



Triumphant in Weariness

His unyielding, nonstop, conspicuous life in us

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Strong friendship in the Spirit is a fuel that the Apostle Paul recognized as necessary for his healthy functioning in God's purposes. And yet, in the absence of it, he was assured of God's triumphant presence. In 2 Corinthians 2, the Apostle Paul expresses the sorrow and pain of his ministry. He finally writes, "Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Messiah and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, *I had no rest for my spirit*, not finding Titus my brother; but saying goodbye to them, I went on to Macedonia." (2 Corinthians 2:12-13)

Paul *had no rest in his spirit*. The original Greek word *an'esis* means *relief from another source other than oneself*. He earnestly desired relief in the loneliness and turmoil of his situation. He not only suffered physical challenges, but the heartache of not finding his friend Titus in Troas. He expected to find comfort in the like-minded fellowship of his brother.

The communion of other faithful followers of Yeshua (Jesus) was food for Paul's weary spirit:

- To Timothy, he wrote, "... I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy." (2 Timothy 1:3-4)
- To the Philippians, he wrote, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all... For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Messiah Jesus. (Philippians 1:3-8)
- To Philemon, he wrote, "I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother." (Philemon 1:7)
- To the Corinthians about Titus (after finding him), "But God Who comforts the lowly in spirit (Gr. *tapeinous*), comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort he received from you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more." (2 Corinthians 7:6-7)

This valiant, strong, yet sensitive, loving apostle was acutely aware of his need for the companionship of his brothers and sisters. He was burdened with lonely toil. And yet, even in his sadness and unmet expectations, he knew the Spirit of the Living God would never cease to shine through him and minister to others no matter what he was going through. In the next verses, Paul breaks out in praise:

"But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Messiah and manifests [*phaneroo'* – makes visibly conspicuous] through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place for we are a fragrance of Messiah to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing..." (2 Corinthians 2:14-15)

Just as His Master Yeshua was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and yet triumphant over the grave (Isaiah 53:3b, 11), Paul was not concerned about whether his Master was shining through him.

Paul knew the Spirit would minister through him in unconscious ways at all times. Paul was not laughing with a bubbly smile when he could not find Titus as he had hoped. And yet, a satisfying, pleasurable aroma of the Spirit of the Living God rose from his life to God and to others. Paul TRUSTED that God caused all things to work together for good to those who love God. (Romans 8:28)

As we walk in the Spirit, our emotions, our loneliness, our longings reflect His emotions as He guides us through a world that is set against His purposes. In time, He comforts and lifts us.

Father, You know our frames, our weaknesses, and our heartaches. You are always with us, guiding and comforting us along the way, and You ALWAYS lead us in triumph giving off Your fragrance through us to a lost world. Shower your undeserved, gracious gifts of encouragement and joy on us today as we share Your love with the world on this journey toward that Beautiful, Prepared Place where we will live with You forever!