

This week: The promise -God's grace is sufficient for whatever God allows or causes

- Context—false apostles coming in – challenging Paul -taking from believers

Paul is defending His apostleship by revealing His struggles - Paul's credentials:

2 Corinthians 12:6-10 (NIV) Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, 7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- He had been chosen by the Lord for service (Acts 9)
- His Jewish credentials
- His persecutions
- His miraculous signs (Acts 14,16,19)
- His visions from heaven
- His unwillingness to take money for his service to the churches
- Paul was placed on display as an example
- False apostles were claiming his struggles proved he wasn't God's person

2 Corinthians 11:21-29 (NIV) ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

1. Paul is clearly God's appointed man – to lead and write scripture

2. But chosen for what?

- Week 1--chosen to live a godly life in Christ Jesus – escape corruption of the world
- Trustworthy to be appointed to the Lord's service despite his past
- Chosen to fight the fight of faith against the devil and the culture
- Paul is facing a thorn in the flesh (some kind of ailment – blindness see Galatians 4:15)

Acts 9:15-16 (NIV)

3. Paul's Response-He prays and asks the Lord three times to take it

- It's right to come to God for help – sometimes God is going to help you through something rather than around it
- Why a thorn – to keep him **humble**
- God desires humility to follow no matter what – to trust Him – and submit to His decisions
- God knows what we need to finish the race

Proverbs 30:7-9

4. God's answer – no!!! My grace is sufficient for you

- A. Saving Grace reveals I am saved by grace through faith –I have God's unmerited favor no matter what
- B. Grace **reveals** God's favor, love and acceptance for us through others (Galatians 6:1-2)
 - a. God promises that His unmerited favor will provide all we need to accomplish what work He has assigned for us to do.
 - b. God's promises to **empower** us through His Spirit to live obedient lives no matter what happens
- C. His grace is and will be sufficient – enough to suffice – all we need to live a godly life in Christ

- D. Sufficiency is not defined by our standard (we always want more); but God knows what is best for us.
- E. **The grace delivery system – Jesus –God’s Word (precious promises) His people**
 - a. **Grace** provides the self-control to not run, freeze or fight in trials.
 - b. **Grace** that enables us to forgive our spouse or parents.
 - c. It’s **grace** that helps us endure our health issues, physical pain, even cancer.
 - d. It’s **grace** that empowers us to listen to someone who sees things differently.
 - e. It’s **grace** that gets you through difficult financial issues.

James 1:2-5 (NIV), Philippians 4:13 (NIV) ,1 Peter 4:10 (NIV), Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

5. His response – I will glory in my weakness

2 Corinthians 12:9b (NIV) “My power is made perfect in your weakness.”

- God’s power has a goal. It is intended to change and mature us. It’s to strengthen us under load. It’s to give us grit.
- Weakness = disease, infirmity, sickness
- The beauty of weakness is not in weakness itself, but in how God’s power shines through it.
- His power is not *our* power. His power doesn’t come through *our* strength, wealth, or talents. It comes through our weakness. Opposite of this world.
- When we are weak, the power of Christ rests on us. No one is too weak to be used by the Lord, but many of us are too strong.

The Promise: His grace is sufficient to save you and work through you, no matter what, if you will allow Him

2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NIV), 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)



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