

Do We Need Grace Today?

by Neil Rhodes

The sermon emphasizes the need for and understanding of God's grace in our lives, and how we can grow in and minister this grace to others.

Duration: 53:39

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 8:1, 2 Peter 3:17, Revelation 1:4, Revelation 22:21

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Christian Faith"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor David emphasizes the importance of grace in the book of Revelation. He highlights that the book begins and ends with grace, emphasizing its significance in the Christian faith. He also discusses how grace can be found in difficult situations and encourages believers to turn to Jesus in times of trouble. The sermon references various Bible verses, including 2 Timothy 4:22 and 1 Peter 4:10, to illustrate the power of grace in the lives of believers.

Transcript

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Father, we thank you that your presence, where two or three are gathered, there you are. Lord Jesus, you're here to bless. Your presence is here to touch every heart.

Now, Lord, I thank you that there is no work of the enemy, there's no power of darkness that can rule or dominate over any person here tonight. Lord, whatever the devil tried to bring in tonight with any person because of a lousy week, he's been stopped at the door by the presence of God. Hallelujah.

And, Lord Jesus, tonight we thank you that we are a people who are now open to hear your word. Now, touch us, change us, minister to us. Hide me behind the cross, let your word find its mark, I pray.

Lord, you put this into my spirit, and I thank you tonight that you will deliver according to the power of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus' name, amen. Turn with me to the book of John, chapter 8. This portion of scripture I'm going to read to you tonight is just going to be a backdrop.

We may get back to it tonight. I'm not sure, but this woman needed grace. And we're going to read this together, and we're going to talk about the grace of God tonight.

It's been in my heart all week, and I know that grace is what God gives to those who are in trial and in trouble. If you're in a trial, in trouble, in fact, some of you don't even know why you're here tonight. Well, you knew that I've got to go to church, and you're here, but you know that you need a touch of Almighty God.

When your eyes are full to the top with pain, there is grace available for you. We're going to talk about God's grace tonight and give you an understanding of it. John, chapter 8, verse 1. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him.

So this is early in the morning. He's gone into the temple in Jerusalem, spent the night outside Jerusalem. He's back in early in the morning, and He sat down and He taught them.

And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. Now, you've got to understand that they have brought this woman, they found her.

In fact, when the Scripture says in verse 3, the woman taken in adultery, it means to have seized her unawares. So she knew nothing about this. You've got to understand that there has been a plot in the heart of these men to try and trap Jesus in the very law of God.

And so He brings her into the very midst, and they said to Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. So they must have been there waiting to take her in the act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us.

Now they are right. They are right. They are right in this.

This woman is rightly judged by the law. You've got to know and understand this. Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned.

That's found in Leviticus, that anybody caught in adultery. The only thing that they omit here is that when you take a look in the book of Leviticus, it says both the woman and the man should have been stoned. But we don't see this here.

What sayest thou? They said this, tempting Him that they might have to accuse Him, but Jesus stooped down, and with His finger He wrote in the ground as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, so He's just busy riding in the sand, and so they keep asking Him, well, what do you say? What do you mean by this? What do you think the Word of God says? What do you think should be done to this woman? So they continued asking Him. Then He lifted up Himself and He said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let Him cast the first stone.

Now, beloved, you've got to think this thing through. These people are not convicted by innuendos. These are hard-hearted Pharisees.

They are not convicted by innuendos. Did I take ten feet longer of a walk on the Sabbath day than I should have? Those kind of things don't convict them. So when Jesus says to them, He that is without sin among

you, let Him first cast a stone at her, and again He stooped down and He wrote in the ground, and they which heard it being convicted by their own conscience.

Now, again, you've got to understand these people are not convicted by some innuendo of missing the mark on walking ten extra paces on the Sabbath day or not washing the hands before a meal. They're not convicted by this kind of stuff. These are hard-hearted people.

They are governed by what they want to trap Jesus in, and I think what Jesus is saying here, now this is just purely speculation of my side, but I think what He is saying here, any one of you who have not slept with this woman or one like her, let her cast the first stone. You see, because they knew the law. The law said both need to die.

And so I think that Jesus speaks something to them, and again it's just my own speculation on it, but they are convicted in their conscience, and they went out one by one beginning at the eldest even unto the last, and Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. Now, how many of you think that this woman needs grace? When Jesus had lifted up Himself and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee.

Go and sin no more. You talk about grace. This is one of the most marvelous, I think in the New Testament, that this is one of the most marvelous testimonies of the grace of God, because she's rightly judged, she's rightly sentenced by the law.

But we see Jesus Christ so full of grace, comes to her and speaks into her life and says, Go and sin no more. Now, in the Old Testament, this word grace is used on numerous occasions, and the Old Testament gives you the greatest understanding of what this word actually means, the Hebrew shen, and it means condescending favor of a superior to an inferior. In other words, what He's saying throughout the Old Testament is that when you find somebody who has the goods, everything that you need and have, or may have a need of in life, someone comes along and, without cost, bestows upon you what you have need of.

So the word grace in the Old Testament, in referring to God, is saying to us that I've got everything that you have need of in life. I'm the superior and you are the one that's inferior. I see you're stumbling.

I see you're falling. I see how that you can't make it in your own strength. And so the grace of God throughout the Old Testament reveals itself in this manner, that God has everything that you have need of.

And He bestows it upon us. And He bestows upon us freely. And it means to bend.

It also means to bend. It means to stoop. It's the one who knows how to lift up somebody who's stumbled and fallen.

It's the father who sees the child stumble and fall and immediately bends down to pick up because you've got the strength, you have the ability with which to lift up this person who has stumbled and fallen. Now when you get into the New Testament, it's just a little bit more difficult to try to come and understand this word grace. It's charis.

It's favor. It's goodwill. It's the pleasure of God.

It's God's good pleasure. He wants to bless us. It's the pleasure of God.

It's His goodwill to us. What is it that causes God to stoop down and to reach us in love? It's grace. Grace is that which God is.

It's His character. Grace speaks to us of His immeasurable character of love and mercy and wisdom and knowledge and strength. Anytime that we have a need in our lives, you're going to see this in the Scriptures today, God, who is so rich in mercy, knows exactly what you have need of every moment of every day.

And it's His grace. He says, This is my character. This is who I am.

It is my good pleasure to reach out to you in your struggle and your trial and give you what you have need of. He says, That's grace. You don't deserve it.

This woman doesn't deserve it. None of us deserve it, but it's God's goodwill. It's His character.

It's His mercy. It's His love. He just wants to do it because He's God and He's good.

No other explanation. Why would God save you? Because you were good at one time? No, our hearts are desperately wicked. God saves us and touches us because He is inherently good and nothing about Him is bad.

And so He likes to just give us that goodness from His own personality and character. Now, listen. We're going to take a look at the three main apostles in the New Testament to give us an understanding of what this word grace means.

We're going to take a look at Peter. We're going to take a look at John. And then we're going to take a look at Paul and see how they term this word grace to us tonight.

Turn with me to Peter. Now, as we take a look at these apostles, you're going to find that we're going to take a look at the last words that these men write. At the end of their lives, end of their ministry, these are the last recorded words of these apostles.

And we're going to take a look and see what they actually speak to us. In 2 Peter 3, the whole of Peter is a phenomenal book. In fact, the two books speak to us volumes of what is going on.

Let me just bring you up to speed. In 1 Peter, he's writing to those believers that were scattered. Jesus Christ to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia.

Bithynia, verse 5, who were kept by the power of God through faith. Verse 6, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, are in heaviness through manifold temptation. So, Peter is writing to the church and they're going through trials.

They're going through tough times. There's maybe no understanding of, I thought Christianity was to get me out of problems, not lead me into trials and difficulties. But here is this church going through some trying times.

And when you get to 2 Peter 3, we see that it continues. Look at verse 7. This is what the apostle is speaking, 2 Peter 3, verse 7. But the heavens and the earth which are now by the same word are kept in

store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. He says in the last days there are going to be ungodly men, men who are not going to care about grace and love and peace, but they are going to be ungodly men and they are going to bring about havoc in this world.

So, Peter is speaking about the difficulties that are reserved for the last days. Look at verse 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also and the works therein shall be burned up, seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved. What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation? Godliness. So, the apostle is just laying this foundation.

He says, folks, it's not going to get better in this world. It's going to get worse. And so, he's educating the church.

He's speaking to these believers. He doesn't want any one of them to know that life is just going to be, you know, dancing around the tulips for the rest of their lives. Peter already knows that he's coming to the end of his life.

In chapter 1 of 2 Peter, he says in verse 14, knowing that shortly I must put off this, my tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus Christ has showed me. So, Peter is at the end of his ministry. He knows that it's coming time where he is going to be taken and crucified as the Lord had spoken to him.

And so, he's laying this foundation for the church. And then in verse 17 of chapter 3, 2 Peter 3, verse 17, Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. So, these are the last words of the apostle Peter as recorded in the word.

And then he gets down to this last verse. Now, look what he says in the last verse. You'd think to yourself, what would be the very last things that this man wants to communicate? These are the last recorded words that we have of this great apostle to the church.

Going through trying times, struggles, things aren't going to get better, things are going to get worse. What do you think he wants to communicate? What is it that's on his heart that he says, you need to know? He says in verse 18, he says, but grow in grace. The last words of this apostle, grow in grace.

And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to him be glory both now and forever. You see, beloved, this isn't just a casual cliché, a Christian cliché, grace, peace, like we often do when we say to one another, we'll see you later. You know, I catch myself all the time with these little clichés.

God bless you, I'll pray for you. See, I've been convicted of lying on that kind of stuff. I'm not going to pray, unless I stop there and then and say, God just blessed him now in Jesus' name.

But we end up as Christians with these clichés of saying things we don't really mean, or we're not even going to follow through on. But it becomes part of our terminology, how we speak. But this is not what the apostle is saying here.

He's not closing this letter off with some kind of a cliché. He says that we need to grow in grace. Now, this word grow here, it's a rare word, and it means to grow to the limit.

It's almost like super grow. It's like miracle growth. You get this plant, and it's not just letting this thing grow on its normal way of coming to fruition, but it's sowing into this thing, miracle grow.

I've got some of that stuff, and I put that in the plants. And my wife thinks I've got a green thumb, but it's really miracle grow. You see, this is what the apostle Peter is saying.

He says, in the last days, when we understand all of these things are coming, one thing that you need to do, if you're going to go through the days that lie ahead, if you're going to make it to the other side and remain steadfast all the way through to the end, he says, then you have got to come to the place of acknowledging, I have got a growing grace. It's got to be the first and foremost thing in your heart and mind. That means to grow to the limit, attain to the power that God has for you, to achieve to the highest place that he has, to grow, to promote, to raise one's position, or to rise in power, to increase.

So the apostle Peter is saying that God's purposes and plans for you, you need to reach them. You need to say, God, I want everything that you have. This is what he's virtually saying to this young church.

He says, you're going to go through trying times and when these times come, make sure that you are reaching into everything that God has planned for you. Set your heart on it. Don't set your mind on anything else.

Grow in grace. Get up and read, pray, seek the face of God, walk down the street, talk to Jesus. Say, God, what do you have for my life? Let everything that he has for me come to pass.

Grow in the things that God has for you. Take a hold of the things that God has. Shake everything else loose and just grow, grow, grow, grow in the things of God.

If you take a hold of the things that God has for you and grow in them, he says, you'll be able to go through and meet every day as it comes towards you. Difficult times or not, grow in the grace of Almighty God. Now, turn with me to, I think, some of the central words of this word grace that the Apostle Peter talks about in 1 Peter 1. So Peter's last words to the church, you grow.

Take everything that God has and just give your whole heart to it. Give your mind to it. Give your heart to it.

Give your life to it. Just grow. Keep growing.

Don't stop. Say, God, I want everything that you have for my life. God, help me to shake these things loose and let me just grow in everything that you have.

And he says, you just grow in grace. Now, look here what he says in 1 Peter 1, verse 6. He says, Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Now, the word manifold means multiplicity.

It just means various. It means multifaceted. It means multicolored.

It means that the enemy doesn't have one way of attacking. Simply in our normal language, what Peter is saying here, he says, I want you to understand that the manifold temptations of the devil. In other words, the devil just has one way of attacking.

He's got multiple ways. He comes in. When you think you've got him beat on one side, he's coming in on another side.

When you think you've got that thing beaten, prayed down, he's coming in through the roof. He's coming in over here. So, Peter says, you come under heaviness because there are manifold, all kinds, various shades of attack from the enemy.

He comes in one way and then another way, then another way. If he's not trying to get at your family, he's getting at the job. The boss doesn't like you and suddenly something else happens.

And you turn around and something else is going on. And you just see one attack after another attack. And you say, well, God, where are you? How can we get through if this is true about the devil coming in from every angle, every attack, multifaceted, multicolored, this way, that way, another way.

From every angle he's attacking us. God, where are you? How do you come through? Well, turn with me. I want to show you a powerful verse of Scripture here in 1 Peter chapter 4. This verse 10, I believe, is the central word of grace that the apostle Peter has laid hold of.

In verse 10 he says here, As every man hath received the gift. Now, the word gift there is grace. It's the same root.

So, you can say it this way. As every man hath received the grace from God, unmerited favor, love, strength, power. Even so, minister the same one to another.

So, he says, have you been blessed? Have you been touched by God? Do you know what it is to walk in His wisdom and His knowledge when you've been up against a wall and God gave you just a thought and you walked out that thought and it was God. And so he says, if you've been ministered to, then turn around and begin ministering it to somebody else. Take someone else by the hand and say, you know what, I see the struggle you're going through, but I want to tell you what God did for me.

And you begin sharing what God did. You see, we start picking up one another. So, instead of gossip going in the church, we have men and women turning around.

How can I help you? I want to tell you something. Last week God just brought me through. I was praying and He brought me through.

Can I help you? Can I stand with you? Can I pray with you? See, this is what Peter is saying. He says, if you've received grace from God, he says, then turn around and minister to somebody else. Just love on them.

But that's not where I'm going. He says, as stewards, now here comes the word, of the manifold grace of God. You see, right in the beginning of the book, He tells us, the devil is going to come at you from every single angle.

But when the devil comes in like a flood, God raises up a standard. He says, he might come from this way, this way, behind you, from the top, underneath. He might come from every direction.

But whatever direction he comes, there is a manifold or a multiplicity or a multifaceted, multicolored grace to meet every attack of the devil. You will never be caught by surprise. That's what Peter is saying.

He says, church, you will never, you will never have to be caught by surprise by the devil. Because every single attack that comes against you, God has a grace. God has a strength.

God has a power. God has a wisdom. So when the devil is getting you down and you just don't know where you're going with your mind, God comes through with the word of knowledge and He just, boom, and God speaks to your heart.

How many times have you been in the house of God and one of the pastors gets up and says, you know, God has just been speaking to me that there's somebody here who's just about to commit suicide. If that's you, God wants you to know that He loves you. See, that's a multifaceted part of grace.

That was God knowing the heart of every single person and in His grace reaching out and touching somebody and just loving them with all His heart. So Peter is saying, yes, it is true that the enemy will come in from multiplicity of directions at you. But in every single direction that the enemy comes in, there is a grace from Almighty God.

So the person who believes in the Lord, walking with Jesus in honesty, not perfection, but honesty, saying, God, You've got to help me. Every single attack, I'm telling you, at every point, every attack of the devil, there will be a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom. There will be a power rising up on the inside.

Some days you'll be just worshipping the Lord and the devil flees. Other days you have to go in your home and say, devil, I command you get out. And authority rises up on the inside by the power of the Holy Ghost.

That's grace. That's grace. That's the grace of Almighty God giving you the power and the grace and the strength to come through.

You can tell I'm just a little excited about this message. All right. John.

Let's take a look at John. Go with me to the last chapter in the book of Revelation. Revelation chapter 22 verse 21.

Again, John has had this revelation of the end times. And what does he say? He says to the church, verse 21, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Now, remember, Peter, he knows that his time is under trial.

He's on his way at this point in time shortly to give up his life to be crucified. The apostle John, when he gets this revelation, is on the Isle of Patmos. He is there.

He's exiled. He's in destitution. He's lonely.

But yet, as we heard Pastor David one time preach, he belongs to the church of one. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. See, church can be with you where you are at.

It doesn't matter where you are, where you find yourself. God knows where you are, and he shows up to touch your life. And so he says at the end of the book of Revelation, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Now, go to chapter 1 of Revelation. Chapter 1 of Revelation. He begins in verse 4. Revelation chapter 1 verse 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia.

Grace. So before we enter in of what you're going to see, what's going to take place in this world, understand that it's going to begin with grace. And at the very end, it ends with grace.

In other words, whatever you face in life, God's goodness, God's strength, his wisdom, his nature, his character, his love, his mercy. Remember, it's multifaceted grace. Whatever you have need of at that given time, God shows up with exactly what you have need of.

So what someone else has been ministered to over here by the grace of God is not necessarily touching your heart because you have a need of grace on something else on this side of your life. But God knows that. And so he says that it's by grace to grace.

Look down here in verse 9. He says he's also the companion of tribulation in the kingdom and the patience of Jesus Christ. So he's going through tough times and what comes out of his mouth is grace. Now go with me to John chapter 1. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on John.

John is the apostle closest to the heart of Jesus. He uses this word the least amount of times. But yet he is the most profound in his usage of this word grace.

It's almost like, well, I've got a handle of it. I'm going to say it once and that's all you need to know. Peter explains it.

The apostle Paul uses it over and over again and he's got such a handle on it. John, he just kind of sees it for what it is, says it, and he moves on. Look in John chapter 1 verse 14.

Well, verse 1 says, In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Verse 2, the same was in the beginning with God. Verse 14, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

And we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten Son, begotten of the Father. What? Full of grace and truth. Look at verse 16.

So Jesus is full of grace. He is the grace of God. He is the wisdom of God.

He is the knowledge of God. He is the love of God. The mercy of God.

He's the power of God. Everything that you want to see God, you see in the face of Jesus. He's full of grace.

It exudes from Him. He sees this woman who's rightly condemned and then He stoops and He lifts her up by grace. You're rightly condemned.

You and I are rightly condemned to hell. But it's grace that saves us. Grace comes to us and says, I'll save you.

And so, look here, he says verse 16, And of His fullness, and of His fullness. So the full grace of God is embodied in Jesus Christ. Fully God, fully man.

Verse 16, and of His fullness. So this is an amazing thing. And of His fullness have we all received.

So that means whatever was in Jesus was of God. And whatever is in Jesus is in me. And that He is fighting every battle on my behalf.

Whenever I have a need, it's Jesus that is speaking into my heart and life. So John says, and of His fullness have we all received. And grace for grace.

Zacharias says, when the temple is built, he's going to say, grace, grace. John picks up the same thing and says, absolutely. It's never going to be anything else but God's goodness, God's power, God's love, God's wisdom, God's knowledge towards mankind who doesn't deserve it but gets it.

And so he says, grace, grace. For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. So John, he just says, you know what grace is? Grace is Jesus.

If you want help, call on Jesus. That's what John is saying. That's why in the beginning of Revelation, which is the revelation of Jesus, he says it's grace and at the end it's grace.

John knows it. He says, you want help? Say Jesus. You need to be delivered? Say Jesus.

You want God to guide you through a set of storms? Cry out to Jesus. So he just brings grace right down to the person of Jesus Christ. Now, I want you to go on now and take a look at the Apostle Paul.

Turn with me to the last words of the Apostle Paul, and that is in 2 Timothy, chapter 4. 2 Timothy, chapter 4, verse 22. And again, he's writing to Timothy and this young man, full of fear, and yet in all of this instruction that Paul gives to him, look what he ends up with. Now remember, Paul is in the Roman Memantine prison, which is a dungeon.

Paul is waiting the sentence to be executed. He's in this time of waiting. He's in the worst prison that Rome has, and we know the end result was that the sentence of death did come, and shortly afterwards, Paul is executed.

And so we understand this. So here we have this Apostle, like Peter, in the last of his days, in trials and difficulties, the end word that he says is grace. The Apostle John, when he comes to the end on the Isle of Patmos, in trying and difficult times, the end word that he uses in the book of Revelation, grace.

And here we have Paul at the end of his life in this dungeon, and you would imagine it would be easy to preach grace if we were all just living in luxury and we had all kinds of money and no problems. But these are the men who say, no, it's in the trying times of life. It's in the most difficult, arduous situations that God shows up.

And with him comes an amazing grace to comfort and to strengthen every heart that calls upon his name. And so here he says, the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.

When he speaks to Timothy in chapter 2, verses 1, he says, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. That's 2 Timothy 2, verse 1. When you look up that word strong, it is, again, it's a very unique word. And Paul is saying here, he says, Timothy, I want you to understand that the power that God, God raised me up as an apostle.

He said, in this lifetime I want you to be one of my apostles. That's the task that he gave to me. And then this word strong here in the original language, what it says and means to us, that Paul is saying that God gave me this calling and then he gave the adequate power, wisdom and knowledge to fulfill that which he's called to me to do.

He said, everything that I've ever had need of, God has given to me. But he's using it in the context of Timothy, who's not an apostle. He's a fearful young man, but he's saying to Timothy, he says, the same power, the same strength, the same wisdom, the same knowledge, the same grace, everything that you have, Timothy, of need of, of God, will be given to you so that you can fulfill everything God's called you to do.

He says, God is going to give it to you, the same as he put me in that slot that gave me the power to live it, so God is giving you the same exact power. So he's saying to the whole body of Christ that God has a grace and a strength and a wisdom from the youngest to the oldest, no matter what your calling is. Moms, single moms, if your whole calling is to raise this kid up to be a giant in the kingdom of faith, then God's going to give you grace to do it.

Oh, he'll give you wisdom, he'll show you how to cut that kid off at the path before they get to ruin his times. God will give you wisdom, knowledge. See, these are the things that come down to where our meat and potatoes are.

He'll give you wisdom on the job, you've got a lousy boss who picks on you, you hate him. Listen, I remember those days when I was working, there was this man, his name was Mr. Gun, and I tell you, appropriate name because he always gunned for me. But he hated me, he hated me.

This man, there was no concealing his seething hate towards me. And I remember, just a brand new babe in Christ, and I did aggravate the situation as I've told you before with big signs, you know, eternal burn on t-shirts. And so I did aggravate the situation on the job slightly.

And I witnessed to everybody that moved, anything that breathed got Jesus. And this man, he hated me. But I want to tell you, I remember so clearly that God would just have me stand and he would be breathing in my face things that I cannot repeat from this pulpit.

And he was just, he hated me. But in my spirit, there was just a rising up. Jesus, you love this man.

Jesus, you love him. God, give me wisdom how to reach him. God, show me how to love this man.

God, and there was this rising up of God's wisdom. I remember being in so much debt because I'd come to Christ after an automobile accident on my motorcycle and I owed thousands of dollars because I was in the wrong. I was on drugs and got nailed by this car because we were dumb.

Plain dumb. And I owed thousands of dollars for this automobile. Didn't have any insurance.

And here's this newborn babe in Christ. I know nothing about the Bible. And I've got all this debt and these creditors calling and saying, you owe us all this kind of money.

I've just got a job for the first time in months. How do I get this money? But I remember just praying, God, you have to come through. You have to come through.

I don't know how to do this. Just simple prayers. You see, the grace of God is not compounded by great statements that people don't understand.

I'm sure God doesn't understand. But prayer from the heart is simple. And I remember standing and saying, God, you have to come through with this money.

Please, God, help me. I get a call from my father and a man says, you want this other man restores motorcycles. And I had this antique BMW that got messed up.

And he saw this motorcycle. And he says, he wants to pay top dollar for this motorcycle. And really, it's a bunch of junk.

And the guy says, he wants to pay me so much money for this motorcycle. I said to my father, sell it. Sell it.

Just get the money today. Sell it. It was to the exact penny what I owed the creditors.

You see, beloved, it's just a simple illustration. But all I want to say to you is that the grace of God comes to anybody, anytime. And it's multifaceted.

What you have need of, God knows. And he says, I will help you and I'll walk with you. I'll give you the wisdom, the knowledge, the strength, the grace, the mercy.

Whatever you have need of, I know it. Just call upon me and I will answer you. Now, I want to share with you one of the most momentous prayers that the apostle prayed.

Don't turn there for time's sake. Listen to this. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 9 and 10.

Just look at me. I'll read it to you. This is one of the most momentous prayers that the apostle prayed.

And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee. You see, the apostle Paul had this thought in the flesh, and we won't even get into trying to figure out what this thought in the flesh was. It doesn't matter.

The fact is, it was bothering the apostle. So much so, he prayed once, oh God, take this thorn out of my flesh. And he prayed a second, oh God, take this thorn out of my flesh.

And by the time he prays the third prayer, the Lord answers him. Now, I want to show you something here tonight. God speaks to this man and he says, now listen, my grace, my grace.

Everything that I have, everything that I am, everything that you'll ever have need of is sufficient. It's sufficient. You don't have need of anything else in this life.

My grace, multifaceted, I'll be there with you. And when you need a touch, you need protection, you need wisdom, you need knowledge, it's there. It's sufficient.

And so the apostle Paul, you see, I believe that this portion of scripture is set in a context of choice. I think this is what Jesus is saying, it's in the context of choice. God isn't imposing his will upon Paul.

God isn't just saying, I'm going to impose this grace upon you and you're going to get it if you like it or not. No, this is in the context of a choice. You prayed, I want to answer this prayer for you.

I want to speak into your life. You get a choice, Paul. Do you want the thorn out of your flesh? Do you want life to be easier? Do you want to have just a nice time? Do you want to go your way? Do you want those kind of, is that the kind of lifestyle that you want, Paul? Do you really want me to take the thorn out of your flesh and let you go your own way so your life is so pretty and nice and with little bows and ribbons and you can have this great life? Or do you want to know what it is in God that I can impart to you in every trial and circumstance? It's your choice.

What do you want? Do you want to know me who can come into every situation where you are and quicken you by the power of the Holy Ghost and give you life? It's your choice. So the Apostle Paul, when he sees this, he says, Oh, he changes his mind. He suddenly realizes.

He understands grace. It's wisdom, knowledge, power. He understands all of that.

He says, for my strength. And Jesus goes on to say, for my strength. The dunamis, the power of God is made perfect in weakness.

So when you get to the place where you can go on, I kick in. I'm there. Now power comes in.

Wisdom, strength. Is that what you want? Or do you want the other? Do you want to have a nice little house? Do you want to have little bows, ribbons? Do you want this, Paul? Nothing wrong with that. Or do you want to know what it is when God meets you at every turn? At every part of the road? No wonder Peter says, go in this, go in this, go in this.

Set your heart, set your mind. Say, God, I want to go in this grace because it means everything that God has. God is going to take me to the highest plane where I could never reach in my own strength.

God is going to take you there. If you're willing, it's a choice. And Paul, he reads, he listens to God.

He says, so then Paul replies in his heart. He says, most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities. Oh, God, I suddenly, it's almost like a revelation.

God, I'm praying for this to leave and God is saying, if that's what you want, then do it. But I've got something else for you. He suddenly sees this and then he begins to say, oh, man, I glory in those.

Yeah, let me be weak every day. Hallelujah. That the power, the dunamis of Christ might rest upon me.

Yes, that's what I want. I want every day the power of God resting on my life. Yes, that's what I want.

That's what he's saying. That's what I want. That's my choice.

I don't want this other stuff. Yes, it's nice. I don't want it.

I want to know what it's like to have the power of God resting on me, motivating me, moving me, encouraging me, giving wisdom, helping me in every situation. Give me a word of wisdom and knowledge on these tough situations. That's what I want.

So then he goes on and he says, infirmities in reproaches, in necessities. I looked up that word necessities. It means things that are pressed, that you are pressed into and you didn't have a choice.

That's what it means. Someone else made a bad decision and you happen to be in the middle of it. And suddenly you are in circumstances over your head.

You had nothing more to do with it. You are just found in a situation pressed into something that you had no say, no choice in the matter, but you find yourself in the middle. He says, Paul says, I rejoice in that.

Don't you understand? Even if I had nothing to do with it and I am in the midst of this pressure, this cooking pot, this pressure pot and the steam, the lid is about to explode. I had no choice of being there, the apostle says. But he says in his heart, he says, oh, I take pleasure.

And he's not masochistic, folks. It's just a joy of saying, you know, I choose to have the anointing of almighty God resting on me. Persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak. Now he's delighted in weakness. He says, when I'm weak, then someone else is strong.

When I'm strong in my own way, strong in my own mind, when I've got my own wisdom and my own mindset up, Christ takes a diminished role. But oh God, when I find myself in those situations, my choice is, yes, Lord. Oh, he forgot that prayer of the silly thorn in his flesh.

He said, put another one in. He didn't say that, but virtually he said it. In the sense of all these other things, he said, all these things, he says, it doesn't matter to me.

He says, let these things roll on because there is a multifaceted grace of God. No matter which way the devil comes in, there is God. When I'm down, he's up.

When I'm weak, he's strong. My choice tonight, I'm going with God. I'm going with God.

I'm going with God. That's my choice. So his grace, his strength can rest on me.

Father, we just bow in your presence. I know I've preached your heart. I know that this is what you have wanted to communicate to this congregation tonight.

A word of encouragement. For, Lord, there are truly some who are praying and have been praying, God, get me out. Get me out of the marriage.

God, get me out of this home. God, get me out of this job. Get me out of this relationship.

Get me out of where I'm at. God, get me out. But tonight, and you've prayed it, and you've been earnest in your prayer, but God tonight is answering your prayer.

You have a choice. You have a choice. You can get the divorce.

You can go on. You can get out that home. You can get out that job.

You can go on. Or, you can choose to walk with me. There's some here tonight, you've never accepted Jesus, and life is hell for you.

Tonight, God is saying to you, I can change that hell. I can give you peace, because I'm God. Now, Father, I pray that every heart that you've spoken to, because it's multifaceted, every heart that you've spoken to, where there is a genuine need for God to show up, then, Lord, let this altar be for them tonight.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Let me take the liberty just to take a couple minutes here to share a story with you that I asked Pastor Carter yesterday or Sunday.

You see, Pastor Carter and Sister Teresa were given a dog, and this dog had been abused in life. I think I've got the story correct, but this dog was abused, and whenever you went out to pet it or touch it, it would just go to the bathroom right there on the floor, because it just responded because of all the heavy abuse that had come down. So when visitors and guests would come to the house, Pastor Carter would say, don't touch the dog, because it would immediately react and respond in the only way it knew because of the tremendous abuse that it had received.

And Pastor Carter was praying. He was telling me that he was on a campaign, on revival meetings at one point, and he was praying, and God spoke to his heart and said that God is the lifter of our head, and immediately he thought of the dog. And when he got back, instead of coming this approach to the dog, he did this approach.

And as he just put his hand underneath and came under the chin of the dog, the dog did not respond like it normally did, and responded in kindness. And so from that time onwards, Pastor Carter just lifted the head up of the dog this way, and healing came to this dog. The dog never did that again, just because of the approach of God.

You see, grace is like that. You see, in my heart, we can have revelation of what Jesus did when he got down. The woman was standing in the midst, but you see, in my heart, I'm so practical.

I think of things like this, that she was so oppressed and so condemned, people coming over her, condemning her, saying rotten things all the time. But I think Jesus' approach was the approach of grace. He went down on his knees, and then he came up, and he says, Grace will reach you where you're at.

See, I think that's what he did. I think it's just a simple approach that nothing Jesus ever did was without significance. It was always significant what he did.

And I was praying, and I was saying, God, I don't need any more greater revelation on this. And he just spoke to me. He says, No, this is how I come to people.

I don't come and just impose things on you. I come to where you are, and I come underneath, and I just lift you up by my grace. And I impart to you my love, my mercy, my wisdom.

I come underneath, and I just lift you up. Tonight, I think there's some people here that you just need to be lifted up. You've been so oppressed and so heavy laden with the words of people and the actions and attitudes.

But tonight, Jesus is just coming underneath and just saying, I'll lift you up. Will you receive it tonight? Then pray this with me tonight, would you? Lord Jesus, I need grace. I'm not going to tell you exactly what I need.

You know what I have need of. But in a simple prayer, I ask for grace. Whether it be wisdom, knowledge, power, authority, kindness, mercy.

Lord, you know, I reach out to you. I reach out to your response. And I receive from you tonight, by faith, the promise of your mercy and your love and all that I have need of.

Comfort my soul. Strengthen my walk. I commit to you my heart.

Help me to grow in all that you have for me. In Jesus name. Now let me pray for you.

Lord Jesus, we could never fully explain this marvelous word because we can't. We are finite. You are infinite.

But tonight, we've got a glimpse. As John, that great, beloved apostle said, grace is Jesus. And tonight, Lord, we give people Jesus.

And we walk out of the house with Jesus. And that you will give us grace and strength. In our jobs, in our homes, in our families.

Remove the pain right now. Remove the hurt. Lord, I just, there's pain here tonight.

Now, Lord Jesus, let the healing balm of Gilead just move away the pain right now. Just move the pain away, Father. And let healing flow into those that are aching from the top of the head to the sole of the hip.

Lord, just minister right now grace and healing and love and the comfort and the mercy of Jesus. Lord, just satiate us now with your presence. Let us know that we're loved.

Lord, I just feel someone here tonight. You just need to know that God loves you. God is just putting his arms around you by the word tonight and saying, My daughter, my son, I do love you.

I love you. I love you. I love you.

I'm not condemning you. I'm not condemning you. I'm just loving you.

Just respond to the love of Jesus. Now, he's filling you, touching you. He's making you whole.

And his words to you are the same to this woman. Go. Go.

Just sin no more. Just go in my grace, my forgiveness, my love. Now, Father, I thank you for your work tonight.

In Jesus' name, amen and amen. God bless you, Times Square Church. This is the conclusion of the message.

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