

Grace is Sufficient



Grace (Part 15)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. In my talk today I'll continue and complete our special theme: Grace.

In my last two talks I've deal with two beautiful manifestations of God's grace in our lives: thankfulness and generosity. Both of them are direct outcomes of the grace of God working in our lives. I said about thankfulness, it is impossible to be in the grace of God and be unthankful. And generosity again follows just immediately out of the operating of the grace of God in our lives.

Today I'm going to sum up my teaching on this theme of grace by one simple, but all-embracing statement: God's grace is sufficient. I want to say that again: God's grace is sufficient.

I'm going to turn for an illustration of this to the experience and the testimony of the apostle Paul. He writes about this out of personal experience. Out of tremendous pressures and needs he comes up with his triumphant truths, God's grace is sufficient. We'll turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 7-10. Paul has been speaking about the tremendous revelation that he's received from God. But he balances that by saying that lest he should become proud and conceited because of tremendous revelations, God also let them be accompanied by a particular force of evil that troubled Paul. He's called an angel of Satan, that buffeted Paul. So Paul had these revelations but he had the angel of Satan in his life at the same time. Now I'll let Paul speak for himself. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

> "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was give me a thorn in my flesh, [that's a messenger or an angel of Satan] to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. [Now you'd think the Lord would answer the prayers of a great man like the apostle Paul. Well he did answer but he answered like he answers our prayers sometimes, He said 'no.' And remember when you pray that 'no' is as much an answer as 'yes.' This is how Paul goes on...] God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' [That's what God said - 'My grace is

> sufficient for you, my power, which comes out of my grace is made perfect in weakness.' And this is Paul's own conclusion.] Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (NIV)

You see the lesson, when the grace of God is operating in our lives, we are not limited to our own resources. In fact, God's grace begins just where our own resources end. As long as we can handle the situation in our own ability, in our own strength, in our own wisdom, we don't need God's grace. But when we come to the end of our own strength, our own ability, our own wisdom, and there's still so much more, that's where God's grace comes into operation. And Paul says in essence, "If you want the grace of God in an abundant measure, then get in a hard place in the will of God." The harder the place you're in, the greater the impossibility, the greater the measure of God's grace available to you.

I'm going to read those words again because we need to take them to heart. "...I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties." "Did we hear you rightly, Paul? You said you delighted in those things? Surely that doesn't make sense. How could you delight in things like that?" Paul says, "I've learned a lesson. They make me weak. They bring me to the end of my own ability. And then when I am weak, then I am strong."

You see, God's grace doesn't force its way through our strength. As long as we're strong, that keeps God's grace in the background. But when we're weak and still in the will of God, we've run out of all our own ability, that's where God's grace comes flooding in. The greater the need the greater the measure of God's grace.

I want to illustrate this by a little example of the ministry of Jesus which has struck me many times. There are two occasions when Jesus fed large multitudes supernaturally. The first occasion He fed 5,000 men with five loaves and two fishes. They took up twelve baskets full of pieces that were left over after everybody had had all they could eat. The second occasion He fed 4,000 men with seven loaves and a few fishes and they took up seven baskets left over. And incidentally the baskets were slightly smaller than the first time. What I want you to notice is the challenge was less the second time. There were fewer people, there were greater resources. There seven loaves and two fishes and they took up fewer baskets left over. But when the situation was even more impossible, when the crowd was larger, when there were 5,000 persons, the resources were smaller, five loaves and two fishes, they took up twelve baskets. Twelve larger baskets. You see the point. The greater the impossibility, the greater the grace of God.

So never get yourself in a situation or an attitude where you say, "Well, this situation is so hard, it's so impossible, there's nothing to be done about it." Cultivate the attitude of Paul. "Praise God the situation is totally impossibility. I'm so happy. This makes real room for the grace of God to be manifested in this situation." We just have to grasp this fact and hold onto it that the grace of God lifts us above our own natural ability.

There's another statement in the New Testament that we will look at briefly. 1 Peter 4:10, Peter is writing to Christians and he says:

> "As each one has received a special gift, [the Greek word is charisma. It's formed directly from the Greek word for grace which is charis. Charisma, a gift in this sense, is God's grace made specific in a particular example, a particular form. So he says, each one of us has our own particular manifestation of God's grace. Then he says about that...] employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (NASB)

In other words, God's grace comes into our lives, it's manifested partly through gifts that God gives us special abilities and as we exercise these abilities, we are acting as stewards of God's manifold grace. The word "manifold" is a good word, "many sided." There's no limit to the different aspects of God's grace. Whatever aspect of God's grace is operating in us, we minister out of that to others.

Let me give you this beautiful little definition of grace. G-R-A-C-E spell "GRACE." God's Riches At Christ's Expense. See, the same letters. Grace is God's Riches At Christ's Expense. I want you to lay hold of that. It's God's riches. God is not poor. He's not in danger of going bankrupt. He'll never run out of grace. The source is inexhaustible.

In closing this series of talks on God's grace I want to lay fresh and final emphasis on the fact that God's grace is rich. I want to quote two passages from Ephesians in this context. The first Ephesians 1:7:

> "In him [that is Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (NIV)

Notice that, "The riches of God's grace." Then in Ephesians 2:7, just one chapter further on Paul returns to this theme but he adds another word. This is what he says:

> "In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

That's rather typical of Paul. The further he goes with something that's related to God, the more excited he gets about it, the larger his vision becomes. So the first time he speaks about the riches of God's grace, he just says, "...the riches of God's grace." But by the time he's got to chapter 2 he's so taken up with this theme that he just can't say "...the riches of God's grace." So this time he says, "...the incomparable riches of God's grace." There is just nothing on earth to compare the riches of God's grace with. We can think of the richest man. We can think of the most generous person. We can think of the largest bank. But nothing offers any standard of comparison for the riches of God's grace.

This means the following, this is the practical application. The more we draw on God's grace the more there is left, not the less.

Now let me give you this closing word for the New Year, something that I heard once that stayed with me. "The will of God will never place you where the grace of God cannot keep you." So if you're in the will of God, no matter if the situation is strange, unfamiliar, difficult. If you've come to the end of all your own experiences and resources and you just don't know where to turn or what to do, bear this in mind. Let me leave it with you. "The will of God will never place you where the grace of God cannot keep you."

Our time is up for today. It's appropriate for me to close with the words of Scripture: "Grace and peace be with you!" That's my New Year wish for each one of you. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday.

As I look back over the Old Year, I want to say a special thank you to each one of you who has shared with me the financial burden of this ministry. Your letters are a great source of encouragement to me personally. Please continue to let me hear from you.

My special offer this week is appropriate to my theme. It's my book The Grace of Yielding. This book will provide you with a vital key to enjoying God's grace in its fullest measure.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on Grace, part three, is available in a single, carefully edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.



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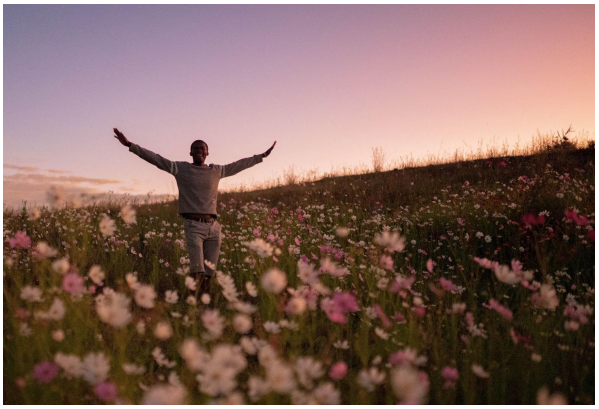

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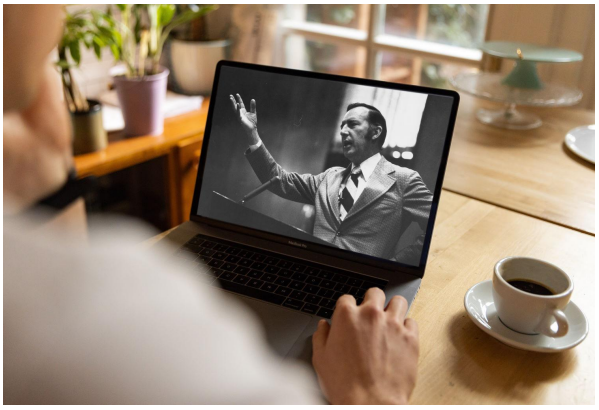

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