

2 Corinthians

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Date: 22 January 1967

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[0 : 00] If the Lord should be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the second epistle to the Corinthians.

Twelfth chapter and the ninth verse. 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.

Chapter 12, second epistle to the Corinthians, and the ninth verse. As I have been reading this word to you as the text from which I hope grace will be given to me to preach from and say something helpful to you.

The thought has come to my mind and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee. And now that is said to every sinner born again.

[1 : 34] It was said at this time especially to Paul in the circumstances in which he was as an apostle of Jesus Christ. But when the matter is weighed up, you must never, never think of grace as being otherwise than sufficient.

I know that you, and I likewise, in our approaches to God are ever asking for more grace. Yes, but do you realize whether you feel it or not that you get it?

You do not get it in a surplus. You have no grace to spare. You have none in reserve. But you do get more grace.

Because there are quite a few of you, dear people, in our cause of truth, it's Sabbath morn. Who, if you were asked to speak the truth regarding the dealings of God with you, I will tell you what you could declare and what you ought to declare.

By the grace of God, I am what I am. I know you might qualify it and say, I am a long way short of what I should like to be.

[3 : 05] But it nevertheless remains a truth which cannot be undone by earth or hell, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

It is by the grace of God alone that you are here in the attitude of worship. And you are here in the attitude of worship. And you are here in the attitude of worship. You are here in the attitude of worship. You are here in the attitude of worship.

You are here in the attitude of worship. Desiring to be found before God and to worship His Holy Majesty around. You are here following on to know the Lord.

And it is by His grace you have not been left to be like those disciples of whom you read when the Savior dwelt on earth.

From that many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus to His disciples, Will ye also go away?

[4 : 13] And you remember what Peter said in his answer, Lord, to whom can we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life.

We believe in the surest. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And it is by the grace of God you are here, still waiting upon God, waiting for God.

Then, dear friends, that brings us right back to our starting point. You have found grace is sufficient. And it is sufficient that you and I must learn to live like this.

And as thy days, so shall thy strength be. Now, I had no thought of beginning this sermon like that, but that will be a little helpful.

To some of you, it may be. I want to look at this subject from one or two viewpoints of it, because it more especially relates to the Apostle Paul vindicating to some in the church at Corinth, his right from God to be an apostle.

[5 : 37] For a lot, there were those in the church of Christ there who actually called it into question. And that was a very solemn business for the Apostle Paul to have to ponder in his heart that he was inspired of God to tend his second disciples to the church at Corinth.

And when you have leisure, and make a little if you can, you can read the preceding chapter, chapter 11.

And there he gives a very great outline of what his sufferings were and how God made him the good minister of Jesus Christ that he was.

And those who questioned him, being an apostle, what could they bring forward alongside it after their experience to set forth that they also were ministers of Jesus Christ to come up and profess to be.

And now, I want to look at the subject because there is much in it that is instructive, helpful, and it could be, I hope it will be, a word in season.

[7 : 03] And now you find that the Apostle Paul in the context gives an account of a wonderful visitation that he had, a revelation of the Lord.

And I just look at that that the second of the subject, as I said, is indeed instructive, and it is the frame in which you have to look at the picture in the midst of it.

And says the Apostle Paul, it is not expedient for me, doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

And now do follow this along. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago. Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell.

God knows. Such an one caught up to the stirred heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.

[8 : 13] God know it. And how that he was caught up into parallel. And heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter.

And what he saw was, strictly speaking, beyond words to describe. But he did see it. It was to him an unforgettable experience.

And he says, Of such an one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

And he goes on, still vindicating his apostorship to the unbelieving Corinthians. For though I would desire for glory, I should not be a fool.

And now that means, if I did glory, if I did tell you what I could, I should be simply telling you what I did know and hear, I should not be a fool, just full of words, uttering that which I knew not.

[9 : 30] For I will say the truth. But now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

And now he comes right down to bedrock. And I'm bound to say this to every man ordained of God to preach has got to travel down through this line of things to be made a good minister of Jesus Christ.

And he says, lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelation there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to book at me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

You remember how the apostle Paul, while he was still known as Saul of Parsons, was called by grace. And you remember how on the master's road the Lord led him deep down into the truth of his sinnership what he was by nature and how for a while he was blind and had to be led above.

And you will remember how the Lord blessed him indeed and brought him forth so that instead of being one of the foremost enemies of God and fighting against Jesus Christ from the time he was cut down on the Damascus road I judge it to be inside a monk he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and seeking to set him forth as the eternal son of God in his divine nature and to vindicate that he who died on Calvary's cross was verily God and verily man and now that is a unique experience and I do not think there is a record of any other likeness that you can read about and now says the Apostle Paul this was a very great experience that he entered into and he was led deeply into the truth and God helped him to preach it right away and now after all

[12:10] Paul was just like Elias Elias was a man of like passions as we are so was Paul and now he says to all 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 and now when the Lord began to deal with Paul like that Paul had to weigh the matter up and there is no doubt whatever it may have been to him as a surprise but he was not to go on teaching the gospel wherever he went to go he was still at the gates of paradise no no great is such an experience needful good if men ordained to preach have got it in their souls experience which you have got to come down amongst the dear people of God in the varied tribulations in which they live and move and that means the preacher of the gospel must not be sailing over life's seas lightly but he will have balance so that he to ride the seas a ride and he himself will have to speak feelingly about that which he has tasted handled and felt of the good word of life according to how his experience is as God shall ordain it to be and now this thorn in the flesh a great deal of speculation has been made as to what it really was but when the word of God is silent about what it was you and I must not speculate about it but it does mean in the original so godly scholars tell us not just a thorn such as you and I have understood a thorn to be but it means a state and therefore it was something which was known and felt by day and night and it was not to be withdrawn says the apostle Paul to this thing

I bethought the Lord right that it might depart from me three times did the dear man pray your do take away this thorn and he might have said I say that with great reverence he might have said Lord thou knowest I could preach a great deal more freely and may be preached better if they will you need it no no you will preach a great deal better with it and it must not be removed or your preaching will not be so profitable and he says to this thing I besought the Lord Christ that it might be harmed on me well the answer to prayer was no no Paul I cannot remove the thorn in the flesh it is my purpose I have permitted it and you will find it is the messenger of

Satan to buffet you so that in your labours in word and doctrine you will be opposed not only by earth by hell itself wherever you go the messenger of Satan what a very solemn consideration that is the messenger of Satan and now that opens up another line of thought which tells us that God has allowed Satan to have quite a deal of permission to afflict people thought of God and especially men who go forth to labour in word and doctrine desiring to exalt and exalt Jesus Christ in the gospels of his grace you find that is outlined also in the book of

Job because there you have a record and the Lord said unto Satan hast thou considered my servant Job that there is none like him in the earth a perfect and an upright man one that feareth God and escheweth evil until he holdeth fast his integrity although thou movest me against him to destroy him mangle him swallow him up without cause and Satan answered the Lord and said skin for skin yea all that a man hath will he give for his life but put forth thine hand now and cut his bone and his flesh and he would curse thee mangle him renounce thee to thy house and the Lord said unto

Satan behold he is in thy hands but it was a very great bet save his life you cannot touch that and why his life was hid with Christ in God beyond the reach of harm but Satan did all that he could and the great thing is he had actually got permission from God that he could test those religions but he only made it more and more manifest in all that he attempted to do that it was indeed that which God was the author of and so we have to keep in our thought that Satan may be allowed to do quite a deal with us in our everyday life and be the messenger to buffet us and remember this word buffet is to do with titan what is nowadays called boxing and in the apostle

[19 : 23] Paul's day when they when a man fought with a man they did wear gloves but they were gloves that were hats and they had either lead upon them or else it was wood so that those who engaged in that warfare were well nigh pounded so that you could not recognize the combatants when the fighting was over seeing they had wounded each other so much in using the gloves whereby they fought and now the holy spirit uses that illustration so that whatever has come into your life and is to you as a thorn in the flesh you do need to weigh matters up before God and wait upon him for grace all sufficient that you may behave aright and however much you may be tempted and tied under it and

Satan may buffet you regarding your religion your profession of the name of Jesus you will find this to be a sweet blessed reality my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness and now that is one viewpoint of the second of our subject but it's just another I look at and when it says here in the context I knew a man in Christ about 40 years ago maybe you will recall to mine when that was you who read the word of God and it tells us 14 years ago the apostle Paul was on his missionary journey and during those journey this is recorded in the

Acts of the Apostles and there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium who persuaded the people and having stoned Paul drew him out of the city supposing he had been dead how be it as the disciples stood round about and he rose up and came into the city and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Gerbe and now all the while the apostle Paul was lying on a ground stone and the disciples supposed he had been dead he was what we call unconscious he was dead to all the world around but he was wonderfully alive to the spirit of the world and it was then as I view it that he was in his soul's experience in paradise and had these visions and revelations of the

Lord so that it was like a miracle that he just rose up apparently dead and went on his way straight forward doing still the work God had commissioned him to do but in his inner man in his soul's experience he had these visions and revelations of the Lord and now if the apostle Paul had not been inspired of God to record it you and I would have not known anything whatever about it and now it is recorded that you who were taught of God when you see those you love going down into Jordan's slown and it may be and often is the case that they are unconscious to all their surroundings and you can only sit by their side and look on but this is to tell us that in their souls while us regard their bodies their unconscious their souls are alive and active and contemplating eternal reality and even viewing as it were the gates of pearls through which their redeemed spirit will shortly enter and they are enjoying all that blessedness in their soul's experience but to you they are just unconscious and you know nothing about it and they may never return to this earth to give you a hint of what they have already seen of the glory of

God which they are shortly entering into and remember what I often quote to you whatsoever things were written before time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope and now let us start first and he said my grace is sufficient for you strictly speaking I say this is great reverence as though Jesus Christ said to Paul Paul wherever you go preaching the gospel whatever your suffering may be whether Satan does buffet you whether you have this thorn in the flesh pain in you more than usual let it be enough that I love you and you rest in that blessed truth

[25 : 39] God is love and that is sufficient I am very sure that quite a few of you dear people if you could be sure you would get a part in the love of God this Sabbath morn you would be prepared to say whatever I suffer as I journey on through life I do not mind I shall not fear it if God loves me that is all I want to know and I love him in return and that is the grace and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for him go back to what I said you have got to learn it dear friends people alike as I day so should I strength you wake in the morn you know what is in the day and sometimes you think however shall

I get through the day with what I have to do and feeling like I do weak as I am and maybe you've got the thorn in the flesh and you know where about to you always know where a thorn in the flesh is be it ever such a little one it makes its presence known and Satan may teach to take advantage of it and suggest you will not get through the day you will break down and not be able to continue to do all you have got to do but what are you to do neither give place to the devil know know and remember he is a liar and come back to what is true and he said unto me and he says it to you my grace is sufficient for thee all the of and this is in it walk me in it let us now look at it from yet another view form when you come to think of this messenger of

Satan which was a thorn in the flesh we read about thorns first of all in the Adam fall thorns are to do with the curse when Adam fell and God pronounced the curse upon the earth it was said that thorns it shall bring forth yes but what do we read four thousand years afterwards we stand take your shoes off your feet and we know spirit you stand before pelvis top and what do we read in those flattered crown of thorns and else because they did that and Jesus Christ on the cross as a crown of thorns and remember they were long spiky thorns so we are told by godly scholars and they pressed them down on his dear holy head and the blood ran down his face yes and he bore that crown of thorns that you and

I when we have a thorn in the flesh and we have a thorn in the flesh each of us told of god that it should be sanctified to our soul's eternal good so that we no longer ask the lord that it might depart from us but what we do ask for is lord do let thy grace be sufficient and it will be by gracious faith true faith that not of yourself it is the gift of god not of work let any man give faith and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee my strength is made perfect in weakness and now some of us it may be quite a few of us have known weakness and it is very painful weakness is a very painful experience it brings home to you your helplessness and in the things of god it is to make you realize that you cannot move a single step without divine aid and if you would be filled with grace then there is only one way whereby god can do that and that is you must be empty and you must be saying and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must see nothing in my hand

I bring simply to thy cross I cling then you get this great all sufficient but there is nothing of the great eye to be admitted not one ingredient of it nor it is the spirit that pricken it the flesh profit is nothing now that brings us to this great subject and what a subject it really is when you help to view it grace the grace of god and I do like how Paul gave his testimony at the end of his ministry and he says there none of these things move me neither count

[32 : 18] I my life here unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify that God is of the gracious it is the gospel that is true to you dear friends young and old the gospel of the grace of God the grace of God is the power of the gospel whereby it becomes good tidings of great joy to poor sinners who are given ears to hear it and hearts to receive it and now how good it is to think of the grace of God from the various characteristics of it my grace is sufficient to thee and now there is one grace that you would like to see more in everything and that is quick in grace there are you dear godly fathers and mothers with your children round about you and children children too and you look on them and in a right mind you know each one is bound for an eternal destiny either heaven or hell and it burdens you and your great concern is that they might be led into the peace and that they might know grace as quicken grace it is a beautiful testimony and you one of the most unliked you have to quicken deal with dead in trespasses and sin you remember

Paul said that to the godly Ephesians and some of them were in the riot in the Ephesus marketplace and they were a right down bad lot and you might never have had a thought in your mind had you been there to look on that some of those rioting would receive the quickening grace of God oh but who can tell that what God will be gracious to this one or that I tell you and you must really keep it uppermost in your mind you must never limit the grace of God because it is troubling grace therefore who can tell but what you will look out of hell so yet you receive it and be made manifest as a saint a sanctified sinner and live unto

God live for God oh you must not limit the grace of God you must not limit what the Holy Spirit may be pleased to do so that when you look on four wretches and you almost despise them because they are such specimens of human degradation it would be much better if you could send up a petition nor could it be possible for such and one to receive thy grace and be made a new creature in Christ Jesus much better prayer can wonders do and it can do wonders when you send up petition to God in the children and the children's children and those on whom your heart may be set that they may yet be made manifest as being numbered with the people of

God oh sitting in grace is wonderful and when all is said and done you do not really need to look into the word of God to get illustrations of it I know you can be and get some very striking ones like Mary Magdalene the dying thief and Saul of Carchus himself and Manasseh Judas king but do you know the biggest example of what grace can mean you look in the glass and the one you see there is the one that has brought from its soul to grace of God and to what it really can do when God commands it that sovereign grace or sin abandons and he communicates to you quickness grace yes

I like the hymn writer line of things he came to seek poor sinners out and you and me the work you would say me the work ah but I say me the work well you can argue like that before God but that is how you feel if the grace of God is not in your death it is an amazing thing that it should ever have been communicated to you what do you sing amazing grace a sweet the sound that saved thee yet like me I once was lost but no and chained with blam but no yes grace is sufficient to call all that vast hope is God has ordained a life eternal and everyone will make the same declaration as I said earlier on by the grace of

[38 : 35] God I am what I am and now you need this grace in its proficiency in all its varied characteristics as you journey on you need it from varied viewpoints once you have received quitting grace then you need to know it as separating grace so that you feel it to be sufficient for you to leave the world deceitful sure and leave it to return no more unless you might be like Moses choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season separating grace and then I like to think of it as supporting grace and you see you cannot face the burdens of everyday life on your own initiative and in your own sense no more and more it is made plain to people following on to know the

Lord that they need divine aid to live a right and this word is recorded to encourage you and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for you I can support you under the heaviest load I see to be laid upon you and when the thorn in the flesh flesh is more than ever and the messenger of Satan buckets you source my grace is sufficient that I can make a way of a state and I can make known to you I can suffer then that are tempted what do you think trust in him you tempted saints tell him all your sad complaints be a present help will be give you strength and victory give a grace to him the grace of

God and oh to think of it like this oh bring no fright God gracious to Paul to Magdalene to me you cannot earn it you cannot buy it you cannot merit it it just comes it is sheer mercy whereby it comes to you and to me for he makest me to differ from another and what is thou that thou dost not receive and now if you look back over the way you have come along what do you say are you going to speak on God's behalf if you ought to do and you know dear friend I've got to test these things home as grace is given for you to weigh matters up before

God you have received support in grace there have been many days when you have said how ever shall I get through today ah but you did get through and the moral dawn and another day like it and you got through that day too and if you say what you ought to say you must say this having obtained help of God I continue unto this day yes January 27 1967 and still this word is here to encourage you and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for him not only is there support in grace there is delivering grace whatever distress is made before you

God will help you to endure and in the ultimate issue there will be a deliverance I like that word of his tell me where he says oh God command deliverance and that is just what you and I need in some particular but you are not to ask him to deliver you in the tongue in the flesh because he answered a prayer like that is no no to this thing I besought the Lord says that it might be passed from me just take your thoughts back to when the be said you were lily men prayed the same prayer and said if it be impossible let this text pass from me nevertheless not as I will but die will be done and he went on as verily man and drunk it out and you and

[44 : 10] I have got to go on to perform in the flesh and the messenger is taken to buffet us and dispose us but remember it is a great mercy to have some religion which the devil does not leave alone do remember that and be said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee I might say something that I must think unto the amen but in whatever way grace is needed whatever difficulties may arise along life's ways whatever mountains there are that rise up grace will overturn them by the roof but the grace that you and I need is the grace of subtletation ever on thy captain calling make thy worst condition known he shall hold thee up when fallen or lift the up then down then wait to wait upon

God wait for God as you lead continuing instant in prayer here you and I hire it is just another fear then at the end of the day you may fear before God so dirty that you have to say oh my God I am ashamed I blessed to lift up my face unto thee let not be nothing you have taken them but it you the greater is no heart in God to you and that you your sin is so I must that there can be no mercy shown that this word lift at you and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee to earth there is grace to pardon everything I do like that word a

God ready to pardon and dear friends do ask your own age to be ever ready to ask to let that grace pardoning grace be sufficient if not if may be right between your soul and God and you may be able to say in his presence you are pleased just God you are pleased and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is my perfect sin you and now this is our God ordained mentally and this is our God that ordained it all who follow him along life ways shall enter into the things of

God by a gracious experience my strength is my perfect sin reason and now what do you and I know about this most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me you take a man ordained of God to peace as he goes on in his labors he comes into affliction losses losses disappointments maybe diseased but these things that he comes into they lead him into various aspects of the truth of God and as he unfolds them from the pulpit as grace is given or at reaches poor sinner cases and they are helped with a little help and they can say the watchmen that go about the city they pound me and now there is no other way to keep the

God to purpose and properly do remember that most gladly therefore will I rather draw in my infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me and he gave on to declare therefore I take pleasure in infirmities in the sources in necessities in persecutions in distresses for Christ's fight for when I am weak then am I strong much might be said along that line of but this was something else and it is to be known by people taught of God as life is my happiness below not to live without the cross but the Savior power to know sanctifying every year

[49 : 38] Amen that You You You