

John 1:17-18

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father. He has explained Him.

How much is enough?

Steve Jobs' level of success was so high that writers have had a difficult time finding a standard of comparison. He has been compared to Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. He was a visionary genius who revolutionized at least six different industries. He dropped out of college to start a company called Apple.

His legacy includes Mac computers, Apple stores, Pixar Studios, iPhone, iPod, iTunes, and iPad. He changed the way we think about computers, phones, music, movies, and retail stores. He made technology cool, intuitive, elegant, and easy to use.

On October 5, 2011, Steve Jobs died of pancreatic cancer at age of 56.

In all of Job's accomplishment in the computer industry, are they enough?

Tom Brady played college ball at University of Michigan. He was a sixth round draft choice of New England in the year 2000. That gives hope for those not chosen in first round. Since being in the pros, Brady has led the Patriots to the eighth super bowl, a record for any quarterback, winning four times, and the eighth trip remains to be seen. As of 2016, his net worth is \$180 million. Yahoo sports makes the declaration that with or without the fifth ring, Brady will go down as the best quarterback in the history of the NFL. (This sermon was preached before the outcome of Super Bowl LI)

One day, Brady will retire. On another day, still to be determined, he will die. In all his accomplishments in sports, is it enough? It is until someone betters him, which may happen. What then?

There was this Jewish guy that lived about the time of Jesus Christ. We have a short version of his resume.

He was circumcised the eighth day. That means he started off as a good Jew.

He was of the nation of Israel. He was a patriot for his nation.

He was of the tribe of Benjamin.

He was a Hebrew of Hebrews. As far as his keeping the Law, he was a Pharisee which made him a radical in some sort of way.

He was zealous in keeping the Law.

He was a persecutor of the early Christians.

As to the righteousness which is in the Law, he was found blameless.

Somewhere around AD 63 to 65, this Jew died from the executioner's axe to the neck. In His accomplishments in keeping the rules, were they enough?

In the backdrop of these real life scenarios, I turn your attention to our text. Verse 17 and 18 are summary statements of all of verses 1-18. The summary is presented by means of a contrast, showing the difference between two ways of being right with God. Verse 17 answers this question. What will it take for us to be placed in the position of being in the right standing with God? Will our earthly accomplishments and our works be ever enough to earn the right standing with God? Can we rely on grace that comes from Jesus Christ?

The verse presents a contrast is that between the Law and Grace. The verse introduces us to the insufficiency of the Law, and the all-sufficiency of grace.

Insufficiency of the Law

The Law was given through Moses. The Law was laid out to show the way to being right with God. The Law is based on obedience to the Law. As long as we are obedient to Law, we are right with God. When we break the Law, there is established for us a system of sacrifices that gives us the way back to being right with God.

It teaches we are sinners.

Galatians tells us that the Law is a school master that teaches us we are sinners. The Law, however, can never make us righteous.

Eternal life, life with God cannot be earned through performance when under the Law. We cannot be freed from the bondage, the guilt, and the condemnation of sin!

Acts 13:38-39 - Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

Romans 3:20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

The Law is insufficient to bring right standing before God. The Law therefore is a tool by which God declares to us that because of sin, we die.

We die physically, spiritually, and eternally.

Steve Jobs, if you are banking on performance as an inventor having given humanity great tools as the basis of eternal life, it is not enough.

Tom Brady, if you are depending on your abilities as a quarterback to entertain people with your greatness, it is not enough.

Jew, Pharisee, Patriot of Israel, your keeping of the law and being blameless is not enough.

That Jew will agree. For that Jew that we talked about is none other than Paul. You figured that out didn't you.

Let me finish what Paul began when he gave his resume.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

That brings us to the second part of the contrast drawn in verse 17—grace.

All-Sufficiency of Grace

God's grace is all-sufficient. It is sufficient for salvation, but it doesn't stop with salvation.

All-sufficient grace is understood as we put verbs behind it.

Grace searches out the lost sinner.

Grace removes spiritual blindness.

Grace gives spiritual sight.

Grace teaches us to fear (trust) God.

Grace relieves fear.

I can stand and talk all day about grace. In the little time I have left, I want to give you the greatest, most profound word for grace—Jesus Christ. Grace is all sufficient because Christ is all you need. Literally, verse 27 can be read grace and truth became through Jesus Christ.

As we define grace as the unmerited, undeserved favor of God. That is exactly who Jesus is. We don't earn Him. We don't deserve Him. We are given Him through the mercy and the grace of Almighty God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. But that is not all. Through the all-sufficient grace that saves, Paul says that it is sufficient to help him to endure the suffering that God chooses not to remove. My grace is sufficient. Power is perfected in weakness.

I don't know where you are in your life right now. But I can tell you this. Christ is all you need. There is nothing else. There is nothing else. It is grace for a life time.

That is what John Newton's hymn Amazing Grace is all about. Through the hymn, Newton takes us through a life where God's grace saturates the life of the believer.

1 Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)

that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

and grace my fears relieved;

how precious did that grace appear

the hour I first believed!

Those two verses tell us about sufficiency of God's grace that saves us from sin.

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:

'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

Those two verses tell us about the sufficiency of God's grace to persevere in following Christ throughout life.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease:

I shall possess, within the veil,
a life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
the sun forbear to shine;
but God, who called me here below,
will be forever mine.

These last two verses tell us about the sufficiency of God's grace that takes us into eternity.

Did you notice one verse is missing? The last verse that is found in our hymn book has been left out.

What's the deal with that? At the time of the writing of this hymn, John Newton's close friend and partner in ministry was William Cowper. At the time of the writing of this hymn Cowper began a torrential journey through mental illness. John Newton stayed with him through it all, even intervening in a suicidal attempt. One of the things that tormented Cowper was the fear that he would never measure up to God's expectation. Newton constantly reminded him of God's amazing grace. At one of the good moments, Cowper embrace the hymn as his testimony, and added one verse to it.

When we've been there 10,000 years;
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun.

Cowper again slumped into mental torment which was a pattern through the rest of his life. In the last moment of Cowper's life, he made this statement. "Wow, He really is going to let me in."

God's all sufficient grace is for you. What are you going through at this moment? Whatever it is, His grace is sufficient to help you endure and carry you through. His grace is sufficient. That means He gives you enough for your moment with an endless amount of grace available as you need it.