



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 16, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

6th Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson: [Jeremiah 17:5-8](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 1 CW (*Red Hymnal*)

Second Lesson: [2 Corinthians 12:7b-10](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [Luke 6:17-26](#)

EPIPHANY MOMENTS

Blessings are Cursed; Curses are Blessed

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

1. Enough of the _____.
2. Don't _____ without Jesus.
3. The _____ is more than enough.
4. In Jesus, we have _____.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

When is the last time you were so frustrated, so stressed, so upset and you said **"Enough is enough"**? You were fed up with it and couldn't take anymore. You didn't want to have anything to do with that thing anymore and wanted it all to change. This is really where we find Paul in our text today to begin with. He was at a point where he was saying **"Enough is enough"** and something had to change. But then we're going to hear God speak to him and kind of change his attitude. Then as we talk about **enough is enough**, we're going to see that there is more meaning to that in a way of what really is enough and how we can find that truth.

As Paul is writing to the Corinthians in his second letter, in the chapters before he has to defend his ministry. There are these people in Corinth who are called the "super apostles." They were saying that "Paul is not really a good prophet. He is not a good apostle. He is deceiving you. We know the Scriptures. We are the best teachers." In the chapters before, Paul defends himself and talks about how he had studied the Scriptures, how he had been faithful, and then he starts talking about all the suffering he had endured. He had been stoned and whipped and left to die and people have gone against his Christian teaching time after time. He sacrificed a lot. He was kind of sick of

the lies that were going on. He was boasting in these things that are human things (he felt he had to do that because he was being attacked), but he gets done boasting about these things and then says, "I sound like a madman. This is a human way and there has to be something better to point to and something better for us to boast in." Instead of boasting in all these things, Paul wants to boast in something else.

So he says: ***Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*** Now we see him not boasting in all the things that the world wants to look at but instead in a spiritual way and saying we can boast in some weaknesses.

What is this thing, this weakness that he is talking about and this thorn in the flesh? What does he mean here? We don't know exactly what the thorn in his flesh was. It could have been some sickness or illness, some disability. Some think maybe he had bad eyesight. He talks about writing with big letters. Maybe it was something from persecution that happened. Or maybe in his travels he got malaria or he was injured from a stoning, but he had something. Maybe it was physical. Maybe it was more about people and the false teaching and the attacks because he talks about ***a messenger of Satan***. Was it people—these "super apostles" and all the people that were attacking the Gospel message. We don't know and it's actually important that we don't know so we can understand that in the same way that Paul had this thorn of the flesh, there might be a thorn in your flesh that you can think about of something that is just there and it doesn't seem like it's going away. Why is it there and why doesn't God take this away?

As we think about that, it says he pleads with the Lord for Him to take it away. We want to understand that as we think about our suffering and the thorns in our lives, there are a lot of lies we believe that make those troubles even more difficult. So as we talk about **enough is enough**, there is also ***enough of the lies***—enough of the lies of how life should be or, in fact, what it is.

Some of the lies that we deal with is that life should be easy. Do you think it's a lie that a lot of people believe, that life shouldn't be hard, that it should be easy and as soon as things get hard, "Why is life hard!?" Who said life is easy? Who says we shouldn't have problems? We live in a sinful world, a broken world, so life is difficult. If someone tells you differently or you are so surprised that there is suffering, then you believe a lie and that causes you to doubt God or struggle with your own faith.

There are lies that our weaknesses are worthless and who God has made us is only about our strengths, but if I understand that God has made me with good things and

bad things, weaknesses, I can also lean on other people. I can grow and understand that weaknesses, as Paul is talking about his, God gives us these for a purpose or He can use them for His purposes.

What about the lie that God won't give you more than you can handle? You may have had people tell you that. "Everything will be fine. God won't give you more than you can handle." It's a lie! That's what this whole section is about. God will give you more than you can handle because you need to depend on Him. You can't handle this on your own. You're not enough. If we think God won't give us more than we can handle, this is a huge lie! God gives you your family, your friends, your loved ones, the church, and most of all Him to lean on.

What about the lie that suffering has no purpose, that there is no meaning in what we are going through? God has a good purpose for things even if we don't always understand it. There are other lies, like you can have everything. If it takes hard work, it's not worth it. I can do it by myself. We love to make everything about us. There are so many lies that we deal with, it's a struggle. I think about that lie of suffering having no purpose or it's all about me. We sometimes need to take ourselves out of it and take off the control and the thought that we are leading everything and if something goes wrong, then it's all over or it's our fault or God can't use this.

The book study we're doing on Sunday nights/the Bible study on Sunday morning, the writer talks about being a father with a daughter. There was a cold winter day and they were driving around and it was chaotic because they have to go in and out and buckle in and things were going wrong. He was frustrated, so he was driving too fast and he gets pulled over by a cop. He was thinking it was a horrible day and he was all stressed out and angry because everything was going wrong. Then his daughter, who was in the back seat hanging out all day, said "Daddy, where are we going?" He says, "Oh, we're going to a rodeo." She says "Okay. Great." She is happy. You, driving, can be so frustrated at everything that goes wrong.

We drove out to Minnesota and back with the snow and everything. It's not right! But if you are in the back and you trust the driver, you can understand that even if things are not exactly how you think, you are just sitting there and trusting God. You're trusting that He knows what is good, even if it's hard, and there is a good destination and He has your good in store.

That really focuses on the next point then of trusting in Jesus and understanding why these things happen. It says that he pleaded with the Lord three times to take away this thorn of the flesh. ⁹***But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*** When we look at what he was going through, he says "I asked God to take this away but he didn't and it wasn't until I heard the Word of God and He said 'My grace is sufficient for you and my power is made perfect in your

weakness' that I understood the Word of God." He is suffering and looking at God's Word and understanding the purposes.

The encouragement here is when we understand life is hard and we are in this broken world, are you going to suffer in life? We know that. Is everything going to be easy? Is everything going to be dandy? No, we're going to have hard times, but you do have a choice of how you suffer. You can suffer without God's Word. You can suffer without Jesus and you can do it on your own, putting your hope in yourself and in people and all the lies that the world and ourselves tell us. Or, you can suffer with Jesus. So the encouragement is, *don't suffer without Jesus*. Put yourself in and hear the Word of God and be filled up with the peace and the truth of who Jesus is and His love for you. Yes, we are sinful, but God has a plan and purpose. Make use of the Word and Sacrament. Don't go so long without God. Use devotion and be filled up over and over again, because life is hard! There are great things that happen but when you get those difficulties, you want to be in line and understand God's Word and be filled up with Jesus and His mercy because of who Jesus is and what He has done. We have to understand that and see that this is so important.

Is it wrong to ask God to remove the difficulty? If you have that thorn in the flesh, if you have a suffering or whatever it is, you're probably thinking of that thorn in your flesh and "God, why don't you give me this" or "Why hasn't this happened yet," but notice that Paul asks God three times to take it away. God said "My grace is sufficient." Why is it sufficient? It's because of who Jesus is and what He has done. *The grace of Jesus is more than enough* because we see so much of who He is and what it means for us. We see Paul ask three times for God to help in his time of difficulty and He says "No, I'm not going to take it away."

Is there another time in the Bible where someone is praying to God, praying to the Father, and saying "God, if you could take this away, please do," and He prays three times for that to happen? Think about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before He is going to be crucified and says "God, if this cup can be taken from me... not by my will, your will. If there is any other way..." Even Jesus, who is God, understands what we are going through when we are in those difficult times and we say "Is there any other way?" Even Jesus did this. But then God answered and said something similar to Paul, "No. There is no other way." But then what happens is Jesus, as that great substitute for us, understands what it is to be in a difficult time and trouble and suffering and trust in God and praying to God, but then He goes willingly. He goes uncomplaining and He doesn't say "Ugh! Now I have to go do this" or complain about how horrible it is. He knows it's necessary and He knows that through the suffering come such important things. Through His life, His living perfectly for you and then going to the cross to pay for your sins He brings this grace that is more than enough. When we say **enough is enough**, God's mercy and love for you is so great because Jesus went to the cross to win you salvation, to take away those doubts and fears you have and the times when we don't

trust God the way we should. We see how amazing Jesus is as His cross gives us everything we need. But this really helps us understand why the world is the way it is and how we can trust God even in difficult times.

We see that *in Jesus, we have more than enough* because of what has happened. We can say that we can ***boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*** ¹⁰***That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*** We have more than enough and when the world says these things are pointless and no good, God says "No, they have purpose and they are good because they are pointing you to me."

What is also important to understand here is this theological term, the Theology of the Cross vs. the Theology of Glory and really what it all means is this: In Jesus we have more than enough even though it doesn't seem that way.

The Theology of Glory is all about thinking God only works through the spectacular or the good. If you have good health, that means that God loves you. If things are going well, that means you have been very faithful. If your church is really good and huge, that means it's because you are faithful and God is good.

What if those things aren't true? What if you're sick? What if you have lost a loved one? What if you have hardships? What if there is danger and difficulty? Does that mean that God doesn't love you? What we've heard in all the texts is that God works through weakness and just because someone is persecuted or something is not popular—we just talked about this in the last few weeks that even though something is rejected, it doesn't mean it's not true. So we look at God's Word and we see that in the cross, in suffering, Jesus gave us everything. Jesus gives us victory over death and sin and the devil. He gives us eternal life. So people look to the cross and they say "What good can come from that?" and we say "Everything!" We don't have to make it all about what the world sees as important and good. We can say God can work even through weakness, insult, hardship, persecution and difficulties. You can think about that in your life, the Theology of the Cross, in how God works through things that the rest of the world might not see as important.

Maybe people look to power and pride as the most important thing and having lots of stuff. But what happens when you have lots of stuff? Maybe you get so busy and now you have to work more and you lose track of the relationships that are really important. You lose track of spending time in your spiritual life. So maybe not having everything is okay and instead of being prideful and making it all about you, what if you make it about service and putting others first. In your marriage, can you say "How can I serve you?" In your family, kids, "Mom and dad, how can I serve? How can I love? How can I show my love and support and put others first?" The world will say "That's weakness.

You need to make it about you and your desires and your wants. If you put down your wants and desires, that's weak." What about forgiving or letting go of anger? "You should be angry and you can't forgive someone that really hurt you!" God says "Forgive, because I have forgiven you."

We can do things that the world looks down on and says is foolish, but we know that it's so much greater in all the different places of your life. The world twists things and God says "No, in all these things, I am working." God can use them to your good. You can trust and know that His power is made perfect in our weakness. His power has a plan. His plan is to get you to heaven. His plan is sending Jesus for you. His plan is helping you see what is most important in your life, and sometimes that means hardship and difficulty. But that doesn't mean God doesn't love you. That doesn't mean Jesus hasn't forgiven you and hasn't forgiven the worst of sins. Lean on Christ and understand it's not all up to you and Christ has done it.

So if you're wondering if **enough is enough**, we know that God's grace is sufficient for you. It's more than enough. He showered His love and mercy on us through Christ and it radiates through our whole life and turns our world upside down to help us to see the value in so many different things and that we can love God and love our neighbor through our whole life and into eternity. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.