

TALK IT OVER

STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK

PART 1 | 25 OCTOBER 2026

NOTES TO LEADERS

- **New deacons:** On Sunday we prayed for and set in place our new deacons. Please pray for them as they take up this role alongside our leadership team.
- **Next Gen update:** R12.8 million has now been pledged and R8.4 million received towards the R15 million total. Thank you to everyone who has given and pledged. Please keep praying with us as the project moves forward.

SCRIPTURES

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1,2

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3,4

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:8,9

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

ISAIAH 40:11

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

EXODUS 19:4

'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'

START TALKING

- What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
- What has God been doing in your world? What can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. Read Isaiah 40:11 and Exodus 19:4. What do these pictures of God as a shepherd and as eagles' wings teach us about the way He comforts His people?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8,9. Paul is remarkably honest that he "despaired of life itself", yet he says it happened "that we might not rely on ourselves but on God". Why do you think we need both honesty AND faith?
3. Steve described a continuum, with uber-positivity (the "Tinkerbell approach") at one end and uber-negativity (the "Melman approach") at the other. Why are both extremes unhelpful, and what does faith-filled authenticity look like in practice?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3,4. God's comfort reaches us directly, but also indirectly through other people. Why do you think God designed comfort to flow through community?

START SHARING

1. When someone asks how you're doing, which end of the continuum do you tend to lean towards (uber-positive 'Tinkerbell' or uber-negative 'Melman')? What makes honesty difficult for you?
2. Relying on others for help and comfort is a sign of strength, not weakness. Do you find it easier to give comfort or to receive it? Why?
3. Think of a time someone comforted you well. What did they do or say that made a difference?
4. Is there anyone here today who is going through some challenges and in need of God's grace, peace & comfort?

START PRAYING

1. Thank God that He is the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Ask Him to help us rely on Him for comfort and not on our independence.
2. Pray that as a LifeGroup and as a church we would stand together like a redwood forest: quick to ask for help, humble enough to receive it, and get better at comforting others.

START DOING

Think of one person in your world who is going through a tough time. This week, offer them comfort rather than advice: send a WhatsApp with a verse of encouragement, take them a meal, or tell them you're praying for them, and then actually pray.

TALK IT OVER

SUMMARY OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday Steve launched our new series, *Strong Enough to Break*, in 2 Corinthians, which is another letter Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. It is one of his most vulnerable letters, where we learn a lot about his ministry difficulties. We'll cover six subjects this year and, God willing, another six next year. Steve's title, *The God of All Comfort*, comes straight from 2 Corinthians 1:3.

Paul writes to "all his holy people" (2 Corinthians 1:1). That isn't just the few getting most things right; it's everyone who has put their faith in Christ. God isn't assessing our holiness based on yesterday's mistakes, but on our faith in Christ. Every one of Paul's 13 letters opens with grace and peace - never more needed than now, with the world in turmoil around us.

Then in verse 8 Paul writes: *"We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself ... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead"* (2 Corinthians 1:8,9). That is incredible vulnerability. Some parts of the church overemphasise positive confession that you can't say anything negative about yourself or your situation, in case you open a door for more bad to come your way. So what do we do with Paul's words? If we had to put it in two words, the Bible invites us into honesty and faith. Honesty: we despaired. Faith: this happened that we might rely on God. Honesty and faith.

So what does relying on God look like day to day? Part of the answer is in verses 3 and 4, where Paul praises *"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."*

1. He is the God of all comfort

Notice the word **all**. His comfort might look different at different times in our lives. It isn't cookie-cutter comfort; He comforts us according to what's best for us, not always what we think we need. Isaiah 40:11 says, *"He tends his flock like a shepherd ... he gently leads those that have young."* If you're parenting little ones, God has a special place in His heart for giving you grace and comfort in this season. And in Exodus 19:4 God says, *"I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."*

2. Who comforts us in all our troubles

Not only is He the God of all comfort; He has comfort for all our troubles, from a frustrating puncture to devastating personal loss. Picture a continuum. At one end is uber-

positivity: "How are things?" "Always well. Praise God." Call it the 'Tinkerbell' approach: no dark clouds, only silver linings. At the other end, equally unhelpful, is uber-negativity: having taken so many hits, you never allow yourself joy, and however bright the lining, you're expecting another dark cloud. That's the 'Melman' approach, named after the hypochondriac giraffe in *Madagascar*. The Bible doesn't call us to either extreme, but to faith-filled authenticity in the middle. There is nothing we could ever go through where God's comfort doesn't reach us.

3. So that we can comfort others

Can you see the progression? God comforts us in all our troubles, and the fruit is that we can share His comfort with others. His comfort comes directly, as we read the Bible and pray, and indirectly through other people. That's why He places us in community.

Californian redwood trees grow over 100 metres tall, yet their roots go only a couple of metres down. The roots spread sideways and intertwine with the roots of the trees around them. The power of the redwood is not found in its own roots; it's found in its forest. Jesus doesn't call us to be a little island. He says, come and be planted in a community.

So we need to grow in two ways:

1. **How we receive comfort.** Relying on others for help and comfort isn't weakness; it's strength. We're not stronger alone; we're better together. Saying "Please pray for me" is strength. It's not strong people praying for weak people; it's one redwood tree supporting another.
2. **How we give comfort.** Sadly, Christians are often not that good at comforting others. We can all get better at comforting others. Unsolicited advice, "You know what you should try...", is usually well-meaning but not always comforting. Try instead: "I'm really sorry to hear that," and mean it. "I'll be praying for you," and then actually pray. "That sounds like a lot. I'm trusting God for wisdom and strength for you." "I went through something similar, and it's really not easy." Take a meal. Send a WhatsApp with a verse.

The God of all comfort comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort others with the comfort we ourselves receive from Him. Let's be people of faith-filled authenticity, honest about our troubles, full of faith in our God, and standing together like a forest.