

The reigning grace of God (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Seymour, Gordon (1928-2017)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord may be pleased to help me, I would direct you prayerfully to the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and chapter 12 and verse 9.
- Chapter 12 of the second of Corinthians and verse 9. And he said unto me, Who said unto him?
- Jesus. 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.
- We see here then in the previous verses 7 and 8, that lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, which we realize that they had in the other verses, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.
- [1 : 22] Oh, friends, what a burden in your lives are these thorns in the flesh. Pricks of conscience, maybe.
- Pricks, dear friends, in your heart and mind of sins. Brought to your remembrance. We've inherited those sins, have we not, from Adam.
- And we cannot say that we're sinless, as the dear Son of God is. But we see a value in the knowledge of Christ. We see him and that sin-atoning blood that he shed on Calvary's tree, that it is finished.
- Be cried out, it is finished. Finished the work that he came to do by the sending of him into this world to save sinners.
- What a great salvation this is. The redemption of your soul. The blotting out of all your iniquities and your transgressions as a thick cloud.
- [2 : 36] The Son of Righteousness, as he is so called. And will be enlightened your soul and mine to look to him. Oh, are we desperately feeling in need of the Saviour?
- Yes, you will have thorns. You will have things that perplex and torment and try you. This is no smooth world to live in. This is a world of sin and woe.
- And Jesus came to seek out and to save lost sinners. And we have to examine ourselves. Do we know our lost condition? Have these buffetings?
- This messenger of Satan, has he buffeted you? I believe we shall each know that. Buffetings. No smooth passage through the wilderness world.
- And there's an all-wise purpose in it if the Lord's in it. And so who do we seek? He said, I besought the Lord thrice that he might depart from me.
- [3 : 49] You know, you and me and our afflictions, we beseech him more than thrice sometimes. And we don't get the answers that we're looking for.
- We would see Jesus. We want to hear his voice. We want him to be revealed to us. And if you've had him revealed to you, if you've seen by faith him upon that cursed tree, we should want to know that he has borne our sins for us and is preparing us for those mansions in the sky.

And so you besought the Lord. And what a mercy, you know, if you've had these sanctified thorns in the flesh, if you've had the messenger of Satan buffet you, why is to humble you and me?

He said, humble yourself before the Almighty God. These buffetings that truly exercise you and me.

But he says, he doesn't leave him there. He said, and this is what he has to say to you, and I do pray that the Lord might bless you today with a little encouragement, that he said unto me, this is a personal visit to Paul, Saul of Tarsus, that had been hailing men and women to prison that ever sought the Lord, that ever believed on his name.

[5 : 29] And he sought them out, hailing them and putting them in prison. Oh, see the turnaround though of Saul by the grace of God.

So these thorns in the flesh were a purpose. And you know if you have a thorn in the flesh, you can't remove it, can you?

Naturally. Difficult sometimes. But they're painful. And they're meant to be painful to you and me. Make you conscious of your sins.

Oh, thou hideous monster sin, what a curse has thou brought in. All creation groans through thee, pregnant cause of misery. And we know it and we have to pass through it.

But what a mercy, he said, my grace. You know, without his grace, we should never be unable to endure, would we?

[6 : 32] The hardship, the darkness. And by nature, we murmur and complain. We murmur and complain over these things.

When wilt thou answer my groans before thee? When wilt thou make a way of escape from these things that seem to bring such disarray in my mind and cause me to have doubts and fears as to where my case stands?

Well, my grace is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which you're told is exceedingly abundant. Oh, but you say, when will he come?

When shall I be assured of my interest in the merits of Jesus? When will my love reciprocate back to him because we love him because he first loved us?

And we have to meditate upon this sometimes. Do I know the love of Christ? Am I seeking after it with my whole heart?

[7 : 45] But Lord, you say, drive out these buyers. Deliver me from these thorns in the flesh. And they are numerous at times and they come one upon the other and you feel you're slowly being destroyed.

And your faith will not endure. But do remember this, the Lord said to his disciples, O ye little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Oh, you feel to come to the end of all things at some times. And yet you see in mercy, he said, my grace is sufficient.

And what is this grace? We read in that second chapter, we read there that he said, who is sufficient for these things?

Sufficient, dear friends, for the hardness by what Satan brings upon yourself, drives in that wedge of unbelief, unbelief, or how painful it is.

[8 : 56] And you go like this, Lord, when wilt thou come? When wilt thou give me this shield of faith, this helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit? You see, the Lord alone can rebuke Satan, but the Lord permits him to come, messenger of Satan, to buffet you and me.

That is the humbling work, isn't it, of his grace. And so, humble yourself before almighty God that you might be exhorted in due time, casting all your care.

And you do have cares, you do have doubts and fears, and you do wonder, can God dwell here because of my hard heart, my carnal mind, which seems to be in the ascendancy more than in the depths of bringing me to humble myself before thee.

It's not humbling yourself before Satan. It's humbling yourself before God. You see, so, through the abundance of the revelations, you won't have had those heights and those depths of perhaps the revelations that Paul had to go through, but you'll know in a measure how God will give you signs and wonders.

We look upon him in providential things in our early days, but then we also want more than that. We want our heart to be changed and our wills renewed and return our feet to Zion's hill.

[10 : 40] So it's beseeching the Lord and not man. You see, the Lord knows the way you and I take. He's appointed it. Your steps are ordered, governed by the Lord.

And though you say, how shall I endure? How can I overcome this mountain or see this valley exalted? Well, we're told it is through much tribulation as Jesus himself said, yet be of good cheer, I've overcome the world.

My grace, my unmerited mercy. This is it, his grace, it's unmerited by you and me because we're full of sin.

But blessed be the Lord. This grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, unmerited.

It is the love and favor of God toward your soul. He singled you out. He knows what sore temptations mean.

[11 : 50] He has felt the same. And we're brought there to say, bow down, thine ear, O God. I am poor and needy. Send the blessed spirit, the comforter, with a word of promise from the Lord Jesus to have a word such as we've got here today which is very well known by you all, no doubt, over the years.

My grace, my favor, unmerited and unworthy of his notice. But it is sufficient. And so our sufficiency is of God.

And so we realize that he is sufficient. And sufficient unto the day is the promise the Lord gives.

But unto you, you say like Jonah, yet will I look again unto thy holy hill and pray for that needful grace to be bestowed upon me.

And that effect of grace, the favor, you feel the Lord's eyes upon you, his ear opening unto your cry.

[13 : 07] And he knows the way. He's appointed it. And there's no other way that we can get to heaven but through the merits of Jesus. And though, as I say, there's given to me a thorn in the flesh.

And all these things, those pricks against the conscience, ultimately, the Lord will wear you and me down. Because there'll be something in your path that calls, that he's caused to come.

And to make you stop in your mad career and make you stop in your pathway to consider his way. to be brought to realize his way was much rougher and darker than mine.

Did Christ, my Lord, suffer? And shall I reply? It's fellowship we've got to be brought into with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. He knows the way.

He knows every step you take, every breath that you take is according to God's mercy. But do you not fail you nor forsake you?

[14 : 14] We can boldly say at times, the Lord is my helper. I'll not fear what man shall do unto me. Because when you and I are weak, then are we strong in the Lord.

And my strength, he said, is made perfect in weakness. He weakens our strength in the way. He weakens our self-will. He gives us grace to be submissive to the mind and the will of God.

And he says, my strength is made perfect in weakness. But here comes the further trial to you. Most gladly, therefore, will I rile the glory in my infirmities.

You know, when the Lord puts an aching void in your soul, you'll begin to ponder the path of your feet. you'll begin to consider your ways.

And pray, Lord, all whatsoever my hand finds the dew in providence or in grace, do be my guardian and my guide and show me now a little strength of faith.

[15 : 35] Strengthen my weak hands, confirm my feeble knees, saying to me, if there's a fearful heart, fear not, thy God will come with vengeance. And to realize that though I have infirmities, the older we get, we feel more of these infirmities because we haven't got the strength of our youth, have we?

But there'll be those things that will torment you young or older in your life in some form or another. But all to know something of this grace, establish you, settle you in the truth by what is applied to your soul and mine and he says, come unto me.

You know, there's some choice invitations in the gospel to meet every sinner's case. Come unto me, all ye that labor and the heaven laid and I will give you rest.

You see, we sometimes think about these things that we have, it's impossible how we can overcome. You cannot overcome anything only in the strength of the Lord to make mention of his righteousness and that only.

So all these stones of stumbling, these rocks of offense in your pathway need to be made plain, remove the stones out of the way.

[17 : 07] Stones, dear friends, or thorns, if you might like to choose it that way, or they would like to choose the way you speak of it, but it's all sent by the Lord.

And Satan rejoices to see you and me cast down. But it's hope though in God, for I shall yet praise him. this is faith and exercise in the midst of the sorrows of the way of what the word declares.

The Lord only needs to apply it. He only needs to apply it and he will do when he sees you sunk for fathoms. Oh Lord, I am oppressed.

Undertake for me. And so he said, for the oppressed are the poor, so will I rise. and deliver him from the captivity he feels to be under.

For you want to live in this blessed place where you feel the Lord's tokens of love shed abroad in your heart. But he goes, you've got to pass through, dear friends, the trial of your faith, but to glory in my infirmities.

[18 : 22] well, before you were afflicted, he says, you went astray. Oh, we can reflect upon that, backsliding sinners.

You went astray. You got slack concerning your reading, concerning your praying. praying. You get so tempted at what's the use of praying.

Nothing seems to develop in my favor. And you don't seem to get answers to your prayer that you so long for. Well, David knew it.

And if you're a follower of Christ, or following on to know him, you seem to be so remote from him, he has a set time.

And you're begging, and it's begging work to pray to God. You'll be at the end of the uttermost ends of the earth in your feeling. When wilt thou come, Lord, and touch my heart, that I might glory in this infirmity, that I might glory in this trial, and that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[19 : 36] You see, through much and many afflictions, the righteous shall be saved. And you wonder sometimes, how can I continue? I'm bound down on twice ten thousand ties, and let me hear thy call.

He said, my sheep, hear my voice. He says it. It's not yours yet. He hasn't applied it. And this is what you're seeking after.

You feel more the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan buffeting you, buffeting you. But the Lord knows the way.

And he's an appointed time to deliver you. And when we say within our hearts, when will he come? When will he deliver me? When he deliver me from this captivity, I seem to be bowed down with twice ten thousand ties.

Oh, let me hear thy call. You see, real religion is more than notion. There's a danger in having a notion or thought of religion and your religion.

[20 : 49] It's knowing the righteousness of Christ as applied and the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart. Then they make amends, won't they? There's grace.

Grace, dear friends. Oh, to grace, how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be. Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.

That's the subject of it. Bind my wandering heart to thee. Your heart wanders, mine does. No bounds where our mind gets to at times.

So far removed from God when we ought to be made nigh by the blood of Christ. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, he says, mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Oh, it's not running into his presence, it's walking. You walk by faith and not by sight.

[21 : 57] And oh Lord, when you come, Lord, in my infirmities, in my weaknesses, do give me power. He says, I give power to the faint, them that have no might.

He increases strength. Oh, you feel very much a weakling at times in the pathway of Christ, don't you? But oh, you long to embrace him.

You long to feel that union with him from off the mercy seat and for him to say unto your soul and mine, I am thy salvation. He waits to be gracious.

He has a sovereign right to. Who are you and who am I to demand the God's coming? No, you cannot. But you'll wait upon him.

You'll wait for him. You'll tarry his leisure, then wait the appointed hour. Wait to the bridegroom of your soul. Reveal his love with power. Oh, may you, may you young ones be patient, waiting upon the Lord.

[23 : 03] The Lord help me at the throne of grace. The Lord help me to pray, teach me to believe in the and trust in the that thine ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear, neither thine arm shorten, that it cannot say.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? said, said, said, said, said, said, said, Abraham and, and Sarah, anything, how hard for the Lord?

Impossible in man's sight. Everything is possible with God. He's a performing God. And though he permits this, this Satan to buffer you, lest, I said, be exalted above measure.

And so you won't be exalted. It's exalting Christ. Sermon in the standard by Mr. Ramsbottom. Exalted. Him that God exhorted to be a prince and a savior, to give redemption to Israel.

He's ever there. His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, no matter what your age and or our case might be. Nothing is impossible.

[24 : 22] Yes, you might speak that to me, but it's not, and it's true, but in my doubts and fears, at times, you wonder where the scene's going to end.

God's reign. And his, all men's hearts, with his hands. We had to prove that in England, haven't they?

Come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. There may be little that you can see any different in it at present. God reigns. God reigns.

And that's a sign, dear friends, in England. That's a sign, dear friends, that some have prayed for. And what seemed impossible a man was performed by God.

So it would be encouraged to believe, to pray on, watch on, wait on. In spite of the messenger of Satan. In spite of what man can do, God reigns.

[25 : 32] And I want a mercy to feel that his grace, his grace, dear friends, is sufficient.

And so we have to ask the Lord against impossible situations being resolved. God is our refuge and our strength, our very present help in trouble.

And we do pray for him to truly awaken us. Even in this dark day, when there's a falling away, bring back the prodigals, Lord.

Bring back sons and daughters of God and even their offspring to begin to be in want because there's an end coming to all things and it's all at hand.

And we know not when. And all those disasters throughout the world, his judgments, will not men be awakened? Yes.

[26 : 33] There will be here a little and there a little, line upon line and preset upon preset to those who look upon these tragedies, loss of life, ushered into eternity at the appointed time.

But all to have grace, all to feel Jesus' love shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Oh, you might be laughed or scorned, you might be mocked and despised, but who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage.

He remaineth not forever, he will come. And he will come, dear friends, according to the word of God at the set time to favour you and me with his grace.

And all how we do need more grace. And the more grace we have, the more we should be humbled to see who am I, what am I, that I should receive the least of verses by this merciful God into whom I would be dependent upon continually to seek his help that is laid upon him that is mighty.

You see, to take pleasure in infirmities, to realise before I was afflicted, as I think we said earlier, I went astray. Oh, we've known what it is to go astray, to seek the things in the world and the pleasures of it.

[28 : 09] But what good did it do us? Because this God has said, my grace is sufficient. My God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Durable riches, solid joys, lasting peace that you're striving for, to enter into that straight gate that you might be saved with an everlasting salvation. You know you will love the Lord with heart and mind and soul.

And that's what we're exhorted to do. But you'll only do it as grace is given and prove the sufficiency of it. The strength made perfect in weakness, glory in your infirmities.

You feel you want to be something, be somebody great in the world. But you know as thy days demand, so shall thy strength be.

Oh, blessed be the Lord that he has grace sufficient for you and me and all of his chosen people that as thy day demands may be.

[29 : 23] So the Lord will supply that need. You'll have to look back and see all the way that all your Lord God has proved you to see whether you'll keep his commandments or no.

Because he says, plainly say, if ye love me, keep my commandments and my commandments are not grievous, but they are tokens of his love to your soul and mine.

and he says, look unto me. Paul had to come over into Macedonia for their help. And so what a mercy to feel that the Lord has brought you into his banqueting house and his banner over you has been loved.

He sends out his light and his truth and you follow him. Oh, blessed be the Lord for his grace. And that grace, you know, and the love of God will be bestowed upon your soul and mine and your blessing for it.

And what a mercy to feel his love. But these things are not in anger before you and your affirmatives. These things are not in anger, but it is everlasting love.

[30 : 44] Yes, and there will be times grace sufficient to acknowledge this. through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is exceedingly abundantly where their sin has abounded.

Grace shall much more abound. And that's what we want. Gracious souls will bless the Lord and realize the necessity of these infirmities.

You went astray. You become careless and prayerless. And you lost your interest in the word of God. But he brings you back.

And now it has come your meat and your drink indeed in afflictions time. That he says, my grace, my presence. He lifts up the light of his candles upon you.

And you feel that peace of God, the past and the knowledge of understanding. All our times. the appointed time rolls on a pace not to propose but call by grace.

[31 : 50] Change your heart, renew your will and return your feet to Zion's hill. Oh, we have to bless God, his long suffering and patience towards us in our unregeneracy.

And yet he's touched us. He's touched us, dear friends, with these thorns in the flesh. And Paul knew about them.

But blessed be the Lord, it's set in his example to you and me. You won't willingly run away from the truth, but you may go so far, no farther, under the tempter's power.

And then he stops you in your mad career and you begin to be in want. What a mercy to be given a want. And what is it? It's a hunger and a thirst for the righteousness of Christ, for without Christ's imputed righteousness, you'll perish in your sins.

The man may poo-poo this and laugh you and be the scorn when we say we go to church, we go to hear the gospel, but you know deep down in your soul he's brought you back.

[33 : 07] He's made you to consider your ways. And he's made you to seek grace. Oh Lord, do remove this from me.

Do remove me from this pathway of darkness and body. You see, firstly he had the revelation. And I look back sometimes of that revelation that I had in hospital, in affliction.

It was a good time to be afflicted, wasn't it? Minister brought low, everything naturally seemed to be going the wrong way in my recovery from an operation.

But I had a revelation of Christ. Yes, no imagination, I think of it now in that hospital ward. So you see the goodness of the Lord in it.

He saw me. He came upon me and revealed himself to me and looked upon me from an appearance on the cross.

[34 : 12] This is no imagination, friends, this is reality. Sometimes it's brought to my memory and to my thoughts. Because he says, I know the thoughts that I think towards you.

Thoughts of peace are not of evil to give an expected end. You've had to wait upon me and we may travel through much darkness and bondage and he might come away, come again with a thorn in the flesh.

You can't remove it. It's there for your feeling and mine. And it's the purpose of exercising him and you and me.

Lord, do fulfill those desires of my soul. Come again and bring to my remembrance those tokens of thy love to reward me and do keep me faithful to thee, Lord, in my walk and my conduct.

We have much to confess of sins, but he has said, he has said, and he's bid you and me come to him because his everlasting love will never change.

[35 : 25] And we bless him for those tokens of his love and we bless his name and look to him again and again because we want that name to be made more precious by Father and earth and all its comforts are and to tarry his leisure then.

Wait till the brigham of their souls reveals his love with power. He does reveal. True religion is something revealed to you and me, applied with power to your soul.

it isn't just reading, is it? It's the word being sealed upon your soul. You bear the witness and sealing of the spirit that he has come to you.

And so you besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. No. But where sin of the bounded grace shall much more of it.

That's the secret. where sin hath abound and doth abound, grace shall much more abound. It's by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you be more than a conqueror through him that has loved you and washed you from your sins in his precious blood.

[36 : 41] Oh, the Lord Jesus Christ will give you that faith, that hope, and that love. For while thou cast down, O my soul, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him as the health of my countenance.

Sometimes we feel so miserable, other times we feel to be so comforted, because he has said, we need grace of patience, though he said, I will not leave you comfort less, I will come to you.

Oh, to be patiently waiting for the Lord to remove this thorn in the flesh, and there will be many thorns, briars and thorns, but blessed be the Lord.

He said, my grace is sufficient for thee, but I must leave it there, friends, for the time. May bless anything acceptable in heaven and forgive all amiss, we pray thee for Christ's sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let us conclude this morning with hymn 184, the tune is Willingdon 815.

[37 : 59] A fullness resides in Jesus our head and ever abides to answer our need. The Father's good pleasure has laid up in store a plentiful treasure to give to the poor.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. 184.

Amen. Amen.

Whatever be it was, we need not to fear.

Ere new man's complaints, his mercy will hear.

[40 : 05] His foolish shall yield us abundant supplies.

Their power shall shield us when dangers arise.

The fountain of flows, I was to redress.

Still, for he bestows that grace upon grace.

His gifts in abundance, we never will save.

[41 : 17] He has arrayed thine hands for all that believe.

Whatever distress awaits us below, Such plentiful grace, and Jesus bestowed.

And still shall support us in silence and fear.

For nothing can hurt us, O Jesus is near.

When troubles attend, O danger or stride, His love will defend, and God will cry.

[42 : 59] And when we are faintly and ready to die.

Whatever is wanting, His grace will apply.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with us each.

Amen. Amen. .