

Am I Ever Enough?

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you would continue to gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Father, we confess before you that what we most need is not more rules to remember with our mind or more rules to embrace with our will or more rules that we would long that we could follow.

But what we need most of all, Father, is for you to write your words of instruction and your words of love and your words of everlasting kindness upon our hearts.

And we confess before you that it is only you who can do this by your Holy Spirit. So we ask, Father, that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit into our hearts and write your very words in the center of who we are.

And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. I know this isn't a very good beginning. Is my mic, I'm fine?

It feels like my, okay, it's drooping. So if for some reason something's doing, just wave at, if it's going really wonky, just wave at me and we'll switch it. But I'm going to do something which might be a little bit foolish this morning.

[1 : 19] It won't be the first time and it won't be the last. And one of the things which I'm, what might be a little bit foolish is that John, when he was reading 2 Corinthians, he said something, or he read something, I should say, that might to some of you sound like it's a really, really, really lovely image.

In fact, it's an image that you think, that's a really lovely image. It's just exactly what I needed to hear this morning. Maybe none of you heard that. But it's very easy if you were going to look at it and even read at it.

He might say, that's a really, really lovely image. And here's where I might be being a little bit foolish. Probably every single one of you or most of you misheard it. And in fact, it's not a lovely image.

It's an insulting image. And so why am I going to tell you that and try to have you look at it and see why it's insulting? One of the reasons I'm doing it is that when I was in first year university 100 million years ago, my first year philosophy professor, he knew the Bible better than I did.

And he was also an atheist. And I think probably his personal mission statement was to make sure that people who followed any religion would follow no religion by the end of his philosophy classes.

[2 : 36] And he was always bringing up things in the Bible. And here I'd been going to church all my life. And I'd been a Christian for a few years. And I'd go, wow, I didn't know that was there. And I would be gobsmacked.

And it's an Irish expression. And I wouldn't know what to say. So I want to have that happen to you folks. So there's an image that is in the text that John just read that many of us might think that sounds like a really, really wonderful image.

Maybe I'm going to quote that. I'm going to write it on a mug. So every day when I drink coffee, I can be reminded of I'm going to put it on the mirror. The problem is you still might want to do it after I've explained to you.

But it's actually an insulting image. And probably when Paul's first hearers were hearing the Bible, they went, it's not what they were hoping that he was going to say.

So it would be a great help to me if you'd open your Bibles and turn to 2 Corinthians 2. 2 Corinthians 2. And it's going to be, I'm going to start reading at verse 14.

[3 : 40] 2 Corinthians 2, verse 14. And just while you're turning to that, you know, there's a couple of, there's many cool things. I haven't talked much to you about the book of 2 Corinthians. It looks fancy, like it's, you know, it's in a Bible.

And this used to have sort of like a gold stuff at the end. And it's nice thin paper. It looks very fancy. But this, you know, part of the thing which is so cool about this letter is, you know, we think of, you

know, in part of the way that the culture understands how the Christianity expanded, that the image that goes to a lot of our minds in Canadian culture is the Crusades or the conquistadors coming to South America.

And they come with armies and they sort of bind people. And that's when people think of Christianity jumping continents or coming to a new people group. That's what a lot of people in our culture tend to think of.

It's violent and it's exploitative. And there's no question that some things like that happen. You can't deny it. But in fact, it's not actually the way that Christianity has generally grown across the world. One of the things which is so interesting about this letter is it was written about seven years after Christianity jumped continents.

[4 : 57] It jumped from the Middle East, or really what you'd almost call Africa. It jumped to Europe. And if you go back and read Acts 16, you get an historical account of the first Christians coming to Europe.

And they don't come with a big army. It's four blokes stepping off a gangplank of a ship. And in Acts 16, when you read about Paul putting his foot down in Philippi, you are reading of the account of the first Christian setting foot in Europe.

And then a little bit later on, when you hear him talking to Lydia, and then Lydia becomes a Christian, you are reading the story of the first European Christian.

Lydia. Either a single woman, because she's widowed, or a woman with a husband who remains pagan.

But it's probably in terms of the context, a single woman in Philippi becomes the first European Christian. And shortly after that, because there ends up being great persecution, the violence in Christianity jumping from Africa to Europe, the violence comes not from Christians, but from pagans.

[6 : 20] And so they violently attack the Christians. Paul's put in jail. Acts 16 tells you the story. And then he leaves, and he goes down the coast of what is now Greece.

And he goes to Thessalonica, and then he goes to Berea, and then he comes to Corinth, probably just a couple of months after Christianity has jumped to Europe. And when Paul comes to Corinth, there are no Christians.

It's a culture and a society completely organized around paganism. In fact, one of the things, Paul doesn't talk about this very much in this book, but it's something which is really interesting, important in 1 Corinthians.

Just get your mind around this. For the average person in Corinth, just put your mind back in this. If I was in Corinth in the year 50, and I said to Louise, I had to go to the temple to worship, what it would mean in many cases was I was going to the temple to have sex with a priestess, because that's how you worshiped.

Or you'd go to have an animal killed, or do some other type of act, or to do some type of magical incantational act. And in a culture which was completely and utterly unified around paganism, Paul comes with no power, and a small group of people, and he starts to proclaim Jesus, and people come to faith.

[7 : 51] And so this letter here of 2 Corinthians, this is written just a few years after Christianity has first come to Europe, and it's come to a center that Paul had been at for 18 months.

He's come and gone a few times, and that's the context of this letter. So for many of the people who are hearing this letter, they probably were Roman soldiers.

Many of them might have been Roman soldiers, or at least they're very familiar with how Rome does things, and how this mighty empire does things. And they're listening to it as Romans, from a pagan perspective.

They've now become Christians. Maybe there's seekers in the congregation. When we listen to the text, we tend to think of Europe as Christian. We have all these false conceptions about how Christianity has entered into other places, and we also listen to it with a Hollywood perspective. So 2 Corinthians 2, 14-17, let's read it, and then I'll explain how we must hear it. But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

[9 : 07] For we are the aroma of Christ to God, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one, a fragrance from death to death, to the other, a fragrance from life to life.

Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not like so many peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ. Now we'll just sort of pause. Here's the problem with this image. I just watched a Hollywood movie last night on Netflix. What is one of the ways that Hollywood likes to end its movies? Think of a lot of the Star Wars movies. Think of, how does Hollywood like to end a lot of its movies? The hero comes back, and there's a big gathering, and everybody's applauding. Or if not like that, then shortly afterwards, there's some ceremony to just sort of reward the great hero. And Hollywood loves to end movies with the hero or the heroine returning, and people applauding and celebrating.

[10:22] And so for many of us, when we hear about this triumphal procession, we think of it in terms of Hollywood terms. But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, because that's how we would like to be welcomed, wouldn't we?

Show up to work, everybody stands and applauds. It might get embarrassing after it happened the 15th time, but the first couple of times would be good, and it would be nice if they surprised us that way occasionally, just with applause.

You know, we come home from work, or we come back to see our wife and our kid, and they applaud, you know? Way to go. So glad you're home. I mean, if Hollywood does it all the time, it's speaking to something deep within us.

Now, I was going to do a visual thing to try to communicate this, but the reason I didn't was I was worried I would fall off the stage and break my neck, and that would really ruin the image, and it would ruin the sermon, and it would ruin my life.

But the way you have to understand this text is not from Hollywood. Paul is at the end of a Roman procession.

[11:25] He's been defeated, and he's the captive, and he's in shackles. So if I was not worried about falling off this stage, I would have had somebody put something on my hands like this, and I would have had somebody put something on my feet, and I would have tied one end of the thing between to the chain or the cord between my hands, and I would have walked like this with my Bible.

You can see why I didn't want to do it. I might forget that I'm wearing it, and next thing I know I trip, and I'm down on the ground. That's the image. Paul is at the end of the procession, and he's been defeated.

In a sense, the image is the Roman army is gone. It's conquered. It's captured people, and people are all cheering, and they're all having a variety of responses, usually mocking at the people at the end of the parade who've been captive.

One of our deepest fears is failure, and one of our deepest fears of all, in fact, if Hollywood wants to try to really try to tug on our heartstrings, it will show lots of Americans.

I mean, it's American movies. That's fine. Canadians would do the same thing if it was a Canadian thing, and they would show them defeated at the end of some alien procession walking along in chains, and it would be like a dagger to our heart, and that's the image that Paul has shared, and he says, thanks be to God.

[13:03] In fact, this, once you understand that that's the image that he's using, but thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession.

You know, some of you have gone to university or are going to university. What is one of the claims that Nietzsche makes about Christianity is that it's a slave religion, that it teaches us to be servile? What does Ayn Rand say about Christianity? That it's a slave religion, that it teaches us to be servile, that it teaches us to be doormats. What is it that many people in the business community and just in the world in general, what is one of the things that they say about Christians is that it teaches to be servile, that teaches to be slave?

What is the fear of many people in Quebec, many francophones, about becoming a Christian? And while they think back to how for many, many years the Roman Catholic Church, whether they're remembering it correctly or not, had taught the people to be completely and utterly servile.

It's a deep fear of many people that that's what the Christian faith does. It's a deep fear and it's a deep human fear. And here it is that Paul seems to celebrate it because he says, thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession.

[14:19] Now, how is it that Paul would use such an image? See, one of the things that the Bible is going to tell us is that we are in far deeper trouble apart from Christ than we ever possibly imagined

and that God had really originally made us for far greater glory than we could ever possibly imagine that can only come through being in Christ.

So how is it that an image like this could be something that looks that we would actually want to embrace? Let's go back to another Hollywood image.

We're zombies. We have the zombie virus. And maybe it's like, you know, one of the hard parts for people who have dementia or people who have Alzheimer's is in the early stages when they realize they have enough of self-possession of their mind to realize that their mind is going.

But let's say in the beginning of a zombie virus, we start to realize that we're becoming zombies and we don't have the courage to cut our head off or impale our face on a pole because that would be really hard.

But we know we're becoming zombies. And then somebody wrestles us down and defeats us and plunges within us a needle and squirts something that not only will it stop the zombie virus but reverse it and start to have us process not towards becoming more and more a zombie from death to death.

[16:08] But we'll reverse the process that now it is going from life to life. We were a zombie on the way to becoming a zombie and someone defeats us wrestles us to the ground because there's enough of a zombie-ish in them that when we see them we start to think of how tasty their brains are and their blood.

I'm saying this in church that's fine. You guys all watch or know of zombie movies. But somebody defeats our attempt at aggression wrestles us down and because they love us their defeat is because they love us the injection is because they love us and as the zombie fighting vaccine enters our body we start to realize that the process is reversed and maybe we still have to have our hands shackled and maybe they want to keep us right with them all the time so we don't get reinfected.

But as we walk along we start to be so thankful that we are no longer going from zombie-hood to zombie-hood from death to death but that our destiny is from life to life and only an image like that makes sense of what Paul is saying and that is exactly what Paul is saying.

That is exactly what Paul is saying. He's going to unpack the gospel as the letter goes on. It's his second letter to Corinth.

He's already told them many many things about the gospel. It's only that that makes sense to this particular text. And you see in other words if you code up the first thing that would be great.

[17:58] Christ defeated sin. Christ defeated death. Christ defeated hell. Christ defeated me to save and deliver me.

Christ defeated sin. Christ defeated death. Christ defeated hell. Christ defeated me to save and deliver me.

that's the gospel. That's the gospel. And Paul, the image, it's a bit of a complicated image, but let's go back to the text, but thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us, spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere, for we are the aroma of Christ to God.

And pause. All of this language of fragrance and aroma, Greek people who are getting this letter, when they read the Tanakh, what we call the Old Testament, they would have read it in Greek. And if they, and maybe this is one of those things that Paul would have preached, and in all the way through the book of Leviticus, when it's describing the different sacrifices in the Old Testament that have us make, that whereby we have peace with God, and there's, and part of it is, as it's burned, as it's a sacrifice, and it's burned, and there's a, there's an ode, all of this is the language of a successful sacrifice that reconciles us to God.

[19:42] So it's a very, very interesting image, because Paul is, is playing with images that would have been something that was meant to be read slowly. Paul is picturing himself as being so glad that he's in change, and he's being led in triumph by Jesus.

And as he's being led in triumph by Jesus, he's using this imagery that he's, that what matters about Jesus isn't that Jesus can have big biceps, or that he's really good, like in zombie imagery, he's really good at banging zombies on the head, and killing them, or anything like that.

It's the image that, that what brings about, that his triumph, is his successful act as a sacrifice. A sacrifice that comes from God, that reconciles us to God.

And, and then the image is that it's as if this odor, it's, it's this aroma of the successful sacrifice that's, it's going up to God, and he can smell, he knows that his son has triumphed by the death of himself, the complete opposite of what we think is triumph, that, that my, that Jesus' defeat of death comes from his death, that Jesus' defeat of sin comes as his death bearing my sin, that his defeat of hell is that it's because he has died bearing my sin, defeating death, that hell is conquered, that hell is conquered, that when Jesus entered into what is death, he tasted everything there is to taste of death, with nothing left over, including whatever it is that we might imagine that hell is, and there's nothing that Jesus did not experience in terms of sin or in death that he has not triumphed over.

When I put my faith and trust in him, it is my defeat of my desire to be like God. It is my defeat of my desire to be completely and utterly sufficient in and of myself.

[21 : 32] It is my defeat from all of those desires that take me from God, and not only is it my defeat of these desires, it is my sharing in his victory. And the image here is of this successful sacrifice.

There's an aroma of this successful sacrifice and the same aroma and fragrance is what comes into me, into my lungs and comes out of my mouth as bearing witness to Jesus as the one who has defeated sin, who has defeated death, who has defeated hell, and who has defeated me, and he can do it for you.

No one is too bad. No one is too broken. No one is too unimportant. No one is too important or too good.

And then it has this ongoing image. Go back to verse 15. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.

Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not like so many peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity and as commissioned by God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ.

[22 : 55] See, one of the reasons I let you know that you probably were mishearing the image is because I don't want to be a peddler of God's word. Peddlers of God's word would make you think that your Hollywood image was correct.

And I don't want to be a peddler of God's word. One of the things you should pray for your Bible study leaders, for your Sunday school teachers, for the professors at Ryle, for me, for Daniel, for anyone who has any type of, for the youth group ministry, for young adult ministry, for any type of ministry, is that we not be peddlers of God's word, but we try to honestly bring out God's word as the gospel that it really is.

Please pray that for us. But just think it for a second. What this is saying, well, okay, let's a bit of a test. How many people, I don't want to shout out the answer.

One of those things you can talk about at coffee afterwards. What percentage of Ottawa do you think went to church this morning? Like, you know, let's say all of a sudden we ask the National Security Agency or Russia or China or any of the other people who are monitoring the tracking devices that we all carry with us and keep charged, knowing as our phones and our iPads and all those other electronic things.

You know, we carry them around. We very conveniently, just to help the NSA and Apple and Google to be able to market things to us and know where we are, we keep our tracking devices nicely charged.

[24 : 25] So, tomorrow morning, you know, somebody hacks and they, it was revealed where everybody actually was on Sunday morning and it, you know, I don't know what, I don't know, 4%, I don't know, what do you think, 5% of Ottawa, the next 100 people you meet tomorrow at work who are over the, you know, do you think 4 of them went to church somewhere?

Not all good churches necessarily. I don't know what the percentage, it would be a very small percentage. I don't think any of us disagree about that would be small, definitely the minority, a huge minority.

So, do you think from the perspective of Ottawa and Apple and Google and the government and NSA, et cetera, et cetera, do you think, what do you think they would think about the claim that what I just said to you a few moments ago about Christ defeated death and Christ defeated sin, Christ defeated death, Christ defeated hell, Christ defeated me to save me and deliver me.

If I was to tell them that all of the things that are going on in the city of Ottawa, that what I just said was more important because only what I said has eternal consequences.

And all of the other things that are being said on YouTube and Twitter is just chaff. They'd think I was insane.

[25 : 55] And I'll be honest, it really sounds pretty insane, doesn't it? But that's what the Bible's saying.

The Bible is saying, verse 15, for we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing to one a fragrance from death to death to the other a fragrance from life to life.

Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not like so many peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity is commissioned by God in the sight of God we speak in Christ. But notice here that Paul himself realizes that it sounds crazy because, you know, however low the church attendance is here today, however low it is that people might, and even many Christians would sort of balk at thinking that whatever comes out of a Christian's lips, that if what comes out of their lips is some type of bearing witness to Jesus, that that has eternal consequences, it sounds a little bit crazy. It would have even sounded crazier in Corinth. I don't know how big the church is. I don't know. The city was like 100,000 people. I don't know. Maybe there were 1,000 Christians. Maybe there were 400, 300. We don't know. It was a very small number of people.

It would have sounded even crazier. Paul is aware of the fact that it sounds crazy. It sounds crazy not only because he's just described to these Romans who are used to seeing victory parades, that the way to understand him is that he's the captive in shackles and chains at the end of the parade because he's defeated.

[27 : 20] And that's probably not how they woke up that morning wishing that Paul would say something to them that would encourage them. So he's given them this counterintuitive image and then he's saying that what he says when he proclaims the gospel and what ordinary people when they proclaim the gospel, that that actually has eternal consequences in people's lives.

It sounds crazy. And probably people are saying who do you think you are? Like why is it do you think that what you say is so important? And Paul understands that. That's why he says in verse 16 who is sufficient for these things?

He knows it sounds crazy. Who is sufficient for these things? And then he begins to answer it. Let's look and see what he says. Chapter 3 verse 1. What's Paul's answer?

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? So he's going to say no, no. This isn't just about me commending myself. Or do we need as some do letters of recommendation to you or from you as if you can somehow go to a degree program that once you finish the course and get the tattoo or the ring on your dominant hand that somehow you're not qualified and competent to do this because you have somebody else who said you are.

You yourselves are a letter of recommendation written on our hearts to be known and read by all. And you show us and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God.

[28 : 53] Not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. And I'm going to talk about this more next week because Paul's going to sort of jump to another image and then after that which is the text for next week he's going to unpack that image a little bit more.

but what he's saying here he's not commending himself and in fact he's even making the issue harder because he's saying what I'm saying is that there is a way what has to happen is something has to be written on our hearts.

Something has to be written on our hearts and that's something that has to be written in our hearts has to turn our hearts from going from death to death because every person you meet today will die with no exception.

I mean unless Jesus comes back and you know the rapture and all that stuff but you know in and of who we are by ourselves every one of us will die from death to death. Aren't you glad you came to church today?

I could give you all these uplifting thoughts and and Paul is going to say you know what let's make this even harder it's not just a matter of writing you know being able to write out some rules to follow you know listen if you just if you do this exercise program you're going to live longer if you eat this oh come on get some fiber and veggies in your diet and cut out all that sugar you'll live longer you know you'll live slimmer and all that we don't mean something has to be written on our hearts and Paul's going to return to this but I just want to see he's in a sense doubling down could you put the next part up I'd like you to read verses 4 to 6 with me such is the confidence that we have through

Christ toward God not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us but our sufficiency is from God who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit for the letter kills but the spirit gives life could you just put up the next point and we're going to go back to the scripture sentence in a moment just notice that the fundamental direction of the text at the end of the day

[31 : 21] I hope you don't I mean this is a helpful thing to remember I've just taken two little bits out of the text to help you to understand the basic flow of the argument but it's the text I hope you remember as a follower of Jesus I mean I'm also dying right I'm also dying and in fact it's one of the most powerful things in 2 Corinthians in a little bit in a couple of weeks he's going to talk about our you know our body getting older and getting weaker and an eternal weight of glory that's inside you know that we're like jars of clay that are cracked and easily broken and will break and that somehow within us through the gospel we are being prepared for an eternal weight of glory beyond imagination but for now I'm dying and you all know that I'm not necessarily the best at doing a whole pile of things part of getting older if you mature a lot of people don't get any smarter as they get older they just get older a lot of people don't get any wiser as they get older they just get older you know those of you who are closer to my age stop just listening to music from the 70s like there's new music out there okay like like try something new you know anyway but you know

I'm not I'm not confident in a whole pile of things and what this text is saying is that I'm not the things I'd have my confidence in and the things that I think might make me sufficient are enough for things that most of the time I'm going to idols and what it means to grow as a Christian is to be able to understand this phrase which I think is up there my confidence through Christ my sufficiency from God my confidence through Christ and my sufficiency from God my confidence is not that I don't know I can be you know I'm above average intelligence I'm pretty good you know relatively speaking at organizing my thoughts you know maybe I have some natural speaking abilities you know maybe I'm on the right side of church history in terms of growth and decline or maybe I don't know I'm just me and those can be my confidences they shouldn't be my confidences and what's going to make me sufficient is that I get to wear a collar it looks like a Javex bottle it's been stuck on a black shirt you know that's not my sufficiency it's not any of those types of things it is my confidence to grow in in life is to understand that my confidence comes to me through Christ and my sufficiency comes from God could you go back to the scripture text please say the text with me again you'll see that I'm not making this up it's not me being clever it's in the text read it out with me please such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us but our sufficiency is from God who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit for the letter kills but the spirit gives life it's a very very very powerful idea

I mean one of the things that just not only is my confidence to come more and more through Christ but my sufficiency you see one of the things that's so nice about this I don't know if Daniel DeGrossier is still here he's still here he gave a talk on sharing the gospel Daniel you're completely incompetent to do that Daniel you're going to speak at church on Wednesday you're completely and utterly incompetent you are not enough we should bring the Sunday school teachers in here right now you are incompetent I am incompetent do you know how freeing it can start to be to realize that you aren't sufficient if I share my faith and I almost mentioned a couple people's names let me tell you there's all sorts of times I think ah what a stupid thing to say or ah why didn't I say that I have a bit of dent in my forehead from doing things like that you know I'll never be sufficient in and of myself but God takes our stumbling attempts to bear witness to Jesus and the sufficiency comes from him only God can write on your heart in a way that turns your heart from a zombie heart to a living heart from a bound heart to a free heart heart that's going from death to death to a heart that's going from life to life only God can do that you are never ever ever ever in and of yourself able to do that that's what the Bible is telling us and when it says the letter kills we're going to talk about that more later on it's really just saying what we don't need is more things that we need to do more ways to lose weight more way to put on muscle more ways to make more money more ways to save money more ways to be better consumers more ways to have everybody like we don't need a whole pile of things written down like that we don't need more tattoos what we need is only God can write in our hearts can we say this text again together out loud please such as the confidence that we have through

Christ toward God not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us but our sufficiency is from God who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant not of the letter but of the spirit for the letter kills but the spirit gives life just in closing is this only spiritual no it's not just about being able to tell people about Jesus one of the problems with pornography and I got really helpful correction from a couple of weeks ago when I happened to mention pornography this is relevant by the way I don't have a hobby horse around it but it's very very relevant is that I only talked as if only men have problems with pornography and I apologize to those women present who have problems with pornography and one of the problems with pornography is that it makes us feel not enough one of the problems for a wife or a husband to find that their spouse is looking at pornography is that it's a big dagger in their heart they worry and wonder why they're not enough why aren't they sufficient for their spouse and one of the worries that we have as we get immersed in pornography or even as we become aware of the fact that even if we ourselves maybe have gotten out of pornography and it isn't doing something to us that maybe the people that we're dating and that we want to marry and we worry that if we get into that marital relationship that after they've been filling their minds and their hearts with pornography that we won't be enough and it's not just in areas of pornography

[39 : 26] I'm using pornography as an example because it's a human problem that we worry about being enough and this text is talking about something eternal but it's a very powerful lesson it's not limiting our confidence in Christ through Christ and our sufficiency from God it's not just limiting it these are huge statements it's not just limiting it to Christian ministry types of things and then the rest of it sucks to be you for the rest of your life it's not that way it's a big statement and here's the problem Genesis 3 human beings want to be like God and as a result of that desire to be like God they become separate from God it's why we need a savior and ever since then we have a hard time understanding where we are on the enough and sufficiency scale because here's the thing many of us and this is one of the things that happens with pornography and it's not only that but also other types of failure is that we demand we start to almost make an idol out of the way we try to deal with it is by trying to almost make an idol out of us being enough in the other person's life or sufficient in the other person's life but you know what we're never sufficient and enough in another person's life because we're creatures not the creator like if

I try to become everything to Louise statistically I will die before Louise if you saw how I ate and she ate I'm going to die long before Louise and I am never sufficient in another person's life in the way that part of that idolatrous part of me that wants to be like God is enough and often when we get wounded by betrayal and we get wounded by pornography and we get just wounded by life part of our desire is to become somehow something that we can never be you see what the gospel is doing here for us is it's starting to try to get us to take off the burden of trying to be like a God to another person or even desiring it and at the same time it comforts us on another level because we it's trying to help us to understand that okay George just saying that you're not enough in that sense doesn't mean you're nothing like the choice isn't as a creature between being like God or being like garbage that's your rebellious nature against God speaking that's the devil speaking that's not God speaking to you it is not a diminishment of me for God to remind me that I'm a creature that's God's word reminding me of what's true and so on one hand this text is warning us in our response to heartbreak to desire to become like an idol to the other person and as the gospel grips us as we realize that Christ has defeated sin Christ has defeated death Christ has defeated hell and Christ has defeated me to save me and to deliver me and as that grips us we realize we realize that we might have to live with many disappointments in life but we have a sufficiency that

God is enough and as we're gripped by the gospel and understand that God is enough that maybe there starts to become to us enough self possession to confront our loved one not out of an idolatry of our self but of being gripped by what Christ has done for us in the gospel please stand some of us have work to do with God because maybe we realize that there's ways in our lives that we're living that are really unbalanced because we're unbalanced about this stuff of being enough or sufficient and to be gripped by this knowledge of what Christ has done for us on the cross and that he makes he that God is sufficient and as we rest in him and as we rest in Christ there is a sufficiency that comes into our lives that helps us to live as creatures and to share about what God does and some of us here's the other wonderful thing about this is if you're here and you're still on the fence about trying to know whether to give your life to Jesus there is no one so battered or

so broken no one so much of a failure and no one so successful or so young or so good looking there is no one who is not going from death to death and Jesus died so that you will go from life to life and there is no better time than now to call out to Jesus to say Jesus I lay down my sword and I lay down my shield and I take off the false armor that I've trusted and I put it on the ground and I bow to you that you will defeat me and be my savior and he will cast no one away absolutely no one let's bow our heads in prayer father you know how many of us are wrestling with questions as to whether we are enough and whether we are sufficient and you know father how many of us are wishing that if we just had more money we'd be sufficient that money will be our sufficiency or being slim or being young or being wise or being whatever father you know all of those things even those of us who have put our faith and you know how we wrestle with these things and still you love us we give you thanks and praise that in

[46 : 30] Jesus we have been saved we are being saved and we will be saved and we ask father that you grow within us an awareness of the places the wrong and false places we go for confidence and sufficiency and that you would grip us again with the gospel that your word would come that was read this morning that many of us would memorize this passage of scripture that would enter into our lives and as it enters into our lives and is written on our hearts that in our day to day lives we bear fruit that brings you much glory father do this work in our heart and all this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen