

God's Grace Makes Us Overcomers

by Zac Poonen

God's grace is sufficient for every situation, problem, or trial, but it requires us to be deeply humble and acknowledge our weaknesses, allowing God to break us and make us weak.

Duration: 58:55

Scripture: Genesis 8:22, Matthew 6:33, John 10:27, John 10:29, Hebrews 4:16, 2 Peter 1:3-4, Revelation 3:21

Topics: "Overcomers"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of humility and warns against the devil's tactics of devouring people through pride. He explains that living under grace, where we rely on God's strength rather than our own efforts, is the key to overcoming sin. The preacher uses an illustration of a fan being turned by hand to illustrate the limitations of human strength and the need for God's empowerment. He also highlights the importance of seeking God's mercy and being merciful to others, as well as the purpose of trials and difficult circumstances in refining and shaping us. The sermon references various Bible verses, including Romans 6:14 and Hebrews 4:16, to support these teachings.

Transcript

We have been thinking of 2 Peter chapter 1, God's magnificent promises, verse 3, and the purpose of all of them, verse 4, is that we might partake of the divine nature. There are many promises in scripture without any condition, and there are promises with conditions. God makes the sun to rise, and the good and the evil.

The sun will rise tomorrow morning on you, whether you are good or evil, without any condition. And he makes the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. There is no condition for that.

But many promises of God have got a condition. Usually it's the material blessings that have no condition. And it's a great deception, like you have heard me often say, that people say that God will bless you if you pay your tithes or you give some money to him.

You can't bribe God. You can't do business with God. It's a false gospel that tells you you can do business with God or you can bribe him to give you rewards.

Every material blessing is unconditional, and that's why you find unbelievers and believers both can be prosperous, and unbelievers and believers both can be healthy. But there are certain promises with

conditions. Even forgiveness of sins, repentance and faith are the conditions.

If a person doesn't repent, doesn't believe, then he doesn't get the benefit of the promise. And that's why you have millions and millions of people, billions on the world, for whom Jesus died, and they don't get the benefit of his death because they haven't fulfilled the condition. And that applies to believers as well, because there are lots of promises to believers, which have also got conditions.

Magnificent promises. Why doesn't every believer become more and more Christ-like every year? I mean, it says here, these magnificent promises are so that we might partake of his nature. And why isn't everybody partaking of his nature? Why aren't people becoming more and more patient every year, more and more pure every year, more and more loving, more and more humble every year, more and more gracious in their speech? I'll tell you, my experience, that I have, in my experience with many, many believers in many lands, and of all types, many, many tribes, and all denominations, I have found that most believers go the other way.

They are wholehearted when they are first converted, and you see them a few years later, they are falling into sins they would never have fallen into the day they were converted. Think of your own life and see if it's not true. There are believers who are radical, wholehearted when they are single.

They become backsliders when they get married and have one or two children. It shouldn't be like that. Marriage should lift a person to a higher plane in the will of God.

If he is married in the will of God, then, but he is single. But what I have generally found is it's not true. Why is it not true? Because there are conditions to the promises.

Those who honour him, he honours. Those who are poor in spirit get his kingdom. It's like that with many, many promises.

Let me show you a very common misunderstanding. In John's Gospel, chapter 10, we read about what many people call eternal security. That means we can never be lost.

John chapter 10, verse 28, And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish. That's absolute. If Jesus says they will never perish, then they will never perish.

And no one will snatch them out of my hand. Clear? My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. This is true, absolutely true.

And I have heard from my earliest time I was a believer, this verse being quoted to me so that I could find security in this verse. But what millions of believers don't see and what was never told to me was that this sentence begins with the word and. It's just plain simple English.

You jump into the middle of the sentence and read it. There is a condition attached to it in verse 27. My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me, and then I do all these things for them.

But it's a very common practice among believers to ignore the conditions and try and claim the promise. This is the main reason why many promises in scripture are never fulfilled in the lives of many believers. For whom is eternal life promised here? Those who hear His voice and follow Him.

What about those who don't hear His voice? You think every believer hears God's voice? Hearing means obeying. You think every believer is following Jesus? I don't think so. Most believers I know, they don't

follow Jesus.

Then how can this promise apply to them? This is the deception in Christendom today. But there's perfect security. I decided some years ago that I'm going to listen to His voice and follow Him.

So if you ask me, I know I'll never perish. I won't perish ever. I've been given eternal life.

No one can snatch me out of Jesus' hand. I'm absolutely sure of that. And you can be sure of that if you decide in your life that you're going to obey the Lord 100% and you're going to follow Him.

Because that's to whom the promise is given. So there are many things like that. Here's another very commonly misunderstood, misquoted verse.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. Very popular verse among believers. A complete misquotation.

And you know, a lot of preachers get away with it because they know that 99% of the people sitting there don't read their Bibles. And they don't know what the Bible says. So they can fool them.

But let me show you what the Bible says in 1 John chapter 1 and verse 7. And you'll discover the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, does not cleanse everybody from all their sins. It's only a certain type of people whose sins are cleansed. And it's important to know that.

Are you one of those? See what it says in 1 John and chapter 1 and verse 7. There's a big IF. And wherever you see in Scripture the words IF. Capitalize it.

Underline it. IF. That's a condition.

If we walk in the light as God Himself is in the light. That means I hide nothing from God. I come into God's light and whatever God's light shows me, I own up to it.

I say, Lord, that's my fault. I don't blame my wife like Adam or blame the snake like Eve blamed and the world is full of people putting the blame on somebody else. Or neither do I justify myself like the Pharisees.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, Luke 16, 15, you are those who justify yourselves. I don't want to be like that. I walk into the light means I am willing to take the blame 100%, acknowledge my sin, feel sorry for it and say, Lord, that's my fault.

I don't want to blame anybody else in the world. I'm the sinner. I'm guilty.

Do you find in your life, my brothers and sisters, ask yourself honestly, a slight bit of blaming somebody else for some sin that you fell into. You know, there are men who say, well, I sinned, lusted because that woman dressed provocatively. You see, it's not my fault.

Why do they dress like that? That's just an example. Some calamity comes into your life and you're immediately looking for whom to blame. That is the mark of the children of Adam.

You're not walking in God's light. When you walk in God's light, you say, Lord, that's my fault. Nobody else's in the whole world.

You'll be a blessed man. If you walk like that. Because in God's light, there's cleansing.

Complete cleansing. It says here, the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all our sin. So make it a point in your life, like I made it a point in my life, that I would never in my life blame anybody in the world for anything.

Never. And I'll tell you, it's amazing what God can do for you when you say, Lord, I'm the guilty one. It's my fault.

It's very, very difficult for human beings to say that. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. I'll tell you as a byproduct, you'll be healthy too.

You won't have so many sicknesses. But you've got to walk in the light. You've got to decide you're never going to blame anybody in the world but yourself for everything.

See, that's the difference between Adam and Christ. When Adam committed one sin, he couldn't take the responsibility for it. He had to blame his wife.

But when Jesus was hanging on the cross, he took the blame for all our sins. And he said, Father, it's okay. I'll take it.

I'll take it as if it were my sin. That's the difference between Adam and Christ. Adam was guilty.

Adam couldn't take the blame for his own sin. Christ could take the blame for the sins of the whole world. So these are little things like this, you know, where if you read the Scriptures carefully, you'll get the benefit of that promise.

But if you just try to claim the promise and ignore the condition or listen to some preacher who doesn't show you the Scriptures and you don't know the Scriptures yourself and you claim some promise without seeing the condition, you'll find it just does not work. Now, I want to talk today about grace. Now, it's one of my favorite subjects.

Anybody who's heard me knows it. But I think of this wonderful promise in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, a verse which you're all familiar with. 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 9. My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.

Or my power shows up best in weak people. Like the Living Bible says. My grace is sufficient for you.

And I want to capitalize the words is. It is sufficient for every single situation, problem, trial, you name it. In fact, later on he says, I'm well content, verse 10, with weakness, insult, distress, persecution, difficulty, it doesn't make a difference what it is.

You can lengthen that list and add every single problem that any human being can ever face. My grace is sufficient for you. It's true.

There is absolutely no situation that a wholehearted child of God can ever face in his entire life for which the grace of God is not sufficient. If you believe that it will change your life. You can be triumphant in every single situation if only you get God's grace.

If you don't get it, then of course you find yourself incapable to cope with it. You know the number of believers I have met who have fear and doubts and all types of, they live with a lot of fears in their mind and anxieties. Whenever, if I have fear and anxiety in my mind concerning anything, I am either saying, I

don't have a heavenly father, who cares for me.

You know, I'm an orphan, so I have to be anxious and worried. Or I'm saying, I have a father, but he doesn't give me grace to handle this situation. Sorry.

So I have to be a bit grumpy. I have to be a bit sour. I have to be in a bit of a bad mood.

You know that every time you're in a bad mood, you're saying that God's grace is not sufficient. I don't believe that I can ever be in a bad mood any time in my life, because I believe the grace of God is sufficient for every single situation. We have to believe it.

It's true. Either it's true or the Bible's a lie. God's a liar.

Take it like that, I see, when God's not a liar. He says, my grace is sufficient. And Paul says, oh, if that's the case, I'm content.

Whether it's weakness or insult or distress or persecution or difficulties, whatever it is. When I'm weak, then I'm strong. Jesus says, my power shows itself best in weak people.

The reason we don't overcome is because we are too strong. God's power is manifested in weak people. And that's why God allows many circumstances in our life to break us so that we become weak, so that we have no confidence in ourselves.

And when we have no confidence in ourselves, we don't become timid. Exactly the opposite. Here's a worldly businessman who's got a lot of self-confidence.

And here's a wholehearted child of God who's got tremendous confidence in God and no confidence in himself. That man is a million times more confident than that self-confident businessman. He's not timid.

That businessman may face situations where he can be anxious and have a sleepless night. This believer who has no confidence in himself doesn't have a sleepless night because he's not afraid. Because his confidence is in God.

God's grace is sufficient. But it shows up in weak people. And that's why God has to make us weak first.

In fact, even the great apostle Paul, he could not get grace till he was made weak. Let me tell you, my brothers and sisters, that could be one reason why you haven't got grace. I made it a rule many years ago in my life, many years ago, and I'm thankful I made it a rule in my life, that if ever I sinned in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive, I would say to myself, I didn't get grace there.

Because if I got grace, I would not have sinned. Because His grace is sufficient for every situation. Why didn't I get grace? Because I was too strong in myself.

Why was I anxious? Why could I not cope with some situation in my office or in my home or with my neighbors or anything? Why is it some situation they say, oh, this is becoming too much for me? Why do believers say that? Oh, this is, Brother Zach, you don't know what I'm facing. You would think they are godless unbelievers talking like that, but they're not. They claim to be born again because they've said the magic mantra words, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

They're not wholehearted disciples. They have not allowed God to break them. God has allowed all types of circumstances in our lives.

And if you'd submit to them, you'd have been broken long ago. But if we resist, then we're not broken. Do you know that the first step for God to manifest His grace in a person is to break him and make him weak? The mighty Apostle Paul, he says how he had so many fantastic experiences with God that he acknowledged, I was in danger of getting puffed up.

It's not a sin to acknowledge that I could become spiritually proud. Do you believe you can become spiritually proud? I'm battling it all the time. The temptation to become spiritually proud.

And you recognize that you can fall into that. You won't fall into it. But you say, oh, no, I'm beyond all that.

Well, you'll fall into it in a few minutes. Paul was humble enough to recognize, I am in danger of spiritual pride because of all the fantastic way in which God was using me and the fantastic experiences I had and the fantastic revelations God was giving me. And so how did God handle that? The Bible says God gave Paul a thorn, a thorn in the flesh.

It was some type of sickness to make him weak, some type of physical limitation. I don't know what it was. And we don't need to know.

But it was something that weakened Paul. And he prayed, God, heal me, heal me, heal me. Nothing happened.

God said, I'm not going to heal you. You're going to have that all your life. Imagine if God were to say that to you about some physical ailment you got.

And you pray and pray and pray and pray. And one day God says to you, sorry, you're going to have it all your life. But my grace will be enough for you.

Will you say with Paul, praise the Lord. That's all I need, Lord. That's fine.

If you're going to make me weak so that I can have your grace, that's enough. And look at the mighty work God did through Paul. He can do it through you.

But he has to make us weak. Even the Apostle Paul, he had to do that because the Lord said, my power is made perfect in weakness. See, this is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

In the Old Covenant he made Samson strong. In the New Covenant he makes Paul weak. Quite the difference.

The Bible says Jesus was crucified in weakness. He did not exercise his power. He could have called 72,000 angels from above, but he wouldn't call them.

That's weakness. He was crucified in weakness. You have the power to hit back at somebody, but you don't hit back.

That's weakness. See, why was God so eager to make sure Paul didn't become proud? There's a reason. Because the moment Paul became proud, God would become his enemy.

That's a law. It's like saying, if you drop a stone, it'll go down. It doesn't make a difference who drops it, believer, unbeliever.

It's a law of gravity. If a believer jumps off the roof, he falls down. If an unbeliever jumps off the roof, he falls down.

The law of gravity is the same. It's the same way this law which says God resists the proud. That's a law.

It doesn't matter whether it's Hitler or the Apostle Paul. The law is the same. God resists the proud.

And if you think that you're some type of favorite of God, that the law won't work for you, that you can jump off the roof and nothing will happen because you're a favorite of God, you've got to be off your head. Don't try it. And if you think you're some type of favorite of God, that even if you're proud, God will not be your enemy, don't try it, brother.

It won't work. He is the enemy of everyone who's proud. He resists every proud person.

Because that is the characteristic of Satan. He resists the proud. James chapter 4. Twice in the New Testament we read these words.

James chapter 4 verse 5. Do you think the scripture speaks without any purpose? He jealously desires the spirit he has made to dwell in us, or like the message Bible says, he's a fiercely jealous lover. You know, there's a type of jealousy which is good. There's a type of jealousy which is bad.

The jealousy of love, Song of Solomon says, it's like a flame, the flame of God. God is jealous and his love means, it's like a husband who wants his wife only for himself. Is he wrong in wanting his wife only for himself saying, I don't want to share my wife with anybody else? I jealously desire my wife's love for myself.

That is the most spiritual thing a husband can do. It's a very crazy husband who says, oh I don't care if my wife loves somebody else. In the same way it says God is a jealous lover.

He wants our spirit entirely for himself. He doesn't want our spirit to be polluted by the love of money. He doesn't want our spirit to be polluted by pursuing the honor of the world.

He doesn't want our spirit to be polluted by pride or anything like that because he's a jealous lover. So don't you think the Spirit speaks, the Scripture speaks, no purpose. He jealously desires the spirit, small s, which is made to dwell in us.

But he gives greater grace. Therefore, it says, God is opposed to the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit to God and resist the devil and he'll flee from you.

That's one of the wonderful things about receiving grace. You've got to read the whole passage together. That when I get the grace of God, the devil won't be able to stand in front of me.

He won't walk away. He won't run. He will flee.

Flee is a pretty powerful word. He will flee from you. How many believers have you met in the world who walk around with the confidence that the devil flees from them? Wherever they go, the devil runs away.

Are you one of those? Wherever you go, the devil runs away? You go somewhere else, the devil says, ah, I'd better run away from here. You go somewhere else, the devil says, ah, I'd better run away from here. This brother is coming.

This sister is coming. You know you can be like that? You don't have to be a great Bible scholar, but you have to be deeply humble. The devil's scared only of humble people.

He's not scared of people who say, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus. He laughs at that. He's not afraid of those mantras, which people quote.

I've seen people trying to cast out demons, shouting at them a hundred times, in the name of Jesus. The devil just sits inside that person and laughs. He's not scared of people who are not.

It's not a question of the name of Jesus. It's a question of who's using that name. What we read here is the devil flees from humble people.

I'll tell you this, my brothers and sisters. He's not afraid of rich people. He's not afraid of clever people.

He's not afraid of people with Bible knowledge. But he's really scared of humble people. Because they've got something he doesn't have.

They've got a power he doesn't have. Because God gives his grace to the humble. Why is he scared of humble people? Because he knows God is with them.

And why is he not scared of proud believers? Because he knows God's not with them. Why is the devil not scared of believers who blame somebody else for something? Because that's his own nature. He's the accuser.

Blame somebody else for something. Why is the devil afraid of those who refuse to blame anybody else but themselves? Because they're humble. A humble man never blames anybody else for his sin or for anything.

And the devil's scared of such people. God's grace is sufficient. But it's not given to everybody.

It's a condition. It's grace that makes us overcomers. It's repeated again in 1 Peter chapter 5. And here it speaks especially to younger people.

And that's why I always say to younger people, dear young people, let God break you in your younger days. For about 16 years after I was converted, God took me through all types of situations, breaking me, breaking me, humbling me through elder brothers who misunderstood me and suppressed me. I mean, you guys are lucky if you've got godly elder brothers who are compassionate towards you and care for you.

I feel that's for some of you, you just don't appreciate them enough. And that's why you're spoiled. I lived with elder brothers who humiliated me and did all types of things.

But I tell you, it was the best thing that could ever happen. It broke me, all those circumstances. But you say, well, what can I do? You've got such godly elder brothers.

How will I be broken? Well, God's given you a difficult wife, right? Or a difficult husband. Or a difficult son. Doesn't have to be an elder brother.

Or a difficult boss. Or a difficult neighbor. Ah, he has got so many ways of breaking you.

But have you allowed yourself to be broken? Have you allowed yourself to see that these are the circumstances, this is the thorn that God has given me to deflate my balloon and bring me down to earth? Or have you resisted it? Then God waits. It says here in 1 Peter 5, you younger men, verse 5, be subject to your elders. 1 Peter 5, verse 5. All of you, clothe yourself with humility towards one another, because God will be against you, if you are proud.

But he gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. And I want to tell you, the mighty hand of God is just those circumstances in which he has placed you right now, which you find difficult.

You squirm under it. That's the mighty hand of God. Humble yourself, instead of fighting it.

And at the right time, he will exalt you. When it says he will exalt you, it doesn't mean he will make you the president of India. I have no interest in being that.

He will exalt you over sin. He will exalt you over Satan. What do you want to be exalted over? Do you want to be exalted over people? Get a promotion? I'm not interested.

I want to be exalted over sin. I want to be exalted over my flesh, which drags me down so often. I don't even want to be an elder brother in a church.

Not at all. I have zero interest in being exalted over people. I'd be tremendously interested in being exalted over the lusts in my flesh.

He will exalt you at the proper time. And then again, it says, verse 8, Be of sober spirit, because your adversary the devil. Notice in James chapter 4, where he spoke about humility, he immediately spoke about the devil.

Here also, he speaks about humility. He immediately speaks about the devil prowling around seeking someone to devour. How does he devour people? By making them proud.

That's all. That's him, firm in your faith. So, God's grace is sufficient for every situation.

Romans chapter 6 and verse 14 says, Sin cannot rule over you, because you are not under law, but under grace. Life under the law is where man tries to do his best to please God. You can never overcome sin if you try to live like that.

Life under grace is where you say, Lord, I can't do it. You got to do it in me. To use an illustration, if I had to turn this fan with my hand, I don't think I could last more than five minutes if I'm pretty strong, maybe ten minutes.

Imagine, in the olden days, they had these slaves who used to turn the pankas for these kings. They got to change. You got to do it in shifts.

You can't do it very long. You get tired and you give up. Have you given up trying to conquer some sin? This is the reason.

You're trying. You're very sincere in trying to make that fan turn. You give up after some time.

You do make it turn for a little while. But imagine when the power of electricity comes into that fan. What a difference.

It just runs and runs and runs and runs for hours. All I did was put on a switch. I got to do something, sure.

It doesn't come automatically. I got to put on a switch. I've got to get power from the electricity board.

Yeah, yeah, I've got to do all that. But once I get the power and I put on the switch, it just runs. You know the power of the Holy Spirit is like that? You got to go to God and ask him for the power.

And then you got to humble yourself and get it. And that is grace. So when you live like that, it says sin will not rule over you.

The fan won't stop. It keeps going. The reason why many people cannot overcome sin is because they never stop living under the law.

They're trying their best, trying their best. They succeed for a while and they give up. And they fail.

And usually such people are very hard on others who fail. Now one would think someone who's failing so much himself should be very merciful on others who fail. It's not true.

Some of the hardest people in the world are those who are failing miserably themselves in their lives, but very hard on others. And some of the most gracious people in the world who are very merciful to others are the people who are overcoming in their own life constantly. And the greatest example of all is God himself.

He never sins, but he's so merciful to people who sin. And the greatest example is the other way, or the other way is the devil, who's full of sin. And he's an accuser of one fellow falls into one sin, he accuses him.

All of us are somewhere in between God and the devil. You know, when we are born again, our sins are forgiven, but we're still pretty close to the devil. That's why we jump on people as soon as they make one mistake, and jump on our children as soon as they do something wrong, and are so critical of how other people do something, how other people bring up their children, and why somebody else is dressed like this, and why somebody else is dressed like that.

We're all pretty close to the devil then. But gradually we learn mercy as we come closer and closer to God. We get more and more grace.

We overcome sin, and as we come closer and closer to God, we become very merciful to others. We're not so quick to judge others. We say, well, perhaps they don't have light.

Or, yeah, they're young. Give them time. They'll get over it.

There's mercy. There's a gracious attitude. Because we've come closer to God.

I believe Christians drive away many young people from God, because they're so hard on them. And they don't even realize it. Grace makes a tremendous difference.

How is it that Jesus was the holiest person in Israel, and the worst sinners would come to Him? One would think, if you're a terrible sinner, you wouldn't want to go anywhere near a holy man, right? Where would sinners would like to mix with whom? With sinners. You don't like to go to holy people. How is it that the sinners in Israel went to the holiest person of all, Jesus? Because in His holiness there was grace.

There was compassion. There was mercy. And that is true holiness, where mercy and grace are found.

So sin shall not rule over you when you come under grace. And I want to point you also to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Here's one of the most amazing promises that has helped me through many, many, many years.

And that gives me even tremendous confidence today as I face the future. 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13. In the middle of that verse, it says, God is faithful, who will never allow you to be tempted, tested, tried, beyond what you are able.

I'll just stop a moment and let that sink in. It's not got to do with circumstances. It's not got to do with how difficult a husband or wife you have or how difficult children you have or how difficult your circumstances are, how little money you are earning every month.

It's got nothing to do with any of these things. God is faithful. It's only got to do with that.

One factor alone, God is faithful. He will never allow you to face a trial, a problem, a temptation, a difficulty, anything painful, difficult, trial, beyond what you are able to bear. But along with that trial and temptation and difficulty and whatever it is, He will make a way of escape.

And that is grace. He will give you grace. Paul thought this porn is such a problem.

It's not going away, but there was a way of escape. God said, my grace is enough for you. So, if the Lord were to remove the trial, Paul would never become strong.

It is by grace that we become strong. Grace is the thing that gives us spiritual muscles. See Hebrews chapter 13.

Hebrews chapter 13. It says in verse 9, the middle of that verse, it's good for the heart to be made strong by grace. Do you know what grace does? It makes our heart strong to face anything.

That's the way of escape. That means, say, you know, the pressures we face. We know that the pressures we face are in our heart.

Pressures and trials of life. And we pray, Lord, relieve me from this pressure. Relieve me from this trial.

And Paul was praying, relieve me from this sickness, whatever that thorn in his flesh was. Relieve me, relieve me, relieve me. Nothing seemed to be happening, till he heard the voice of God saying, what you need is not relief.

What you need is to humble yourself under my mighty hand, which has allowed this in your life. Accept it and experience my grace. As long as you keep resisting it, you won't experience His grace.

Paul finally said, okay Lord, that's fine. If you want me to live with this thorn all my life, great. I'll accept it.

But I want your grace. I want your grace more than I want relief from this thorn. And he got it.

He didn't get relief from his thorn. As far as we know, Paul lived and died with that thorn. I don't know what it was.

But he got grace to be a conqueror. What are you more interested in your life? Tell me. Are you interested in a comfortable, easygoing, life full of wealth and health? Or are you interested in being an overcomer, to have grace to overcome? See, it's grace that makes us strong in our heart and that can come only as we face these difficult situations where God makes us weak and we experience His grace in those situations that, you know, people say, well, if I just keep on yielding, taking up the cross every day, my partner will just take advantage of me.

Could be a wife, could be a husband. If I just die to myself, die to myself, die to myself, like you say, somebody will take advantage of me. Yes.

If God is not faithful to prevent you from being tested beyond your ability, then I agree. But that cannot happen because it says that God will not allow you to be tested beyond your ability. As soon as he sees the needle going into the red, he'll turn the valve and reduce the pressure.

I believe that. I've experienced it for years. He never allows it to go into the red.

You know, these boilers, boiler rooms and all where they, I used to work in a ship where it was run by steam and they have these boiler rooms and you've got to be careful the pressure doesn't become too much, it can blow up something. So you keep watching the, you need the pressure of steam to drive the ship, but you've got to make sure it doesn't go into the red or something. So as soon as, the people watching it all the time, as soon as it goes towards the red, they reduce the pressure.

That's how God is. Just enough pressure to make the ship move, but not enough to blow up the whole thing. That's how God is with us.

I praise the Lord. You know, when Paul says, I am what I am by the grace of God. What does he mean by I am what I am by the grace of God? That means God took me through all types of difficult situations and gave me grace in those situations to overcome.

And the result is, here I am. And the person who's never gone through those situations never comes to this wonderful place of triumph. I remember many years ago when I was a young man, God took me through difficult situations and he gave me a verse which I've never forgotten all my life.

Psalm 66. Psalm 66, verse 10. You have tried us, O God.

That means you have tested us. You have refined us as silver is refined. That means put in the fire of affliction.

And you brought us into the net. You know what it is to be in a net? You know how a fish feels when it's caught in a net? A fish that's just been freely swimming in the sea for years, all of a sudden it's caught in a net. It's trapped.

Have you ever found yourself in circumstances like that? You know, a freezing going girl suddenly gets married and has three or four babies and then she's in a net. It's no longer the old single life that she enjoyed. It's a net.

You know, you can't move, can't hear and so many things. It's just like the four walls of her house are like a prison. She's there the whole time.

There are different things that can bring you into a net. You could be in hospital for a few months and that's like a net. You can't do what you like.

You're trapped. You brought me into the net. You brought me into circumstances where I can't escape.

Maybe you're in a job where you can't get another job and it's such a problem working with your particular boss. That's a net. And you have laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.

Imagine that. You have laid an oppressive burden upon our loins. Now, I'm sure that burden came from some man.

But David had the wisdom to say, Lord, it wasn't that man. It was you. Peter thought it was Judas Iscariot who brought the cup and Jesus said, no, it's my father who sent the cup.

The cup which my father gave me, shall I not drink it? Not the cup which Judas Iscariot gave me. Jesus had nothing to do with blaming people. It's the cup which my father gave me.

I have learned to say that in the different circumstances of my life through the years. This is the cup which my father gave me. And as I've said that, I've been an overcomer.

But if you say Judas gave me this cup, that's the way to be defeated. You brought us into the net. Don't blame people.

You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins. You made men ride over our heads. Not men rode over our heads.

You made men ride over our heads. There's a lot of difference between saying men rode over our heads and saying you made men ride over our heads. You made my wife yell at me.

You made my husband yell at me. There's a lot of difference between saying it that way and saying my wife yelled at me. Or my husband yelled at me.

Try it. Try saying it this way. Lord, you made that fellow do this.

David once said, God made Shimei curse me. It makes a world of difference. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the difference between Peter and Jesus was just this.

Peter saw Judas. Jesus saw his father. So Peter took out his sword and swiped that fellow's ear.

He missed Judas' ear and got somebody else's ear. And Jesus picked up that ear and healed him. That's the difference between seeing Judas and seeing the father.

You can't blame Peter. He's a fisherman. He's not used to swinging a sword.

He got the wrong fellow. But anyway, that's how it is. It makes a tremendous difference when you say you did it.

You brought us and you took us through fire and through water. And then finally, what did you do? You brought us into a place of abundance. You know, I was once checking up the Hebrew word for that place of abundance.

It's a Hebrew word called Reviah, used only twice in the whole Bible. The other place where it is used is, my cup runs over, in Psalm 23. So what he's saying is, you finally brought me to the place where rivers of living water started flowing through my life.

Now my brother, sister, whenever you see a person from whom rivers of living water are running, you can be pretty sure he's gone this way to get there. You may not know all about his private life. And if you want to get there, this is the way.

He will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. He uses circumstances, but his ultimate purpose for you is a place of abundance. So what shall we do? There's a lovely verse in Hebrews 4 which I want to bring to you.

Hebrews chapter 4. When we face these needy situations in life, and the difficult situations in life, God doesn't say he'll let us escape them. It says here in Hebrews 4.16, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. That throne itself is called the throne of grace, so that we can receive mercy.

Mercy is forgiveness for our past failures. We all need that. The only person who never needed it was Jesus, who never sinned.

All the rest of us need mercy. And we need mercy from God till the end of our life. And that's why we should be merciful to others.

So we come to the throne of grace to receive mercy and, listen to this wonderful expression, to find grace, let me paraphrase it, to suit my need exactly according to my need. The item costs 5,000 rupees. God's given me 5,000 rupees.

Tomorrow my need is 50,000 rupees. God's given me 50,000 rupees. Isn't it wonderful to have a father like that? Another day my need may be only 5 rupees.

What does he give me? 5 rupees. My grace is sufficient for you. One day it may be 500,000 rupees.

He gives me 500,000 rupees. The more need, grace to help me in my time of need. Now I don't know what your need is.

But I'll tell you this. If you decide today that you are going to go the way of brokenness and humility for the rest of your life, you're not going to complain against people, you're not going to complain against circumstances, you're always going to say, you did it Lord. You, you, you.

There's only one person with whom we have to do, it says in Hebrews 4.13. There's only one person with whom we have to do. I don't have to do with Judas Iscariot. I don't have to do with anybody.

I have to do with my father. Herod, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, Judas Iscariot, let them be so many. I deal with my father.

It's wonderful to live like that. And they find his grace is sufficient for every situation I can ever face in my life. And ultimately through it all, he will bring you to the place where your cup runs over.

He anoints your head with oil. Your cup runs over and over and it's endless that other people are blessed through you because grace flows out from you. In John chapter 1, we read verse 16.

From the fullness of Jesus, we receive grace upon grace. The more you receive, the more you can be a blessing to others. You know, grace is the exact equivalent of money in this world.

You know how important money is in this world. We need it every day. And the more you have of money in this world, the more comfortable a life you can live in this world.

The exact equivalent of that in the kingdom of God is grace. The more you have of grace, the more triumphantly you can live in the kingdom of God on this earth. And that's our calling.

We are to be trophies of God's grace, what God's grace can do in all our time of need. The Bible says, let us come boldly. Let's come with confidence.

And as we receive that grace because we are humble, the devil will flee from us. I shared this with you a little while ago. One of the things the Lord told me this year was, as in the past you were afraid of the devil, now on the devil will be afraid of you.

I said, Lord, this is wonderful. I want to live like that. How can you compare that with money? If God were to say to me, I'll make you a millionaire, but you'll live scared of the devil all your life.

I said, Lord, keep your million. I want the devil to flee from me. What do you want? What do you really want? And that's the thing.

Do you really want the devil to be scared of you and run away from you? Do you want to have power over sin in your life? Do you want to be a conqueror in your life? Do you know that Jesus, let me say this in closing, Jesus lived all his life with the grace of God upon him. Luke chapter 2 verse 40. From the time he was a child, we read, the grace of God was upon him.

The first man who walked on the earth about whom it is written, from his childhood, Luke 2.40, the grace of God was upon him. That's why he could conquer and face every situation. What about when he died? From birth to death.

Hebrews chapter 2, you read about his death. How did Jesus die? Hebrews chapter 2 verse 9, last part, it was by the grace of God that he could die for us. He needed grace from the time he was born till the time he died.

And now, how does that apply to us? Now turn to keeping those two verses in mind, how Jesus lived from birth to death. Now turn to Revelation chapter 3 and verse 21 and see how it applies to you and me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with me on my throne.

There's a condition, overcome, the promise, you'll sit with Jesus on the throne. It's not for everybody. How to overcome? As I also overcame.

I have to overcome exactly like Jesus overcame with the grace of God upon me from birth to death. And I'm sat down with my father on his throne. Brothers and sisters, what shall we say to this wonderful

gospel? The next verse, he who has years to hear, let him hear.

Because not everybody has years to hear. Some people are still going to find fault with people. They won't see God in all their circumstances, in their situations.

But he who has years to hear, let him hear. Let's pray. We thank you, Father, for such a triumphant gospel.

But we can be more than conquerors in every situation. The devil will be scared of us. Not because of who we are, but because greater is the one who is in us than the one who is in the world.

Because we are one with you, Lord Jesus. You are the head and we are the body. In ourselves, we are nothing.

But in you, we can conquer everything. We thank you. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

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