

“The Plan of God in Providential Events”

1 Thess. 2:17-20

The Sufficiency of His Grace for the Sustaining of His Suffering People

I. Paul's impediment in ministry was satanic (v.18).

Paul's statement raises a host of questions. For example, in Acts 16:6, 7, Paul claims the Holy Spirit had hindered him from ministering, yet in this instance Satan hinders him. How did Paul know the difference? The same mind-bending thought comes into play when we consider the sufferings of Job. Though Satan was doing the harm, Job said, “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away” (Job 1:21). The same idea is present in 1 Chronicles 21:1 and 2 Samuel 24:1.

- **First**, we need to see just how vast the Scripture is.
- **Second**, as image-bearers we are called upon to think biblically and Scripturally.
- **Third**, true worship is truth based and motivated.

When we walk in these thoughts our response should be three-fold: **humility, charity, and teach-ability.**

A. Who He is

B. What He does

C. What I am to do

1. Know that the devil was defeated at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Heb. 2:14).
2. His defeat has been openly displayed for all to see (Col. 2:14, 15).
3. The devil is now powerless (Heb. 2:14).
4. Resist the devil by putting on the whole armor of God and he will flee from you (James 4:7; Eph. 6:11).
5. Do not forget what you are in Him and what He is for you.
 - a. I am safe from the devil because of our present position (1 Cor. 12:13; 3:16; 6:19).
 - b. I am safe from the devil because of our present protection (John. 10:28-30).

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- c. I am safe from the devil because of our present power (1 John. 4:1-4).
- d. I am safe from the devil because of our present purpose (1 Cor. 6:19b, 20; 2 Cor. 5:15).

The second truth we see is Paul's joy in ministry.

II. His joy in ministry were the saints (vv. 18, 19, 20)

- A. Stand today, in the face of incredible opposition and suffering, as a victor in Christ. Be what you are!
- B. Know that today God is using you to touch a life. Everyone you come in contact with is being influenced by the power of God. He is using you to transform lives.
- C. Do not quit. Do not give up. Stand fast in Christ. Never stop loving Him.