

Grace and peace! Sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus! I feel like I've already been here for a while because you have been so kind to me and to my family. Moving went smoothly with the grace of God and with your support and prayers. Fairfield Grace is so beautiful! My wife loves the parsonage, especially the updated kitchen! Special thanks to staff members: Jeanne, Anne, and Kristina for helping me to know about the ministry here. And Grace as SPRC chair and Matthew as Board of Trustees chair for a smooth pastoral transition and moving into the parsonage. Bob is in charge of the technical part so we can worship today, and Angela prepared a power point presentation. Franklyn provided us a wonderful sermon not only for the children but also for all of us already! And thank you to everyone who helped make today's worship possible. Lee as the lay leader and Larry as the worship leader. Thanks to your faithfulness to God and to Fairfield Grace community!

Have you ever heard of the FOMO syndrome? FOMO is an abbreviation for "Fear of Missing Out." It is a coined term related to fear, the fear of 'missing a good opportunity.' Somewhere amazing things are happening, but I might be missing out on them!

FOMO was originally a marketing strategy, most famously used by marketing strategist Dan Herman in artificially shrinking the supply of a product so as to encourage consumers to purchase the product before they run out. This is akin to companies using 'limited edition' sales today! It was in 2004 when FOMO was recognized as a social pathological condition by Harvard Business School and Oxford University. Apparently, a majority of adults in the United States and Great Britain suffer from FOMO syndrome, so we too are probably not immune from this social phenomenon. But what do you think was the catalyst for the FOMO syndrome? The spread of SNS or social networking service.

How often do you check your SNS in a day? Probably multiple times. They say younger people check their SNS more often because they want to know new information obsessively sooner. The easy sharing of information via SNS has ironically engendered an insatiable hunger for information among us. What good things are happening that I don't yet know about? Am I

missing out on anything interesting? How are people around me spending their time?

Can you relate? It is human nature to be fearful of the unknown. The spread of SNS has made that unknown information accessible at the touch of our fingertips. So, people pathologically obsess over SNS and the new information available to them by it. And people are getting nervous...

So what should we do? Just quit SNS?

Please meditate on the Bible today. "My grace is sufficient for you ..."

In other words, it means that God's grace toward you is already sufficient, abundant, and overflowing. Do you believe it? God didn't say, "I will give you more abundantly in the future! Hang in there!" It's that God's already given you enough! Do you believe this? Or would you say, "Pastor, I think it's a little lacking now..." We are surprisingly easily dulled by what we have already received. When we possess things that others envy, once we have them, we take them for granted. Some people live healthier than others. Of course, you work hard on your own, but there is definitely something given. Some people live in a more prosperous environment than others. Some people have greater energy and passion than others, and some live smarter than others. If you are grateful for it, especially as a Christian and steward of God, you are living a faithful life.

"Pastor, if God blesses me more, I will love God more." I've seen a lot of people saying this. (I understand that. But) Listen again to what God said to the Apostle Paul as what God is saying to you now! "My grace is sufficient for you... ." (Amen) Did you ever lose your gratitude to God while going through the difficult tunnel of COVID-19? "Thank You, Lord. I want to live a life of gratitude for the rest of my life without taking for granted the things You have already given me. Up until now, I have lived for myself and my family, but from now on, let me live for You. Have mercy on my weaknesses and shortcomings and help me." I pray that we all can recover our gratitude by regarding what we have as "Enough... ." Then we will start to see things.

(Still all my song shall be, Near-er, my God, to Thee, Near-er, my God, to Thee, Near-er to Thee.)

The apostle Paul was a man of great worldly accomplishments. He was a well-educated Roman

citizen, and the Pharisee of Pharisees in strict observance of the law. He also had a profound impact on the beginnings of Christianity and world history. The letters Paul wrote to each church collectively formed more than one third of the New Testament. But Paul said he considered all these to be “worthless.”

The Apostle Paul said that he began to boast about his many weaknesses. Proud of his weakness? Who in the world can boast of their weaknesses? Weaknesses are not something to be proud of, but rather to hide, right? Some people live a miserable life because of their weaknesses, and others lose their self-esteem because of their weaknesses. When we compare ourselves to others, we fall into a sense of shame in face of people who have more, and sometimes intoxicated with a sense of superiority regarding those who have less than us. We live a very relative life. But, realizing that God's grace toward him was already abundant and absolute, Paul no longer fell into a sense of self-doubt, nor was he intoxicated with a sense of superiority. Rather, he was living in anticipation of God, who would build strength through his weaknesses!

God gave Paul, who received many graces, the thorns of the flesh so that he may not become prideful or arrogant. Despite Paul's many prayers to God to be rid of this thorn, God did not grant his wish. Instead, God opened Paul's spiritual eyes and enabled him to have a change of perspective on his suffering. Whereas Paul used to only see the pains of the thorns, Paul was now able to perceive the benefits of his suffering.

Paul realized that his thorns of the flesh was in fact God's blessing to prevent him from becoming prideful. It was easy for Paul, who experienced dreams and revelations unlike anyone else, to pride himself on his secret knowledge and intimate connection to God. But the pain of the flesh always brought him back to the position of humility. The thorns were actually God's tool of grace.

When Paul's spiritual eyes were opened, Paul realized that his weaknesses were actually his strengths within the grace of God! Having had lived a life of satisfaction based on his accomplishments and the envy of others, Paul met Christ and now decided to live only with the

Lord by the power of the Lord. So Paul confesses in today's Word that he will rejoice and boast about his many weaknesses, for Christ's power manifests in weakness. It is because of our weakness that we depend more on Christ and His power works through us.

The FOMO syndrome is borne out of comparing ourselves with others. It leads to feelings of inferiority, pride, and jealousy. These feelings are commonly based on self-infatuation; I love myself too much to the point that I cannot stand the spotlight going to anyone other than myself.

Let's reflect on the Bible when we start to become jealous. Remember that God has made each and every one of us unique. We each have different styles and talents. And each of us were given a unique vision and calling for our talents.

There is a saying, 'God does not tell the fish to fly.' God made you to be different from everyone else in the world and wants to use you in a unique way. So accept yourself for who you are! Be at peace with who you are, and reject the FOMO syndrome. Instead, stay in the grace of God through your weakness or thorns like Paul!

The Bible speaks clearly. The day will surely come when you will stand before God and count the things you have done on this earth! The day will come when eventually we will all have to stand before our Lord and count how we lived on this earth with God's entrusted to us! What is surprising, however, is that the word often translated counting in the Bible is [apodidomi] in a Greek word meaning "to give back", that is, not count, but return! It means that we must return what we were given to the Lord.

"My grace is sufficient for you ...!" We want to live with the eyes of faith that enables us to see Jesus in our lives. It is a miraculous fact that every life that truly communicates the power of God starts with a profound confession of one's own weakness and sinfulness; humility allows us to experience the preciousness of God's grace and channel God's love to those around us.

Dear Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ! Are you lacking the grace you have received from God so far? If you ever think so, please stand in front of today's Word. "My grace is sufficient for

you...!" Jesus died on the cross to save us from the power of sin and death, and rose again on the third day. He has made us children of God. In the end, He will welcome us into the Kingdom of God. We as Christians are blessed to live a life of love and respect through our gratitude, sharing, and intercession of grace, not of envy and self-infatuation. May the Lord graciously bless your life, your home, your children, your workplace, your body and soul, and may you love Jesus ever more! Amen!