

The Grace Talk

by

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“To live by grace means to acknowledge my whole life story, the light side and the dark. In admitting my shadow side I learn who I am and what God's grace means.” — Brennan Manning

*“There it is again, the same words I’ve heard before. **“MY grace is sufficient for you.”** You would think I would know by now that God’s answer for my need will be taken back to His grace being sufficient? Is He trying to teach me something about grace that I’m not getting? Is He trying to teach me something about Himself, or is he simply trying to teach me something about myself with His emphasis on grace? What does it mean, **“MY grace is sufficient?”** This is nothing new. It seems to be a consistent answer from God. He answered the Apostle Paul the same way when Paul asked that God remove his famous **“thorn in the flesh”** that he spoke of. Paul saw it as a hindrance, and a limiter on his life and ministry. But God saw it as a necessary part of Paul’s life for a greater good, and that is why He permitted it. What gives? Why would a condition that is obviously something we might struggle with be permitted, instead of giving us the help we need to have it removed? Instead of the answer I’m looking for, I hear God assuring me that His grace will be enough? Am I missing something? I guess I am, for Paul saw how God’s grace delivered something greater than he was asking for. It depended on a certain point of view. Could that be the same for me? Is God giving more and better and I cannot yet see it?”*

Does this introspection sound familiar? If you are Christ’s disciple or you are on the way to being one, it will sound familiar and it is likely the sound of your own voice you hear, for it is the way God forms a man after His own heart. If you were not hearing it as your voice, it would for sure be mine several years ago for I asked those same questions. I can now say emphatically that the purpose for God’s *grace talk* to us is to help us find something most of us are missing, which is to learn to walk in His grace. You see, the *grace talk* leads to a *grace walk*. There is a *grace walk* that God invites us to and it is the best place we will ever find ourselves, when we finally get it.

Let’s start with a not so obvious fact. Most of us think God is giving us a trite answer to our need with saying that His grace is sufficient for us. After all, He owns *cattle on a thousand hills* and His wealth is unfathomable. He could easily meet our financial needs. His ability defies human science and medicine. Therefore, it would be nothing for Him to heal the medical issue of someone we pray for. He made woman for man and visa-versa. It would be nothing for him to bring a couple together and meet their needs for companionship under His arrangement for a husband and wife. He created the world, so why the earthquakes, tsunamis, and polar ice melt, when He could snap a finger and make them disappear? Why does evil reign on this earth, especially after the Prince of Peace overcame it? Why would the evil intentions of godless people be allowed to persecute Jesus’ Church when God could rain fire down from heaven to

silence their words and destroy their ability to wage their evil? Why not just destroy them? Do those evil people really count? Can God's grace turn those evil hearts as well? Is that what He is waiting for? Is He *gracing* them by His patience and delay?

How would God's grace help in all the cases listed above when the need for His immediate intervention for us is so obvious? Maybe, just maybe, it is because He sees things that we cannot see, and He is asking us to trust Him to do the best thing for the situation and us? Is this why He tells us that His grace is sufficient, for it is the best thing for us and He knows it? After all, we know how His grace can change a life that is on the evil side of the fence, for His *grace* helped an evil persecutor of the Church see the Light. His name was Saul of Tarsus. I'm sure when Paul remembered this fact about his old life and how God *graced* him, it caused him to see God's *grace* talk in a different way. Paul saw God's response of "*MY grace is sufficient for you,*" to no longer be the least that God would do for him, but rather the best that He would do for him. So, let's start there. Let's start to see God's grace as the best God has to offer and not the least thing He gives us, and then we may see it in a right way.

What does God's grace give us that we do not fully understand? Sure, we know that it is God's unconditional love and acceptance, but that is only the beginning part of it. Sure, it is God's Rescue At Christ Expense (G.R.A.C.E.). His grace caused God to give us Jesus to come and rescue us. But, that is only the second part of His grace to us. Sure, God's grace will glorify us in the end when we are invited into His Heaven. That is the fulfillment of His grace to us. But, do we understand that God's grace also sanctifies us and gets us through life victoriously? Do we understand that His grace signs for us, seals us, and delivers us to heaven, but are we failing to understand that His grace also transforms us in the process? Is this why His grace is the best He can do and not the minimum? It is in the process of our trials that His grace is sufficient for accomplishing his plans for our life? His plans are good for us. In fact they are the best we can have. Are you willing to allow this objective to also be your own objective for your life ... that God's plans for your life become reality?

I love Charles Trumbull's writings. *Victory in Christ* was a major inspiration to me in my early thirties, and taught me much about God's grace that I didn't realize before reading his book. What I came to see is that God's grace is Jesus Himself, and with Jesus, we get all Jesus can do in our life. Here is a brief example of Trumbull's wisdom:

"Jesus Christ does not want to be our helper; He wants to be our life. He does not want us to work for Him; He wants us to let Him do His work through us, using us as we use a pencil to write with - better still, using us as one of the fingers on His hand.

Remember that Christ Himself is better than any of His blessings; better than the power, or the victory, or the service that He grants. ... He is God's best: we may have Christ; yielding to Him in such completeness and abandonment of self that it is no longer we that live, but Christ that liveth in us. Will you thus take Him?"

– Charles G. Trumbull –from Victory in Christ

So remember this. God has a plan for you. This is true when you are facing your worst nightmares, and you may be there now? When you have no other resources, and life seems like a wall of impossibilities of which you may be there now, His plan is best. When you face an evil force coming at you that demands that you bow down and worship it or else you will be persecuted, His plan in the midst of this persecution will always be best even if God allows it. When you find yourself at the end of shattered dreams and all hope is gone, which may be your condition now, His plan is still working and being perfected. Wait for Him. It will turn out for the best. When you cry out with tears watering your pillow for a son or daughter or wife or husband who has lost their way, and you may be there now, His plan for their life and yours is in His hands. You can trust Him. Whatever the challenge you will face, and even those that come suddenly into your life, He is with you. When you cry out for His help and you hear His words, "*MY grace is sufficient for you,*" you can be assured that He both hears your prayers, and the answer He will give for your need is His best response that He can give you. You can be assured that His grace is the best thing you can want, and through this trial that you face, God is inviting you to come and *walk in His grace ... to walk with Him.* That is what abiding in Jesus means. It is learning to walk in His grace where He will fulfill His plans in you, and for you, and through you. My brothers it is true. Our King's grace is indeed sufficient.