

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Sufficient Grace

Have you ever found yourself Disappointed w/ God ?

A)I can honestly say that I have many times. I know that it is wrong? It is stupid ?

B)It is sacrilegious and maybe even Dangerous!

1)That might bum you out to hear your Pastor say that

C)Although David was called a man after God's own heart and I have read many Psalms – David was disappointed with God.

D)SO I feel like I am in good company!

1)I can also honestly say – I don't stay in that place very long – but I have been there

E)And when I feel that way – the reason is usually is because God didn't do what I

thought he should do. 1)He didn't **answer** the prayer the way I thought He should answer it

2)He didn't come through **when** I thought He should come through! **ARROGANT – I know**

D)So Yes I have been disappointed with God in my life.

Well if there is ever a time when the Apostle Paul might have been tempted to be disappointed with God it is the time that our text today talks about.

A)But instead of being disappointed – Paul received a revelation from the Lord that is as true today for all of us as it was for him at the time he received it.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

B)Paul was a man who had some pretty intense and spectacular revelations from God

1) including the Vision of heaven he mentions in the beginning of the Chapter

Bb)Light and Voice of Jesus at his conversion

1))As well as his years in the Desert of Arabia – personally discipled by the Lord that we know little about.

C)Here he mentions how God allowed him to be inflicted by a thorn in his Flesh a messenger of Satan to Buffet him

1) **Thorn** – not a splinter but an 18 inch wooden tent spike.

D) **Buffet = to strike with the fist.**

1) Constantly hitting poking. Another translation to be constantly kept under.

And Paul prayed that God would take it away- He prayed 3 times – But God did not take it away.

A) God had something more important to give than deliverance.

B) Now before we talk about what God said to Paul – lets talk about your situation.

C) Maybe there isn't one specific thing in your life that is a thorn: Maybe your thorn is life in general.

1) We all suffer all the time: “Been said that the problem with life is that is so daily.”

Job said, *man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.* Job 5:7

We all know that life is filled with trouble, life is filled with disaster.

A) And if we're not in the disaster, we're on the edge of one.

B) Everybody has struggles. We struggle to be faithful, to be joyful, to be effective in serving Christ.

1) We struggle against all of the pressure that would take away our effectiveness, our joy, our usefulness.

C) We are fallen. Our flesh is corrupt.

1) Though our souls have been redeemed, we live as one man put it **“incarcerated, in the prison house of unredeemed human flesh.”**

We can talk all we want about the victorious Christian life – and being radical for God

A) And it is easy for Pastors to talk in lofty terms – I can easily be guilty of doing that –

B) For good reason – I look at my own life and see God has done exceedingly abundantly above all I could ever imagine.

C) That I am standing before you today as a Pastor is an absolute miracle to me.

D) That I have the privilege of being the Pastor of such a great Church literally blows my mind –

1) and I want all of you to experience your mind being blown by God

But the fact of the matter is when we really break it down – it is not the big things so much that Challenge us – it is everyday things.

A) And as prisoners in fallen flesh, living in a fallen world system, in a fallen cursed universe,

B) We have difficulty in life non stop.

1) Life is filled with strong temptation. Life is filled with attractions to sinful things.

C) Life is filled with struggles to cope with the disappointments and the pain and the suffering that comes into all of our experience.

I want apply this text to those things – the grace needed to make it thru the thorn of daily life.

A) The longer that I walk with God – the more that I am coming to understand that when it comes to being the Pastor of this Church, a leader, husband, a Christian, a father, a friend – a son to my parents.

B) I am not very good at any of it! – I constantly fail – I constantly let myself down, those around me down.

C) The longer I walk with the Lord – the more aware of I become of my need to be dependant upon his grace.

Three things I want us to see that we learn from Paul's situation.

#1 Trials and suffering Humble us.

#2 Trials and suffering Drive us to God.

#3 Trials and suffering become a platform for God to Display His grace.

#1 Trials and suffering Humble us.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

God wants His children humble. That's lesson number one.

A) There are many things in life that can humble us.

Impressiveness of Creation

B) Trip to Grand Canyon – I am awesome!

1) Rocky Mts – Wow – I am impressive.

2) Class in Astronomy – Stars and Galaxies – I am so small.

C) Trials also serve a purpose of Humbling us.

1) Trials have many purposes.

Trials test the strength of our faith.

Trials wean us from earthly things.

Trials call us to eternal hope.

Trials reveal what and who we really love.

Trials teach us to value God's blessing.

Trials enable us to help others who suffer.

Trials produce endurance which equips us for greater usefulness.

D) But more than anything trials have a way of humbling us – Reveal our need

1) Reveal how insufficient we are.

E) But that is good because the Bible declares that “God resist the Proud but He gives grace to the Humble.” James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

#1 Trials and suffering Humble us.

#2 Trials and suffering Drive us to God.

A) God is the only one to whom we can go in the suffering.

B) Look at verse 8, "Concerning this I went to my therapist." No...no, it's not what it says.

1) "Concerning this I attended a seminar." No.

2) "Concerning this I read a book." No.

3) "Concerning this I rebuked Satan." No...no.

C) No Paul says: Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

D) In the time of his deepest need, his deepest pain, his severest trial, he didn't go to Timothy,

1) he didn't go to Titus, he didn't go to a committee, he didn't go anywhere but to God.

D) Why? Because it is God who sits on the throne!

And his throne is called a throne of what? – Grace Right

Hebrews 4:16

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

1 Peter 5:7

“Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

The God who created the Grand Canyon / MTS– who holds the Galaxies together and knows all the Stars by name – is also the God who is intimately interested in your life .

In your time of need bids you to come to Him

#1 Trials & suffering Humble us. #2... Drive us to God.

#3 Trials and suffering become a platform for God to Display His grace.

A)That's the third lesson. God alone can and will provide grace sufficient for the trial

9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

B)The Word Grace is Charis in the greek – it us used 155 times in the NT – It means Favor or Love –

1) My Favor is sufficient for you, my Love is sufficient

Bb)Sufficient = Enough! – My grace is enough – My favor is enough my love is enough for you.

C)Now when we hear the word Grace we immediately think of saving Grace – By Grace.....

1)But the Grace of God is broader than just saving Grace.

2 Corinthians 9:8, this is what Paul writes: “And God is able to make all grace abound to you,”

A)all grace, meaning stretching across all categories. It’s not just saving grace.

B)Paul continues “that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”

C)Grace for every situation! Never exhaust – Like Niagra always more to follow: Fish water/ Man air

God gives all grace, God makes all grace ABOUND so that you always have enough to be sufficient for the task or challenge at hand.

A)Peter called it the manifold grace of God. 1 Peter 4:10

B)Manifold= multi-faceted, or multi-colored grace of God.” -

1)Match the color or situation of the trial.

John MacArthur: “Grace is a dynamic force, a dynamic and benevolent power that applies the goodness of God and the resources of God to our lives to save us, to keep us, to enable us, to deliver us, to sanctify us, to glorify us.”

Luke said, writing in **Acts 4:33** of the early church, that they were experiencing abundant grace.

A) Paul informs us in **Romans 5:2** that we all stand in grace.

B) And may I add we are standing head deep in it.

1) It is the very atmosphere we breathe. We live in the environment of grace.

James 4:6 “**God gives more grace or greater grace.**”

A) No matter what you might think of that grace, no matter how great you think it is, no matter how grand you think it is,

B) no matter how lavish you think it is, no matter how superabundant you think it is,

1) It is greater than you think, it is greater than you can comprehend.

C) John said of Jesus – John 1:14, 16 “**He came full of grace and truth – but then he adds that of his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.**”

Grace to understand the Word. Grace to wisely apply it. Grace to overcome temptation.

A) Grace to overcome sin. Grace to endure suffering. Grace to endure disappointment.

B) Grace to endure pain. Grace to obey the Lord. Grace to serve Him effectively.

1) We’re given grace to defeat temptation.

C) Grace to make it through the difficulties and struggles of life –

God meets us with his many colored grace and says to us like he did to Paul **my Grace is sufficient for you and my power is made perfect in your weakness**

A) Notice those words again:

B) **My Grace IS sufficient** – Not was or will be – both are true in Paul’s life.

1) Thru all the suffering ship wrecks imprisonments –etc God’s grace was sufficient.

C) **And His grace will be sufficient for any future needs.**

1) But our problem is the trial we are in at the moment is always the biggest.

D) Compared to past things we have gone thru – Molehill not a MT – **but seems like MT Everest.**

But the words that Jesus spoke were – My grace **IS** sufficient – **Grab onto those words today**

A) Sufficient for the need at hand.

B) Present reality to the promise. His grace **IS** sufficient – right now

C) Our Weakness only magnifies the greatness of His Grace! "My grace is sufficient for you, **for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**"

D) Grace is experienced in Weakness

It is good to know Grace as a form of theology!

A) But an ounce of experience is worth a ton of observation!

C) We experience God's grace the most in our times of weakness.

CHS "The strength of God is never perfected till our *weakness* is perfected. When our weakness is consciously and thoroughly felt, then the strength of God has done its work in us."

Don't run from weakness

A) See we tend to do that – Nature of our culture is to cover up blemishes and hide weaknesses –

B) We want to focus on our strengths and ignore our weaknesses.

C) A husband might say: Well I might be a lousy listener or a lousy communicator but I am a great provider – **give me a break.**

D) **Weakness we feel is dangerous.** It makes us Vulnerable and we don't want to go there.

1) That is the wrong attitude

That husband needs to say: I am thankful that I am a good provider – God has blessed me with a good Job

A) He has given me a good work ethic

B) But honey will you pray for me that God will help me to be a good communicator and listener.

1) That attitude is #1 an attitude of Humility that God will bless

#2 It is one that **invites** God to reveal his grace.

C)The bigger the weakness – the bigger the platform or the Stage for God to display His Grace on.

D)That is the Beauty of Christianity – It gives us the opportunity to see the greatness of God instead of the greatness of man.

Wrap this up:

A)When we are disappointed with God: What we are really saying is “**God I don’t like where you have me in life right now.**” {That is wrong attitude

B)Now I don’t think Paul liked his thorn in the flesh being stabbed constantly

1)Paul wasn’t a Sado Masochist who enjoyed Pain

C)But Paul knew He was right where God wanted him.

1)His situation wasn’t the consequences of sin.

There are always consequences { Still is grace

D)But that wasn’t the situation with Paul He was right where God wanted him

1)Rather than getting disappointed Paul said I am going to Boast in my weakness - V.9b-10

Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

APP

1. Don’t be disappointed – Right where God wants U

2. Struggle is meant to humble us – Admit weakness

3. Invite the Lord to display His Sufficient Grace

4. Rejoice – You are Weak – He will show strength.

Rejoice today – Close with Communion in the sufficiency of the Grace of God.

Lord thank you for your grace that

A)Saves us – Sustains us – Meets us in our weakness

B)Grace that we stand, endure – make it thru temptation

We want to Embrace our thorn – You bore the thorns on your head

You allowed the stake driven into your hands and feet the spear into your side – Thank you.