

# Our Sufficiency

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Date: 10 March 2013

[0:00] 2 Corinthians 3 verse 5 it says, Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency!

Our sufficiency is of God.

Our sufficiency is of God. Of ourselves we are inadequate. Our source must be the sufficiency of our God.

Our source, our resource must be our Lord God, not of ourselves, not of ourselves. We are not able.

We are not able. But we have the power of divine enablement. We have the power from on high. We have the power of the Almighty God.

[1:10] The Creator of heaven and earth is the power that resides in us. The same power that raised Christ from the dead comes and resides in every believing heart.

Do you ever feel inadequate? Oh, you're all, no one's putting their hand up. You all feel, you all never feel inadequate. No, come on, let's be honest. Do you feel inadequate sometimes? Yes, you do. I do. All the time, pretty much. It's a common feeling, isn't it? It's a common feeling. Feeling inadequate. Yet, as we read through the words of Scripture, we see that even the most useless, the ones who felt the most useless, God used.

It's amazing, isn't it? The Bible tells us warts and all about all our character defects and human faults and failings. We read, for example, of Moses in Exodus 3.

You might want to follow there. In Exodus chapter 3, we're going to look at some of these characters that remind us sometimes of ourselves. Exodus chapter 3, when God called Moses, Moses felt inadequate.

[2:25] Inadequate. In Exodus 3 verse 10, it says, God speaking, Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I? Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, that I should bring them forth out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee.

When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Notice that, verse 12, Certainly I will be with thee.

Like Moses, we can all dream up excuses. Excuses. Excuses. Why? It's too hard for God to use me.

I'm just not up to it. Verse 1 of chapter 4, Exodus 4 verse 1, And Moses answered and said, But behold, they will not believe me. He felt like he was just totally out of his depth to do what God had called him to do.

[3:44] It goes on in verse 10 of Exodus 4, And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither here tofore nor since, they are spoken unto thy servant.

But I am slow of speech, and I am a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind?

Hath not I the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Amen. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray, thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. In other words, send somebody else. Send someone else.

He felt inadequate. He felt incapable. Unqualified. Moses had five questions, he could put it in simple terms, five simple objections.

[4:48] He said, Who am I that I should go? What shall I say to them? What if they will not listen? I am slow of speech.

Send someone else. But in various ways, God's response to each of these objections is, I will be with thee.

Amen. I will be with you. When God calls, he enables, he equips, he empowers. Another example is Joshua.

In the first chapter of Joshua, the book of Joshua, God had repeatedly to tell Joshua, Be strong and courageous. It seems Joshua felt weak and concerned about what God had called him to do.

Three times in four verses of Joshua, chapter one, God said, verse six, Be strong and of good courage. Verse seven, Be thou strong and very courageous.

[5:53] Verse nine, Have not I commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.

God assured him over and over and over again. Be strong and of good courage. Perhaps you feel like Joshua, inadequate, inferior, sometimes.

God can give you, I've heard this expression, God can give you confidence. Confidence.

Confidence. Philippians 4.13, it says, I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.

Amen. I was talking to someone just yesterday and not picking on all the smokers per se, because we've all got our hangups of one kind or another, and they said, I can't, I can't, I can't.

I said, you can. It says here you can. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. I can. He wants to. He knows he should do just for his health, just for common sense to give up the filthy things that he smokes.

[7:10] Yet he kept saying, I can't, I can't, I can't. Believers here today, you can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth you.

Again, I'm not picking on particularly smokers. There's just one hangup. You've got, you that don't smoke have got enough of your own. Amen. You've got enough of your own to start pointing fingers.

And this one here has especially got many more hangups. But it's when we have the, I can't. We've got to turn it around and get some confidence.

I can, I can, I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. Have you ever wondered, how could God use someone like me?

Have you ever wondered that? I think of it all the time. Totally inadequate. Perhaps you are consumed with guilt over something of the past, some scar in the past, some reason why you failed.

[8:15] There's some stain, some blot, some reproach. Perhaps you've got some physical reason or limitation. Now, raise your hand if you are left-handed.

Oh, we've got some of you here today. Some of you here, special people. Left-handed people. I'm going to preach to you now. Left-handed people.

More than 90% of the world are right-handed. But if you're a lefty, don't feel alone in a right-handed world. Now, my dear wife's a lefty as well.

And it's been said that billions of people live on the globe, so there are hundreds of millions of left-handed people out there. So you're not alone. And the Bible tells us of a left-handed man called Ehud.

Ehud, Judges 6, I think it is. Ehud, he was left-handed. Left-handed. And now, left-handed people through history, sometimes they look down on.

[9:20] In some cultures, it's considered a limitation. A limitation. An oddity. Even a disability to be left-handed. Of course, we don't think that today.

But being left-handed was considered something that was unnatural. It was something that was considered peculiar. Of course, we know that being left-handed is just as normal as being right-handed today.

I know, in times past, they used to try to force people, didn't they? To try to force people to write with their right hand, do things with their right hand. But with Ehud, he could have felt devastated the fact that he had something different about him.

Something different about him. Maybe Ehud would also have felt inadequate. Perhaps he was devastated by this problem as it would have been considered.

But God chose Ehud, a left-handed man. God chose Ehud for a particular responsibility, a particular mission. Now, because Ehud was left-handed, God enabled him to kill Eglon, the Moabite king. [10:30] And, you know, in those days, of course, a right-handed person would have the scabbard, the sword, hanging off the left-hand side of their body so they could unleash it with their right hand.

So, when Ehud went into the king's court, when he went into the king's royal throne room, the guards would have been there to check him out, to frisk him, to check him for any concealed weapons.

And they would have patted him down, probably, you can imagine, I'm being a bit inventive here. But you can imagine they would have searched him and they would have looked for any kind of concealed sword hanging off his side.

They would have checked his side, his left side, you could imagine. And so, Ehud had his concealed weapon on his right side. He would have had it concealed to suit a left-handed swordsman.

And so, as the guards who protected the king searched him, they did not find the weapon that was concealed, the sharp sword that was concealed in Ehud's clothing.

[11:38] So, the guards would have assumed that Ehud was right-handed. But as a lefty, Ehud kept his sword on the right side. So, it was overlooked and went unnoticed.

So, Ehud was used of God to kill the king of Moab and God brought a victory for the nation through Ehud, the left-handed man.

God uses us when we feel inadequate, when we feel like we may not have what others have or we may feel like we lack. Our sufficiency is of God.

Jeremiah, another case in point, Jeremiah would have felt inadequate. In Jeremiah chapter 1, we see how, again, Jeremiah thought of all kinds of excuses, all kinds of reasons.

Why not? Why God can't use me? In Jeremiah 1 verse 4, it says, then the word of the Lord came unto me saying, before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

[12:54] What does he say? Jeremiah 1 verse 6, Then said I, Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child.

But, verse 7, the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Jeremiah. Lord God, I cannot speak, I am a child. You know, young people here today, the word says, let no man despise thee, because of thy youth.

Your age is no limitation. For God to use you today. You don't have to wait until you're old and grey and decrepit like me. You can be used of God in your younger years.

[14:06] Remember now, thy creator, in the days of thy youth. Use, be used of God as a young person today. Step up, step out, and God can use you, young men, young women, God can use you for his glory, as he did Jeremiah.

We can dwell on our shortcomings. We can dwell on feeling like we're not able. It's actually better to feel weakness than pride.

Isn't it? Isn't that so? It's better that you feel weak. It's better that you feel inadequate. It's better that you feel unworthy. For whatever reason, whether you're left-handed, whatever it might be.

You name it. Your cultural background, your English language level proficiency, we can all make excuses. I'm still trying to learn the language.

Don't let it stop you from serving God. Don't let it stop you from being used of him. He will be with thy mouth. He will give you the words to say. It's better to feel weakness than pride.

[15:15] Or self-sufficiency, isn't it? Our adequacy is in him. Our sufficiency is of God. Jeremiah later declared, that familiar one, thus saith the Lord, Jeremiah 9, 23, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.

Let not the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this.

that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Amen. If we start to brag on about whatever might be going for us, you know, all the things that we could write on our CV, all the letters behind our name, all the credits and plaudits and praises of man, all the achievements we could cite, we're taking the glory from him.

God forbid, God forbid. Another inadequate man is Gideon. Gideon, another inadequate man, Judges 6. If you'd like to flick there, Judges 6.

[16:36] Our sufficiency is of God. Judges 6, Gideon, verse 12.

The angel comes, appears to him, says unto him, The Lord thy God is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. What's Gideon doing?

He's threshing in the wine press. When you threshed wheat, you did it in the open so the wind could blow it away. He was kind of hiding in some little hiding hole, some kind of place where the line was pressed.

It was some concealed kind of place. He was busy, but in a place where he was hiding, fearful, scared.

We could imagine that was the case. And yet, the angel of the Lord comes and says, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. What does he say? Verse 13, 14, and the Lord looked upon him and said, go in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.

[17:56] Have not I sent thee. Verse 15, and he said unto him, O Lord, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

I'm a nobody. My family's poor, and I'm the least in my father's house. You know, you must have got the wrong guy.

You know, I think when the angel came and said, the Lord is with thee, thy mighty man of valor, you could have gone like that, you could talk into. Oh, you must have got the wrong guy. You know, he made a mistake.

Who's behind me he's talking to? Verse 16, And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

And verse 34, it says, The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. Verse 34, that made the difference, that made all the difference.

[19:03] The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. God wants to use you. A great God can use a small and weak Gideon.

And a great God, the same great God, the same Spirit of God can use weak ones such as we, such as us.

Don't doubt him. Be used of him. Be available unto him. The sufficiency is of God. The sufficiency to do the work of the Lord is found in him, in him, in him, by him, through him, unto him.

The sufficiency is of God. Go work in the vineyard. Go and work in the vineyard. Who's ever done some grape picking?

It's hot and dirty work. I think I lasted about one day. It might have been half a day. God is able to make all grace abound towards you.

[20:13] 2 Corinthians 9 verse 8. God is able to make all grace abound towards you that you may always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

God is able to make all grace abound towards you that you always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

2 Corinthians 9 verse 8. That's a good memory verse isn't it? Isn't it? It is. Write that down. 2 Corinthians 9 verse 8.

God is able. It's wonderful that it's a combination of our weakness and his strength. Our weakness and his strength.

That's the combination. That's the winning combination. Not our strength and his strength. It's our weakness and his strength. Amen?

[21:11] That's what we need. 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9. As Paul was beseeching God, he had this thorn in the flesh. We don't know what it

was. Something that he wanted to get rid of.

Something that was hampering him. Something that was unpleasant for him. A thorn in the flesh. Perhaps an affliction. Something that was causing him grief and concern.

And he prayed and prayed and prayed. And what did God say? 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee.

For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

glory in my infirmities. That's a different way of putting it isn't it? Don't know that the faith prosperity preachers would say that.

[22:15] But that's what Paul said. I'd rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Because his strength is made perfect in my weakness.

Not in my prosperity. Not in my having everything going entirely my way. Not in my success. Not in my making a good life.

Not in my having my best life now. In my weakness. In my weakness. God's grace is sufficient.

God matches our weakness, our problems with his almighty power and strength. and we can know the sufficiency of God's grace.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. We find in him our supply, our supply, our resource, our shepherd, our source, our security, our sufficiency is of God.

[23:23] The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. God, I heard it said, a young summer school boy, I think, was trying to explain to someone what, he was asked to explain what that meant.

The Lord is our shepherd, I shall not want. He said, the Lord is our shepherd and that's enough. That's enough. That's all I need. That's all I need.

The Lord is our shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd. That's enough. That's enough for me. Our sufficiency is of God. He's all you need.

He's all you need. And as we live moment by moment, living by grace, it's his grace, his great grace towards us that is enough. It's enough.

We don't need anything more. Ephesians 1 19 we read that you may know the prayer of Paul. He says, that you may know, it goes on verse 19 of Ephesians 1, what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power.

[24:32] That you might know the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe according to the working of his mighty power. That's a good prayer to pray, isn't it?

You might know the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe. The working of his mighty power. We need grace today, grace every moment.

Just as Paul in his despair found God saying, my grace is sufficient for you.

Let's commit to that today. Let's commit to that sense, that realisation that he is enough. He is enough. He is all that we need.

We need nothing more than his grace. And let's commit to walk in that highway of holiness with him. To know the beauty of his holiness.

[25:27] To know the wonder of his amazing grace. It's sufficient. It's sufficient. It's all sufficient grace. And he's given us a Bible that is sufficient.

The Bible is sufficient. The Bible is profitable. He's given us everything we need.

We don't need to add to it with some extra-biblical revelations. That's when we get in trouble. That's when we get in all kinds of trouble.

Like the Seventh Days. Like the Mormons. Like the Watchtower organisation. Like the charismatic movement. Extra-biblical revelation.

It's dangerous ground. It's thin ice. Friends, we've got to stand on the word. The Bible is sufficient.

The Bible is sufficient. We don't need to add to it. We're commanded not to add to it. We don't need to add signs and wonders.

[26:29] We don't need to add entertainment. He's confirmed his word.

We've got it in our hand now. We've got it in our hand now. We need to be in a biblically sound fellowship where we can abound.

Where he can match our inability with his enablement. Where we can match our powerlessness with his almighty power. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 7 says, but we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

The minute we start to big note ourselves and think somehow we've got it all together and think somehow we've got a monopoly on the truth or we've somehow arrived is when we start to fall. Let him that think of his standard take heed lest he fall. We need to keep humble. We must keep humble. As a church we must keep humble.

Every movement, every movement, if we start to have our name in lights and start to brag on ourselves is when the spirit will leave us. We'll be like Samson, he didn't realise that God had departed from him.

[27:44] The treasure is in earthen vessels. There's lots of earthen vessels here today. There's even some left handed people.

Even some left handed people God can use today. Amen? Praise God. There's people from all walks of life, all cultures and stratas of society, all different countries, different languages. God is calling you. And he will be with you. He'll be with your sister when you go back to England. Amen? We've got a sister who's just here heading back Wednesday to the UK. God will be with you, with you, wherever you go. That's what the word tells us. And friends today, we can know that God can work through weak human vessels for his divine glory today. For his glory. That all the glory will be unto him. That all the glory will be his. As we read in Psalm 115 verse 1.

[28:46] That all the glory will be unto the Lamb who sits upon the throne. That's what we want. That's what we need. That's what we must have. That all the glory will go to the Lamb upon his throne.

As the psalmist cried in Psalm 115 verse 1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. Our sufficiency is grace of God. Let us pray.