



18 October 2024

"My grace is sufficient for you"

One of the great perennial deceptions is that trusting God fully will lead to success in terms of this world — good health and wealth often top the list.

The apostle Paul wrote that those "who suppose that godliness is a means of gain" have a "depraved mind" and are "deprived of the truth" (1 Timothy 6:5). He goes on to tell us "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment" (6), quickly shifting to the correct, the spiritual focus.

This deception is perennial because we can easily slip back into being focused on the fleeting things of this world rather than on the eternal.

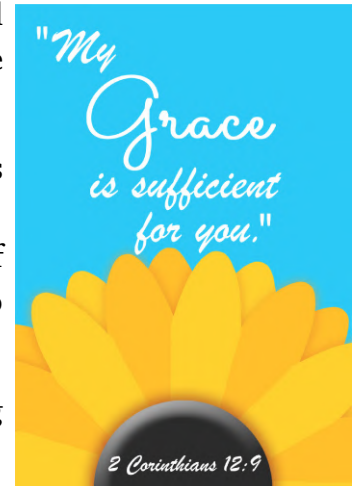
God has given us Paul as a good example. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 opens with Paul recounting being caught up into God's presence where he heard "inexpressible words." Then he tells us he was given a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from exalting himself, to keep him from becoming proud. When he repeatedly asked God to remove it (whatever it was), God told him,

"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (9).

It appears that his problem was with him for the rest of his life.

One thing we learn here is that our prayers, prayers in faith, cannot *claim* the request because all requests are subject to God's will. Jesus taught us to pray "Thy will be done," not "my will be done." As one man wrote, while "the idea of controlling one's future with his thoughts or faith is appealing to sinful man, it is insulting to a sovereign God who has revealed Himself in Scripture." Disappointment and frustration in prayer, with God, and giving up on praying is often related to not actually believing and fully wanting, trusting God's will.

A second thing we learn is that God's will and purpose is for His glory in all of His creation. In Isaiah 43 He tells us, "everyone who is called by My name and whom I have created *for My glory*..." (7). God's will is good for and to us, but it is ultimately for His glory. His ultimate concern is for the eternal, and our ultimate concern also should be for God's purposes and glory. God gifted Paul greatly, used Him greatly, but Paul learned to live depending on God's power rather than his own, to live what he preached, to "do all things for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).



Then, thirdly, God directly, specifically tells us His grace is sufficient for us. Period. Think about it: if God's grace was sufficient

- to forgive you of all your sins,
- to give you everlasting life with Him,
- to transform your mind,
- to gain victory over sin,
- to enable you to do things for Him that count for eternity,

why would it not be sufficient for taking you through the greatest needs and deepest tragedies you face?

Another truth for us here is that God chooses to have His power perfected, to have it reach its full completion, to be fully present in our weakness. As one person writes, Paul's "weakness becomes the vehicle by which God's grace and power is most fully manifested to himself and others." You see, again, God's purpose is to bring glory to Himself. When He gives, releases His power to us in our weaknesses, we and others know it is God's power not ours, it is God, not us. It is when we are captivated by the lie that we are, can be, should be adequate in ourselves rather than in God that we not only become proud, but we fail (see 2 Corinthians 3:5).

One more lesson here is that Paul boasted, delighted in his weaknesses. Does that sound strange? We know from his letters that he did not continually write a "poor me journal" listing his weaknesses. Rather than complaining or looking down on himself because of his weaknesses, he looked at them, framed them in light of God's purposes to experience God releasing His power through Christ, to make him strong to be the man God wanted him to be and to accomplish the work God prepared for him.

Whatever you are facing today, however you feel, know that God's grace is sufficient for you. Rest and rejoice in the fact that "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever" (2 Timothy 4:18).

Pastor Lyle