, but one from which he is delivered from, is now in Macedonia from where he writes 2 Corinthians. The Corinthian Church is one where if something can go wrong it probably will. They have had factions, false teachers and inappropriate sexual activity. Believers have been taking each other to court, disorder at the communion table and unruly worship. And as if this wasn’t enough many of them have closed their hearts to Paul. How is Paul to sort all this out? Altogether there are about 4 letters which he sends to Corinth of which this is probably the last. So how is he going to take things forward? Well let’s begin…

**Introduction vs. 1 – 2**

1. When you are deeply troubled by a situation involving people how are you likely to react?
2. How would you assess the tone of the beginning of Paul’s letter?
3. Two words he uses are ‘grace’ and ‘peace’. What does Paul mean by these words?

**The God of all comfort. vs. 3 – 7**

1. In this section various attributes of God are mentioned. What are they?
2. What would you say is the nature of God’s comfort when we face hardship or difficulty?
3. Paul stresses that God often comforts us when we are in distress. How might we experience this comfort?
4. If a person were to say to you that God as the comforter will deliver them from all discomfort and distress how would you respond?
5. If you were to feel that you were so troubled and weak that you couldn’t help anyone how might this passage challenge you to think differently?

**Paul’s sufferings vs. 8 – 11**

1. If you were to peek back to 1 Cor 4v8 which in a tone of irony, if not sarcasm, gives a flavour of the character of the false teachers’ teaching. Why in the light of this does Paul want to tell them about his troubles? *(Hint for leaders – Paul wants the Corinthians to know that faith doesn’t always mean reigning like kings but experiencing the brokenness of the human condition. The false teachers were placing before the Corinthians a false view of Christian living which he wants to correct here. 2 Corinthians stresses God’s grace works in our weakness)*
2. What were the various trials Paul faced? Can you list them?
3. ‘Relying on self’ – v.9 – How do we often fall into this same trap? What should we do instead?
4. What is the purpose of the reference to God as one who raises people from the dead (v.9)?
5. How does this passage remind us of the value of prayer?
6. There is so much thanksgiving in this passage. Given his troubles is Paul being real?