

How sufficient is grace? (2Cor.1: 12, Eph.2:1-9)

The New Testament teaches God's "gifting" of grace through the finished works of Jesus Christ. It is not merely an instrument that guarantees forgiveness of sins and by acceptance, knowing we'll go to heaven only, but the believer is assured of much greater promises based on the obedience of Christ to the will of God.

Grace should not be thought of as a part of the Christian life, but rather the essence of it. Grace is not like other Christian topics such as obedience, good works, wisdom, devotion, ministry, forgiveness, holiness, giving, discipleship, and so on and so forth; but because of it we are saved and justified freely by God. The Bible does more than simply hint at a complete necessity for grace in the 24/7 living of the Christian life.

For example, when it comes to spiritual gifts Paul tells us that we're each gifted differently "according to the grace given us." In speaking of his own spiritual growth and ministry Paul writes, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, *but the grace of God with me.*" Elsewhere he testifies, "I became a servant of this gospel by the *gift of God's grace* given me through the working of his power."

Paul boasts that everything that he accomplished was because of God's grace working in him. "This is our boast," he affirms, "Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but *according to God's grace.*" Paul's boast in his accomplishments wasn't really a boast in his accomplishments! It was a testimony to the power of grace. His devotion to his call, his understanding of the gospel, his abundant labor in the Lord, his servant hood, his persistence, his humility, his... you name it, wasn't sustained for a moment by his own strength, striving or abilities.