

# THE GRACE OF GOD

- Ephesians 2:8-10
  - Gift
- Titus 3:4-7
  - Kindness & Love
- Roman 3:24
  - Redemption that is in Christ Jesus

**God's favor**

**Undeserved and unearned by you and me**

# FOR THE LOST & THE SAVED

- The lost are in need of God's favor, but likewise the saved are in continued need of His grace
- Hebrews 4:14-16
- I Jn 1:6-9
- Acts 14:17

# CORINTH

- Paul's apostleship challenged
- His authority & influence at stake
- I Corinthians 14:37
- Not an issue of personal feelings or self-promotion
- At stake: Acceptance of the apostles' doctrine
- Paul's apostleship proven
- Corinth: Boasting according to the flesh
- Paul: If boast, boast in my infirmities
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

# A THORN IN THE FLESH

- “a pointed piece of wood; a stake”
- Numbers 33:55
  - An enemy who would harass, annoy, cause trouble and pain
- Satan’s goal: demise of your soul
- Infirmary – weakness
- Reproach – a wrong springing from insolence; injury; affront; insult
- Needs
- Persecutions
- Distresses – gives place for anxiety, sorrow, pain
- Not sin

# PERSPECTIVES ON THORNS

- A messenger of Satan
- Satan's purpose: destroy Paul spiritually
- Job:
  - Job 1:6-12
  - Job 2:1-7
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18, 16
- Spiritually discerned:
  - To buffet him – strike, beat him – so that he would not be exalted above measure
  - Keep Paul from pride
  - A teacher of humility

# THE PRAYER & THE ANSWER

- Three times – pleading for removal
- The answer – No
- “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness”
- Pointed Paul to greater dependence upon the Lord
- Evidence of pride – independence that confesses in attitude and deed – “I don’t need God”
- Proverbs 30:8-9

# RECEIVING THE ANSWER

- Verse 9
- Boasting in infirmities
- Corinth: boasting according to the flesh
  - Shame?
- Paul: take pleasure – bear cheerfully

HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?

“For when I am weak,  
then I am strong”



# A GREAT ENEMY

- Pride
- “Anti-God state of mind”
- Matthew 5:3
- James 4:6-10
- Infirmity – an instrument to teach humility

# INFLICTING PAIN & SUFFERING

- Pain
- Suffering
- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Spiritual discipline

# EARNEST PRAYER

- 2 Kings 19:14
- 1 Peter 5:6-7
- Philippians 4:6-7

# MISUNDERSTOOD

- We don't know everything!
- Habakkuk 1:1-5
- Can we live without all the answers?
- We can!
- We must!
- Pray earnestly
- Accept the answer

# SUFFICIENT GRACE

- Enough
- Fitting
- Will supply the need
- The strength necessary to the need
- A demonstration of His grace

# A PROMISE OF GREAT VALUE

- “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness”
- Romans 5:3
- Tribulations → Endurance → Character → Hope
- 1 Peter 1:6-9
- Refining power

# THE RIGHT DIRECTION

- Bear difficulties cheerfully
- Carry on sacrificially

# THE WRONG RESPONSE

- Ignore
- Self-pity
- Discouragement, despondency, bitterness
- Why me?



# THE RIGHT RESPONSE

- Pray
- Problem may be removed

or

- Not removed so that we can be humble and trust God
- Grace – enough for our trial
- Resulting spiritual growth
- Greater faith, greater trust
- Rely all the more on His strength, because His grace is sufficient