

# God Does Understand

2 Cor. 12:7-10

Paul speaks here of calamities in life. I've been here 11 years now. Our congregations has suffered many losses over those years. Many of you have suffered great loss. After a loss you get up some mornings hoping that perhaps it was just a bad dream...but it's still there, it's real, and you must deal with it. Friends, God is the only one who can help in times of great grief and heartache. He will comfort you if you'll let Him...He understands!

John Newton was a drunken slave-trader. After coming to he wrote: "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me..." All who have been born again have experienced God's saving grace!

But there is another kind of grace available...not to the lost but to the saved. It is sustaining grace! It's the grace that holds you up during times of trial; sorrow; loss; grief; temptation; stress; pressure. It's the grace that keeps you going when you don't think you CAN keep going.

## What Sustaining grace is NOT

### 1. The absence of normal emotions

We are creatures with emotions. God's sustaining grace will help us work through our emotions. I once heard a preacher say that a Christian should be so full of joy that they walk into the funeral home laughing and rejoicing...**that's utter nonsense!** Tears, sorrow, and grief are a gift from God that help to relieve built up tension and emotion. They show how much we feel, care, and how deeply we love. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then tears speak a million words that we can't get out...but "tears are a language that God understands!" Remember at the tomb or Lazarus that Jesus wept!!

In Rev. 21—God will wipe away all tears...but until then, it's ok to cry, to grieve, to groan... God understands. And sustaining grace is not the absence of these normal emotions.

## **2. The absence of Anger**

Though anger is a negative emotion, it is a normal emotion. Our anger can be directed toward God; doctor; those who say the wrong things; toward yourself, wishing you had done something differently. We hear things like “Lord, it’s not fair/doesn’t make sense/why?” Sustaining grace is not the absence of anger...it’s a normal emotion at times...and God will help us work thru the anger, if we’ll let Him!

## **3. The absence of Guilt**

When there’s no one to place the blame on, we turn the blame inward, and give place to the devil. We think of what we should have done differently; when we said the wrong thing; didn’t say sorry, or I love you; we think of arguments or misunderstandings that could have been avoided; what we didn’t say and wish we had...but now it’s too late. We think of how we sacrificed what’s important on the altar of the urgent. Sustaining grace is not the absence of guilt...but even in our guilt...God understands.

I once read of a couple who seemed perfect in public, but behind the scenes they struggled, like any of us! In a low time, after an argument, they both left for work in a huff, he left a note on her pillow that said, “I hate you.” He died that day in a freak accident...and she returned home that night from the hospital to the note he left!

## **4. the absence of pressure.**

There are financial matters, personal matters, endless paperwork...and our whole being can seem to become beaten down under the load of pressure...but even in times of pressure...God understands! And His promise is that His grace will be sufficient for the burden at hand. He promises wisdom and strength that are equal to the task!

v. 9 of our text says... *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*”

Phil. 4:13—I can do all things...

Ps. 55:22—Cast your burden...

Ps. 46:1-4 *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.”*

Mt. 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

**Consider 3 things about this thought from Jesus:**

**1. The proposition *“come unto me”* (Jesus)**

There’s plenty of places you can go and not find sustaining grace. Some choose science over religion...but science cannot offer you sustaining grace! Philosophy/logic/reason. Some choose a bottle, a pill, or a syringe.

Only Jesus is the Rock in a weary land...

...the shepherd of the flock

...the water of life to a thirsty soul

...the bread of life to a hungry soul

...the burden bearer for the heavy laden...

...only He can satisfy our soul/give us sustaining grace.

Because only Jesus left heaven’s glory to come live the perfect life we couldn’t, to die the death WE deserved, to pay for OUR sins. Only Jesus conquered death for us! **“If that isn’t love, the ocean is dry...”** Many churches are trying to take Jesus to the world, dropping Him to a level they’d consider tolerable...and yet Jesus said, *“come unto me.”*

## 2. The persons - *“all who labor”*

His grace is offered to any who will come to Him...the poor as well as the rich/cultured-ignorant/educated-uneducated/thief on cross-religious Nicodemus! Think of all the invitations given in the Bible to “come”

- Genesis—God told Noah to come into the ark (an invitation from God to come into the place of safety...it applies to you and me today! God is our refuge!)
- Isaiah 1 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*
- In Matthew, Jesus invited us to come to the marriage, to sit at the table with Him, the place of provision (it applies to us today!)
- In Revelation 22 *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will...*

I don't know what you need sustaining grace for this morning...but if you don't need it today...one day you will! I believe there's as many needs in this room as there are people...and all are invited to come!

We've seen the Proposition: *Come*...The Persons: *All you who labor*

## 3. The Promise *“and I will give you rest”*

The question is this: Is Jesus capable and qualified to give you the rest that He promises? Well, in the Bible, names mean things...names describe the character and nature of people.

God has over 300 names in the Bible which help us to understand him.

- In Gen. 22:14—Jehovah Jireh: *“the Lord will provide.”*
- Ezek. 48:35—Jehovah Shammah: *“the Lord is there”*
  - ...in times of trouble (just ask David)
  - ...loneliness (ask Elijah)
  - ...persecution (ask Paul)

- Jer. 23:6—Jehovah Sidon: ***“the Lord our Righteousness”***
- Ex. 6:3—El Shaddai: ***“the Lord is sufficient”***
- Ex. 15:26—Jehovah Rapha: ***“The Lord our healer”*** He heals broken lives, and broken hearts!
- Ex. 17:15—Jehovah Nissi: ***“The Lord our banner”*** ...giving us victory...over sin, death, hell, self.
- Judges 6:24—Jehovah Shalom: ***“The Lord our peace”***
- Gen. 14—Jehovah Elim: ***“The most high God”*** Omnipotent—all powerful Omnipresent—all places at once, helping her at the same time He’s helping him over there!

Mt. 1—we see the full and final revelation of the character and the nature of God...and the angel said, ***“His Name shall be called Jesus!”***

The sweetest Name above all names. Honey to the taste, harmony to the ear, healing to the soul! Only Jesus can satisfy our soul!