

God's Perfect Grace

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When the Word is sown, the devil comes for one reason; he wants your Word. He wants it desperately because the Word is what will bring you all the way through to VICTORY!

As God continues to prosper the ministry, He keeps impressing upon me how strong the spiritual bond is between two people when they share the ministry of Jesus in each others' lives. It is my prayer that I may be as much of a blessing to you as you are to me.

At this moment, I am in Ohio in a meeting and, even though my whole ministry is gearing up for our preachers conference in Brazil, it seems as though every time I pray, God begins to pour revelation knowledge through my spirit for you. I know it is because of that spiritual bond.

Lately God has been dealing with me over the GRACE OF GOD. I've been studying and meditating on the life of Paul the apostle. If there was ever a man outside of the Lord Jesus Christ that deserved the devil's attention, it was the apostle Paul.

Writing to the church at Corinth Paul said: *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."*

This verse sums up and records one of the greatest onslaughts ever launched against a man. Paul went on to say: *"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

When the devil attempted to stop Paul, he threw all of the wiles that he could muster up, conceive, and connive. He threw everything at Paul because Paul was worthy to be stopped. Paul, in addressing this, called it a thorn in the flesh. He said, "because of all the revelation knowledge that has been bestowed on me, there has been given to me a thorn in the flesh. So, in case I be exalted in anybody's eyes, this thorn in the flesh has come to keep me from gaining any kind of credibility." He said, "Everywhere I turn, there he is. I sought God three times. Three times He said, 'My grace is sufficient.'" "

Paul concluded by saying, "I will rather glory in my infirmities, my weaknesses as a man, the limitations set on me by this flesh." He said, "For when I am weak, then am I strong." In fact, Paul said, "The Lord told me that His strength is perfected in my weakness. I will therefore take pleasure in infirmities, distresses, and perplexities."

What an incredible statement to say - MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT. He not only said it once. He said it three times!

The part that was so fascinating to me was that, for a man of Paul's stature, revelation knowledge,

and understanding in God, it took three times for God to get the understanding of the power that is in grace over to Paul. If it took three times for Paul, then I suspect that you and I could easily miss a whole lot about grace.

God pulled my spirit into this subject time after time - MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT. Then I realized the difference between the man in Mark 4 and the man who took Paul's route.

In Mark 4 it says the sower sowed the Word and immediately Satan was able to come and steal the Word. Paul said, "Because of the abundance of my revelations, this thing came." Satan came immediately to steal the Word. That is what he was after in Paul's life. He not only wanted to destroy the Word in Paul, but he wanted to destroy his influence in the eyes of the people. That is why Paul said, "You Corinthians, I am perplexed, I cannot believe that you are desiring proof that Christ is speaking in me!" So the devil was after the same thing in Paul that he is after in you, only to a greater degree with Paul, for Paul was more worthy to be stopped than we are, at this point. The devil was after the Word. And even for a man of this stature, it took God three times to make Paul understand - "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT".

When the Word is sown, the devil comes for one reason, he wants your Word. He wants it desperately because the Word is what will bring you all the way through to VICTORY!

Because the devil wants our Word, he will bring persecution, affliction, and cares, and, if we get offended and go the way of these devices, then the devil is able to take the working of the Word out of us. But Paul was not about to take that route. He said, "I will rather therefore glory in my infirmities." He also said over in Romans 5, "We glory in tribulations." James says we are to "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations."

Even though it took three times of reassurance, Paul put his feet on the rock and lifted his voice towards Heaven. In the midst of hell, on the edge of death, about to be thrown to the lions, about to be killed by a raging coppersmith, Paul learned that, in all of these things, the way to have Jesus' strength perfected in his weakness, was to lift his hands before God, glorify Him in a loud voice, praise Him, and worship Him hour after hour in the middle of the most adverse and backward circumstances. This activated grace in his life and traded his standing of weakness for God's standing of strength. This also trades our weakness for His grace, which is something we could not merit or earn in any area of our redemption, including deliverance from our present circumstances.

We have been forced to understand grace in the realm of the afterlife. Meaning that we believe His grace is sufficient to take us across the barrier of death.

Death surrounds us. It is inescapable. It is the last enemy to be put under Jesus' feet. Positionally, death is under Him for those who believe but still the evidence of death is on every hand. We see it every day. The news is full of it. The world has to reconcile itself to death. We have been forced to lay hold of grace and trust it to take us across the barrier of death. We are forced to say, because death is inevitable, "HIS GRACE IS SUFFICIENT" in these realms. It must be so.

What we have not understood is that His grace is sufficient in this present realm, this side of glory, in

every hellish situation. There is an untapped resource that we know very little about. You see, praise and worship in the middle of our adverse circumstances seem to be a primary function in activating grace and trading His standing for ours, His strength for our weakness. The knowledge of that grace makes me feel like shouting!

God told Paul three times that grace is where sufficiency lies and we are examining a man who had the worst hell could throw at him. All that the powers and principalities of hell could ever muster, conjure up, conceive, connive, and throw at a man, were thrown at Paul. In all the universe, the weapon singled out and revealed to this man to enable him to stand up under and defeat these attacks was the grace of God. God said, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT."

I have affectionately labeled this weapon Paul used "aggressive grace". You see, you turn the grace of God into a weapon when you enlist it against your problem. God said, "Paul, in My grace IS all sufficiency!"

Again, let me say, the instructions to activate this grace were incredible. He said, in the middle of the worst of it, stand up and glorify God for His grace. In every situation, glorify and praise God in your weaknesses, in your limitations as a man. Take pleasure in your infirmities and your necessities and your perplexities. Why?

Because God said that His strength will be perfected in you in the presence of your weakness. When you are stripped of your dependency on the flesh, it places your dependency on grace, which is His standing. When you are weak, then you become strong. Somehow in the middle of a test, praising and glorifying God with all of your heart activates grace. When you trade your standing for His, you are reigning over your problem.

Why does Psalms 8:2 say, "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger*"? Then when Jesus quotes this verse in Matthew 21:16 why does He say, "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected PRAISE*"?

Ephesians 5:18-20 says: "*Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always...*"

To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with strength, with power, with wisdom, with boldness, with the answer to whatever problem we have confronting us.

Praising and worshipping God brings about a refocusing of our attention. When we truly get our eyes upon God we see how big He is and how small our problem is compared to Him. Just as the old familiar song says, "turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace".

When our eyes are on Him, we stop worrying and fretting and getting in God's way. Anxiety and fear depart and peace and love dominate. A stillness and a quietness settle in. We slow down and begin to walk with confidence and purpose. Our path becomes directed by Him. "*They that wait upon the*

Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint". "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." "O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him." "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies."

"I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance (the margin says - his presence is salvation)."

I want to encourage you to determine in your heart that you are going to praise and worship Him until your eyes truly become fixed upon Him, until you experience an exchange of your weakness for God's strength, your sickness for His health, and your poverty for His wealth.

I encourage you to make it a practice to set aside time for daily praise and worship to activate God's grace in your life.