

**“My Grace Is Sufficient!”**  
**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

**Introduction:**

1. This Morning:
  - Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles:
    - To 2 Corinthians Chapter 12!
  - As You Well Know, We Live In A World Of Great Suffering!
    - All You Have To Do Is:
      - Read The Newspaper!
      - Or Turn On Any News Channel Or Station!
    - Or - To Bring Things Even Closer To Home:
      - Just Go To A Hospital!
      - Or Even Into A Rescue Mission!
    - Suffering Is Everywhere!
  - We Also Know:
    - That Christians Are Not Immune:
      - To Suffering In This World!
    - Christians As Well As Non-Christians:
      - Experience Disease & Disabilities!
    - Believers As Well As Un-Believers:
      - Will Have Problems With Their Jobs Or Their Finances Or In Their Marriages!
    - The World In Which We Live:
      - Is Very Dysfunctional!
        - That Is, It Does Not Function The Way God Originally Intended & Created It To Function!
    - But A **True** Christian Can:
      - Suffer & Struggle & Experience Sorrow:
        - **Differently** – Because Of What We Learn From Bible Verses Like The Ones We Have Before Us This Morning!
2. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Tell Us This:
  - “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. / 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. / Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong!”
  - A True Christian Can:
    - Suffer & Struggle & Experience Sorrow:
      - Differently!
    - Because A True Christian – As A Child Of God:
      - Can Rest In The Promises That We Find Here!
        - The Promise Of God's Grace!
        - And The Promise Of God's Strength!
      - That God's Grace Is Sufficient For You!
        - It Is Enough! More Than Enough!
        - For You To “Meet Your Trials Here!”
  - So - I Would Like For Us To Look More Closely At These Verses:
    - To **Help** You:
      - If You Are Suffering Today! Or:
    - To **Prepare** You:
      - For The Struggles You Will Face Tomorrow!
    - Because The Words That We Just Read:
      - Are Timeless!
        - And Are For You & For Me! So:

\* First, We Need To:

1. **Realize Our Need Of The Lord's Grace!**

- As We Saw In Chapter 11:
  - The Apostle Paul Was No Stranger To Suffering!
    - Even Earlier In This Letter, He Described His Suffering & His Struggles:
      - In This Way - 7:5 - "Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears!"
    - He Felt Like His Struggles:
      - Were Surrounding Him!
        - Have You Ever Felt This Way?
  - But When We Come Back To Chapter 12:
    - Listen To What He Says About These Struggles:
      - In 12:5 - "Yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities!"
    - How Could He Say These Words?
      - How Could He Feel This Way?
        - To "Glory" In - Even To "Boast" About His Own Infirmities & Weaknesses & Struggles?
  - I Believe It All Started When:
    - He Saw How Weak He Really Was!
      - And He Realized His Great Need For God's Grace!
    - Do You Realize Your Need For God's Grace:
      - In Your Own Suffering & Struggles & Even Sorrow?
        - You Will When You Understand How Weak You Really Are!
    - You Will Realize That You Need God's Grace:
      - All The Time!
- When You Are Physically Weak!
  - Paul Had This In Mind When He Wrote:
    - 12:7 - "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!"
  - God Had Blessed Paul:
    - By Revealing Much Truth To Him Directly:
      - Through "Visions & Revelations" - Especially The Vision Of Paradise He Shared With Us Last Week - In 12:1-6!
    - Yet God, In His Great Wisdom:
      - Also Allowed Paul To Have A Physical Problem / A Physical Infirmary & Weakness / In Order To Help Him Remain Humble Through It All!
        - To Keep Him From Being "Exalted Above Measure!"
    - A "Thorn In The Flesh!"
      - Not Sure What It Was! There Have Been Many Suggestions To What This "Thorn" Might Have Been - Some Believe It Had Something To Do With His Eyes!
        - But Whatever It Was - It Was A Persistent & Very Painful Problem!
  - But - Not Only Did God Allow Paul:
    - To Have This Problem:
      - He Also Allowed Satan Himself:
        - To Be The One To Afflict Paul With This Problem!
          - Reminds Us Of What Happened To Job!
    - It Was A "Messenger Of Satan To Buffet Paul!"
      - Now - If This Was "Satan's Messenger" - What Kind Of "Message" Was Satan Trying To Send To Paul?
    - Perhaps It Was:
      - A Message About God:
        - To Convince Paul That God Did Not Care For Him & Could Not Control What He Was Going Through!
    - Perhaps It Was:
      - A Message About Paul Himself:
        - That He Was A Fool:
          - For Serving The Lord!
        - That He Was Too Feeble:
          - To Serve The Lord!

- Or Even That He Was A Failure:
  - In His Service For The Lord!
- Or Perhaps It Was:
  - A Message To The World:
    - As A Witness:
      - Of God's Displeasure!
    - And As A Warning:
      - Of What Its Like To Serve The Lord!
- No Matter What Message Satan Was Trying To Send Paul:
  - Ultimately - God **Was** In Control:
    - And **Permitted** Satan To Afflict Paul:
      - But Only To Fulfill God's Own Sovereign Plan - To Keep The "Poison Of Pride" From Infecting Paul's Heart - To Keep Paul From Thinking "Of Himself More Highly Than He Ought To Think!" (Romans 12:3)
- Now: God May Have A Different Purpose & Plan For You:
  - But He Also Allows / Permits Physical Struggles:
    - Into Your Life As Well!
    - But Why?
      - He Wants You To Realize:
        - Just How Weak You Really Are Without Him!
        - That You Need His Grace!
- But We Don't Just Need His Grace & Strength:
  - When We Are Physically Weak!
    - Aren't There Other Weaknesses That We Face In Our Lives As Well?
      - Yes! There Are Many! Like:
  - When You Are Mentally Weak!
    - When You Are Weak In Your Understanding!
      - James 1:5 Assumes This Weakness When It Says: " If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God!"
    - Do We Lack Wisdom?
      - Do We Lack Understanding?
        - Are There Ever Times Of Confusion & Even Mental Conflict?
    - That Is When You Need God's Grace! Or:
  - When You Are Emotionally Weak!
    - When Your Struggles & Your Sorrows:
      - Seem To Surround You Like The Waters Of The Ocean!
      - And There Is No Peace For Your Heart & No Rest For Your Soul!
    - This Is When You Need God's Grace! Or:
  - When You Are Spiritually Weak!
    - When The Temptations You Face Feel So Strong:
      - And You Succumb To Them! You Give In To Them! And You Sin!
      - And Shame & Guilt Once Again Floods Your Soul!
    - This Is When You Need God's Grace!
- There Are All Kinds Of Infirmities & Weaknesses In Our Lives!
  - Physical & Mental! Emotional & Spiritual! And Others!
    - But What Do We Do With Our Struggles?
  - We Need To Realize Our Need For God's Grace:
    - In All Of Our Struggles!
      - And This Is Why Paul Brought His Infirmity / Weakness To The Lord:
  - In 12:8 - "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me!"
    - He Prayed! He Prayed:
      - Because He Knew The Truth:
        - About The Lord!
        - That He Did Care!
        - That He Was In Control!
    - And So - He Plead His Case Before The Lord:
      - Three Times:
        - That This "Thorn In The Flesh" - "Might Depart From Me!"

- Paul Knew That The Lord Would **Hear** Him & That The Lord Could **Heal** Him!

- And This Is What You Need To Do As Well:
  - When Your “Heart Is Overwhelmed!”
  - Because Jesus Christ:
    - **Does** Care For & **Is** In Control Of Your Struggles As Well!
  - Listen To The Words Of:
- Hebrews 4:14-16 - “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. / For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. / Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!”
  - We Need To Realize Our Need For God’s Grace!
    - But Then We Need To Take That Need To God’s Throne!
  - Because Jesus Himself:
    - Understands Our Weaknesses & Struggles!
    - He Faced Them All Himself!
  - Remember When Jesus:
    - Was Faced With His Impending Arrest:
      - In The Garden Of Gethsemane?
    - Three Times Also - He Prayed To His Father In Heaven:
      - “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt!” (Matthew 26:39)
  - So What Did The Lord Do For Paul?
    - Did He Hear His Prayer?
    - Did He Answer His Request?
  - The Lord **Did** Hear & The Lord **Does** Answer Paul’s Prayer!
    - And We Find These Timeless Words From Jesus Himself In 12:9a - “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness!”

\* And This Leads To A Second Thing We Must Do When We Face Struggles:

2. **Remember The Truth About The Lord’s Grace!**

- The Answer That The Lord Gives To Paul In 12:9:
  - Is So Important For Us Today!
    - The Lord Was Not Just Providing This Answer To Meet Paul’s Needs Back Then, But To Meet Your Need Today As Well!
  - So Often We Think That:
    - The Suffering & Struggles We Face Today:
      - Are Different Than Before!
      - And Can Be Handled Differently!
    - But They Can’t!
      - “There Is No New Thing Under The Sun!” (Ecclesiastes 1:9)
  - We Often Think That:
    - Our Modern Trials Are More Difficult:
      - Than Those In The Past!
      - But They Aren’t!
  - We Often Think That:
    - Our Modern Solutions Will Really Help Us Better:
      - Than Those In The Past!
      - But They Really Can’t!
  - And Although Science & Technology:
    - Have Advanced Us In Some Ways!
      - We Must Never Forget To Whom We Must Turn - First & Foremost With Our Struggles In Life!
        - The Lord!
  - And The Lord Gives Us This Truth:
    - To Help Us Through All Of Our Struggles:
      - “My Grace Is Sufficient For Thee: For My Strength Is Made Perfect In Weakness!”
  - This Is A Comprehensive Truth!

- That Is - It Covers Everything!
  - Every Infirmary! Every Weakness!
    - Every Struggle! Every Trial & Temptation!
- Jesus Says To You:
  - “My Grace Is Sufficient For Thee!”
    - This Means That His Grace:
      - Really Is Enough For You! It:
      - Really Is All You Need!
    - And Not Just When You Face A Physical Struggle:
      - But *Any* Struggle You May Have!
        - So - Where Do You Turn First In Times Of Need?
  - Remember The Truth About God’s Grace!
    - That It Is Enough!
    - And That It Is Comprehensive!
- This Is A Continuous Truth!
  - That Is - It Never Stops Being True!
    - Jesus Says - “My Grace **IS** Sufficient For You!”
      - In An Ongoing & Continuous Way!
  - There Is Never A Time:
    - There Is Never A Situation:
      - When This Will Not Be True!
    - So - Who Do You Turn To First In Times Of Need?
  - Remember The Truth About God’s Grace!
    - That It Is Enough!
    - And That It Is Continuous!
- This Is A Contenting Truth!
  - That Is - It Will Genuinely Help & Bring Real Contentment:
    - When You Are Suffering / Struggling / Sorrowing!
      - Because Jesus Says:
  - “For My Strength Is Made Perfect In Weakness!”
    - Sometimes - The Grace Of God:
      - Is Not Entirely In The Grasp Of Our Understanding:
        - When We Are Going Through A Time Of Struggle Or Difficulty!
      - We Wonder:
        - Why Did God Allow This!
        - What Is God Doing Through This!
        - The Truth About God’s Grace & Goodness Grace Does Not Change / But Sometimes It Is Still Hard For Us To Understand!
    - But His Strength & His Power:
      - *Is* Within The Grasp Of Our Understanding!
  - We Hear About God’s Strength & Power!
    - In The Bible! Over & Over Again!
  - We See God’s Strength & Power!
    - In The Lord Jesus Christ!
      - Power To Heal! Physical Needs!
      - Power To Teach! Mental Needs!
      - Power To Comfort! Emotional Needs!
      - Power To Save! Spiritual Needs!
  - We Have Even Experienced God’s Strength & Power In Our Own Lives!
    - First - To Save!
    - Then - To Sanctify!
    - And - To Sustain & To Supply Our Needs!
  - Remember This Truth About God’s Grace!
- Because - When You Do:
  - The Lord Says:
    - “My Strength / Power Is Made Perfect In Weakness!”
  - What This Means Is That:
    - The Strength & Power Of The Lord:

- Can Shine More Brightly In Your Life When You Are Weak!
- That Is - The Lord's Strength:
  - Will Be More Fully Demonstrated:
    - To You - And:
  - Will Be More Fully Displayed:
    - To the World:
      - In Your Weakness!
- Do You Want To See The Strength / Power Of God Highlighted In Your Life?
  - Then Whenever You Are Struggling:
    - Rest In & Trust In These Truths About:
      - God's Sovereign Grace & His Sustaining Strength!
  - Because It Is In Those Times Of Your Life:
    - That His Grace & Strength:
      - Will Shine More Brightly!
  - In 2 Chronicles 16:9 - We Are Told:
    - "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him!"
- And When We Understand This Truth:
  - I Believe That We Will:

### 3. ***Respond To The Promise Of The Lord's Grace!***

- The Rest Of 12:9 & 12:10 Records:
  - Paul's Own Response To The Truth He Learned:
    - About God's Grace & Strength!
  - He Says - "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong!"
    - How Did Paul Respond?
- With A New Desire!
  - In 12:8:
    - Paul Wanted His "Thorn In The Flesh" To "Depart" From Him!
      - That Was His Desire!
      - And It Is So Often Our Desire!
  - But In 12:10:
    - Paul Wants The "Power Of Christ" To "Rest" Upon Him!
      - To "Rest" Upon Him:
        - Like The Covering Of A Tent Or The Roof Over Your Head!
  - Paul's New Desire:
    - Was To See More Of:
      - God's Power In His Life!
    - Than To See More Of:
      - His Struggles In Life Go Away!
  - Instead Of Seeing His Weakness & Limitations:
    - As ***Detrimental*** - To His Life & Ministry:
      - They Became ***Instrumental***:
        - For The Display Of God's Power & Glory!
    - What Changed?
      - The Revelation Of Christ's Grace & Strength!
      - Paul Also Responded:
- With A New Delight!
  - In 12:9 Paul Says:
    - "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities!"
  - And In 12:10 Paul Says:
    - "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake!" "Well-Pleased!"
  - Now - At First Glance - We Might Think:
    - Paul - You Are Insane!
      - How Can You "Glory In" & Even "Take Pleasure In" Your Suffering & Struggles!

- But If You Look A Bit Closer:
  - You Will Realize That Paul Is Not Getting Pleasure & Delight:
    - **From** These Struggles!
    - But **In** These Struggles!
  - When He Is Facing Any Of These Trials:
    - He Lists 5 More Categories:
      - Of Them Here:
        - In Infirmities!
        - In Reproaches!
        - In Necessities!
        - In Persecutions!
        - In Distresses!
    - You Can Go Back To Chapter 11 For More Detail!
      - But - Paul's Focus Is Not On The Struggle:
        - But On His Savior!
- Paul's New Delight:
  - Was In The Truth That The Lord's:
    - Grace & Strength Were Available To Him & Rested Upon Him Through Whatever Trial He Faced!
  - This Is Why He Could Write:
    - In Romans 8:28 - "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose!"
  - Everything God Permitted To Happen To Paul:
    - Was - Ultimately - For Paul's Own Good:
      - And For God's Own Glory!
  - The Apostle Peter Understood This As Well:
    - 1 Peter 4:13-15 - "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: / But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. / If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified!"
      - Another Response Of Paul:
- With A New Determination!
  - 12:10 - "For when I am weak, then am I strong!"
  - Paul Understood That:
    - His Strength Was Nothing!
      - But Christ's Grace & Strength Were Everything!
  - And This Will Help You To See That:
    - It Is Better To Let The Strength Of Christ Be Displayed In Your Weakness:
      - Then To Attempt Anything For Christ In Your Own Strength!
  - After All:
    - Whose Power / Strength Is Greater?
    - And Whose Work Will Last?
  - As Charles Hodge Once Wrote:
    - "When Emptied Of Ourselves, We Are Filled With God!"

### **Conclusion:**

1. What A Change Took Place In Paul's Heart & Mind!
  - When He Was Given This Truth By The Lord:
    - "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness!"
  - A New Desire!
    - A New Delight!
    - And A New Determination!
2. And What A Change Can Take Place In Your Life:
  - When You Remember This Truth About The Lord:
    - Whenever You Are Struggling:
      - Or Suffering Or Sorrowing!
      - About Anything!

- Look To & Trust In The Lord!
  - And Especially These Truths:
    - About His Grace & His Strength!
    - Because It Is Only Through Him:
      - That The “Weak” Can Say “I Am Strong!”
- 3. And Whenever You Are Struggling:
  - Realize Your Need!
  - Remember The Truth!
  - And Respond To The Promise:
    - Of The Lord’s Grace:
      - And His Strength!
- 4. “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. / Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: / Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; / Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; / Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s!” (Psalm 103:1-5)

\* “Day By Day!”

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