

Series: "AMAZING"

For Message: I Peter 5:8, 12; I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 2:13; Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 46:1
Message Title: "SUSTAINING Grace: Part 2"

Introduction: Welcome to BMZ Church! Glad you are with us today as we CONTINUE our WORSHIP SERIES called: "**AMAZING**"! We are TALKING about GOD'S GRACE. On Easter, we kicked this series off talking about **SAVING GRACE**. LAST WEEK, we GOT STARTED with GOD'S SUSTAINING GRACE. (Missed it? www.bmzchurch.org/sermons/).

Today's message... something COOL about God. God ALWAYS FINISHES what He starts. ALWAYS! Listen ... **PHILIPPIANS 1:6 = ⁶And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.**¹ It does NOT say, God MIGHT FINISH, or God HOPES to FINISH. It says God WILL FINISH! This is the Apostle PAUL. He WROTE THIS while sitting in a PRISON CELL. He WROTE it to the CHURCH in PHILIPPI that he STARTED. Paul faced many TRIALS, TROUBLES, and TEMPTATIONS in his life. But PAUL, END of his life, in a PRISON CELL writing this LETTER, CONFIDENT GOD will FINISH what He started.

What does that mean? It means IF you have SURRENDERED your life / HEART to CHRIST and made JESUS the LEADER of your life and you've RECEIVED God's FREE GIFT of GRACE, YOU are GOING to HEAVEN! NO DOUBT. Case closed. DONE DEAL. GOD WILL FINISH what He STARTED in YOUR LIFE. HOW? Because your SALVATION does NOT DEPEND on Your PERFORMANCE; it DEPENDS on God's PROMISE of SAVING GRACE. IF you're a FOLLOWER of Jesus, THE QUESTION is NOT "**WILL you finish the race?**" IT'S, "**HOW will you finish the race?**"

Last week, we STARTED with GOD'S SUSTAINING GRACE ...

God's SUSTAINING Grace

SOME Christians JUST SURVIVE the RACE. OTHER FOLLOWERS of JESUS BEAR FRUIT and THRIVE in THIS LIFE as WITNESSES to JESUS. Let's THRIVE!

What is Sustaining Grace? Here's a DEFINITION: "**Sustaining Grace is the power to keep going when I feel like giving up.**"

My GUESS IS, I'm NOT the only one who has TIMES when I'm READY to GIVE UP. But SUSTAINING GRACE is the POWER to KEEP GOING when you FEEL like Giving Up. IT'S the POWER to KEEP CHOOSING RIGHT over WRONG ... to KEEP GOING when you're SO TIRED you can NOT TAKE another STEP. It's the POWER to KEEP GOING when TROUBLES HIT.

Listen, there are many PITFALLS in this LIFE. But REGARDLESS of what you GO THROUGH ... what you FACE THIS YEAR, you can count on God's SUSTAINING GRACE.

LAST WEEK ... THREE SITUATIONS that will CAUSE YOU to STUMBLE, to QUIT, to NOT FINISH WELL in LIFE. **3 THINGS to KNOCK you OFF YOUR FEET in LIFE...**

#1 = I'm TEMPTED

You all UNDERSTAND WE are ALL TEMPTED with things NOT of GOD, right? God GIVES me SUSTAINING GRACE to keep me standing when I'm TEMPTED. Then, His SUSTAINING GRACE keeps ME STANDING WHEN ...

#2 = I'm TIRED

Sometimes, I'm JUST TIRED. LIFE can BE EXHAUSTING with BUSYNESS, dealing with WORK, FAMILY, SCHEDULES, and EXTRA ACTIVITIES. LIFE

can be TIRING. It takes a lot of STRENGTH / ENERGY to LIVE. GOD PROMISES to ENERGIZE you with HIS SUSTAINING GRACE **IF** we TRUST in HIM. GRACE for when I'm TEMPTED and TIRED ... #3 = SUSTAINING GRACE helps KEEP me STANDING WHEN ...

#3 = I'm TROUBLED IOW, WHEN I have PROBLEMS / DIFFICULTIES. THERE is a WORD for WHEN you have TROUBLES that REFUSE to GO AWAY. The WORD is "LIFE." JESUS EXPECTED TROUBLES and WARNED US NOT to be SURPRISED. THIS LIFE is FULL of TROUBLES / DIFFICULTIES / OBSTACLES. BUT God REMINDS US NOT to WORRY. He will GIVE us the POWER of HIS SUSTAINING GRACE.

Listen, I want you to know GOD is READY to HELP. IF you're TEMPTED, TIRED, or TROUBLED; God's SUSTAINING GRACE is WAITING for you. What is it for you?

Okay, I'll ask (don't have to raise your hands ... just think about it): "**Are YOU being TEMPTED today? Are you TIRED and thinking about GIVING UP? Are you dealing with a FORM of TROUBLE?**" Okay, NOW WHAT? NEXT WEEK, we will go FURTHER with RESPONDING, but for THIS WEEK ... FOCUS on GOD'S PROMISES. WORK on your TENACITY / GRIT ... FIGHT THROUGH the TIRED / TEMPTATIONS / TROUBLE by RELYING on GOD'S STRENGTH (Sustaining Grace) ... NOT YOURS!

TODAY, we GO DEEPER with GOD'S SUSTAINING GRACE. **We ALL NEED IT, so HOW do we RECEIVE IT?** Good Question!

How To RECEIVE God's Sustaining Grace:

SO, if I need it ... HOW do you get it? HOW do I GET God's SUSTAINING GRACE? Here are FOUR (4) BIBLICAL, PROVEN and PRACTICAL STEPS to receive God's SUSTAINING GRACE. The FIRST ONE is this:

1. CALL for God's HELP

There is a THEOLOGICAL word for THIS ... PRAYER. PRAYER is HOW we CALL OUT to God when we NEED HELP ... NEED His SUSTAINING GRACE.

WHY, when we are TEMPTED, TIRED or IN TROUBLE, do WE THINK we must HANDLE it OURSELVES? Here's the DEAL: **IF you PRETEND to be SELF-SUFFICIENT, you SHORT-CIRCUIT God's POWER in your LIFE!**

DON'T MISS THIS: **It's a HUGE STEP of MATURITY to realize you NEED GOD.**

When you are **TEMPTED**, IF you FOCUS on the TEMPTATION, you'll FALL to the TEMPTATION. Instead, FOCUS on GOD and CALL for God's help.

When you are **TIRED** and don't have ENERGY, do NOT FOCUS on WHAT'S DRAINING you. That will only make you MORE TIRED. Instead, FOCUS on the ONE who can FILL YOU UP ... CALL to God for help.

When you are going through **TROUBLES**, IF you FOCUS on your TROUBLES, you will just be MORE SCARED and WORRIED. Take your FOCUS OFF your TROUBLES and FOCUS ON God and CALL to God for help.

LISTEN, YOU are NOT GOD! YOU CANNOT CONTROL what HAPPENS around you. So, WHAT do you DO when it HURTS so BAD, and you CAN'T CHANGE IT? You ADMIT IT! HUMBLE yourself and CRY OUT for God's help. PRAY. PRAY EARNESTLY... CONTINUOUSLY... PASSIONATELY... with INTEGRITY. PRAY in SYNC with the EMOTIONS you are EXPERIENCING. Say, "**God, it hurts! Help me! I can't handle it!**"

RELY on the SUSTAINING GRACE of God. JAMES way of saying it ... **JAMES 4:6-8**
 = ⁶ *And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* * ⁷ *So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he*

will flee from you. ⁸ *Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.*²

NOTICE WHO gets GRACE ... The HUMBLE. Those who ADMIT they CAN NOT DO IT ON their OWN. GRACE goes to those who TURN to GOD for HELP. **“GOD, YOU’RE GOD and I’m NOT!”**

So, the 1st way to RECEIVE God’s SUSTAINING GRACE is to CALL to GOD for HELP. Here’s the 2nd way . . .

2. Fill Your MIND with God’s WORD

WHY do we GIVE you SO MANY SCRIPTURES EVERY WEEK in your NOTES? BECAUSE we want to FILL your MIND with God’s WORD. WHY do we HAVE a MEMORY VERSE and OFFER BIBLE READINGS? To FILL your MIND with GOD’S WORD!

BECAUSE I KNOW over this NEXT WEEK - you will be **TEMPTED**. YOU will NEED to REMEMBER that VERSE from this week or a previous week to help you.

I KNOW over this NEXT WEEK - you will get **TIRED**. FILLING your MIND with GOD’S WORD will give you STRENGTH and ENERGY to draw from.

I KNOW over this NEXT WEEK - you will face **TROUBLE**. But FILLING your MIND with God’s WORD will give COURAGE, FAITH, and DIRECTION to GUIDE YOU.

But it’s MORE than just SCRIPTURE on SUNDAY. It’s spending TIME **EVERY DAY** READING the BIBLE and/or STUDYING your DEVOTIONS or in GROWTH GROUP.

The BIBLE: let it COMFORT you, STRENGTHEN you, FILL you, SOOTHE you, let it give you the ENERGY you need. READ IT, EVERY DAY of your LIFE. Get a translation that’s easy to understand. READ IT and FILL / WASH your MIND with THE WORD! IF you NEED a BIBLE, LET us KNOW. Bible Reading Plans in YOUR BUILDING and on our WEBSITE under “NEXT STEPS.” Get GOD’S WORD IN your MIND and ... **GET the “L” OUT!**

This NEXT VERSE is like God’s RED BULL ... **PSALM 119:25 = ²⁵ I lie in the dust; revive me by your word.** Why **“Lie in the Dust”**? The writer is DISCOURAGED! How about YOU? Discouraged? NEED REVIVED? The BIBLE is like SPIRITUAL RED BULL!

SO, STOP listening to DISNEY MOVIES. STOP LOOKING WITHIN YOURSELF for the ANSWER or for more STRENGTH. Look to GOD and to His WORD. Look outside of YOU, the CREATED, and LOOK to the CREATOR who MADE YOU. The ANSWERS are NOT in you. They’re in God’s WORD!

Okay, CALL OUT for GOD’S HELP and Fill your MIND with GOD’S WORD. #3...

3. Accept SUPPORT from God’s PEOPLE

Here at BMZ, we offer Semester-Based GROWTH GROUPS. Here’s why: Human Beings were CREATED in God’s Image and GOD is SOCIAL! We’re CREATED to NEED EACH OTHER! We need RELATIONSHIPS and SUPPORT! So, we offer GROWTH GROUPS in FALL and SPRING. We OFFER WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY!

We also offer OPPORTUNITIES to SERVE together on our HOSPITALITY TEAM or with our CHILDREN’S MINISTRIES or with our TECH TEAM. When we SERVE together, we build RELATIONSHIPS, and REALIZE we are NOT ALONE in striving to FOLLOW JESUS!

Sometimes God delivers His SUSTAINING GRACE through the ENCOURAGEMENT of OTHER PEOPLE. Through a GROWTH GROUP or SOMEONE you MEET on SUNDAY in WORSHIP or THROUGH SERVING TOGETHER. AND it’s BIBLICAL ...

GALATIANS 6:2-3 = ² Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. ³ If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling

*yourself. You are not that important.*³ WHEN you're TEMPTED, TIRED or TROUBLED, do NOT THINK you have to GO IT ALONE. ACCEPT SUPPORT from God's people.

SO, HOW do you RECEIVE God's SUSTAINING GRACE? CALL OUT for God's help, FILL your mind with God's WORD, ACCEPT SUPPORT from God's people. FINALLY:

4. Hold On to God's PROMISES

There are over 7,000 PROMISES in the BIBLE just WAITING to be CLAIMED. They are LIKE BLANK CHECKS. Here are TWO you can HOLD ONTO as you are **TEMPTED, TIRED, or TROUBLED**. These PROMISES will help bring you God's SUSTAINING GRACE: ISAIAH 40:29-31 = ²⁹ *He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.* ³⁰ *Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.* ³¹ *But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*⁴

KEEP your HOPE in the LORD and FOCUS, NOT just on the TEMPORARY, but the ETERNAL! FOCUS on the Hope of HEAVEN. 2nd CORINTHIANS 4:18 = ¹⁸ *So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*⁵

2nd CORINTHIANS = Apostle Paul. IF ANYONE UNDERSTOOD GOD'S SUSTAINING GRACE it was PAUL. In fact, WE KNOW from his LETTERS that PAUL SUFFERED from an ailment. There has been a lot of debate about what that was for Paul, but Paul called it his "**THORN in the FLESH.**"

Was that THORN a **TEMPTATION** he struggled with? Maybe a **PHYSICAL AILMENT** that caused him to be TIRED / FATIGUED? **TROUBLE** he was facing. WHATEVER it WAS, we KNOW PAUL can RELATE to WHAT WE EXPERIENCE and our NEED to EXPERIENCE God's SUSTAINING GRACE.

I want this to be the PROMISE I leave you with today. Maybe YOU are STRUGGLING with a **PHYSICAL AILMENT**. Maybe you are struggling **FINANCIALLY** or in your **JOB / CAREER**. Maybe it's **RELATIONSHIP TROUBLE**. Maybe there is a **TEMPTATION** you just CAN'T SHAKE. Maybe you are **TIRED** and think, "*I just can't put another foot in front of the other.*" MABYE you are **STRESSED OUT**.

PAUL, with his THORN in the FLESH, writes ... 2nd CORINTHIANS 12:8-9 = ⁸ *Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.* ⁹ *Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.*⁶ I LOVE THIS.

When you're STRUGGLING and CAN'T FIX IT, "**DON'T GIVE UP; LOOK UP!**" God's SUSTAINING GRACE MEETS YOU at your point of need and GIVES you COURAGE, WISDOM, and STRENGTH. It DOESN'T PROMISE we WON'T STRUGGLE. It PROMISES the PRESENCE of GOD. That's ALL WE NEED!

I'd like to CLOSE with a special PRAYER / CALL OUT for those of you who are **DISCOURAGED**. You may be struggling with **WORRY**. He can fix that. CALL OUT! You may be struggling with **GUILT / SHAME**. He can handle it. You may be dealing with **DEPRESSION** or **FINANCIAL** conflict or conflict in your **HOME**. Maybe you're dealing with **UNEMPLOYMENT** or **INFERTILITY** or something you **CAN'T CONTROL**. He can!

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ga 6:2-3). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Is 40:29-31). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (2 Co 4:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁶ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (2 Co 12:8-9). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

So, TELL HIM RIGHT NOW what is discouraging you! Tell Him PASSIONATELY. It's OK to shed a TEAR. Tell Him what is DISCOURAGING you. Today, some of you are facing a strong TEMPTATION. Some of you are exhausted and TIRED and you don't know how long you can keep up the pace. And some of you are in TROUBLE ... FINANCIAL, your MARRIAGE, your HEALTH. God GETS IT ... GOD CREATED us to NEED HIM! **We aren't supposed to be able to handle it on our own! That's not how we are created!**

I want to give you just a MOMENT, RIGHT NOW, to GET QUIET and GET HUMBLE. Go to GOD RIGHT NOW with your TEMPTATION, your TIREDNESS, and your TROUBLE.

Let's Pray

Next Steps: *I will memorize 2nd Corinthians 4:18*
I will read James 4 and/or Galatians 6
I will ask God for Sustaining Grace in the area of: _____

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us! In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you. It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is **HIT "SEND"** your COMPLETED Connection Card

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- I just want to remind you ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... GALATIANS 6:2-3 = ² *Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.* ³ *If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.* ⁷
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- NEXT WEEK: ***If you've EVER FELT LIKE you can't POSSIBLY be ACCEPTED by GOD ... AGAIN ... Need to be here ... What causes us to FALL AWAY from GOD and what STEPS do I TAKE to RESTORE that RELATIONSHIP BETTER than EVER! Again, Eternity is a LONG TIME ... BE HERE!***

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."

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Let's PRAY: Jesus, you know every single need represented here today. You know what we need even before we ask. You know our hurts and you know our fears. You know our struggles and you know our sins. You know our loneliness. You know our grief. For those who are hurting here this morning, may they find relief. For those who are discouraged, may they experience Your Sustaining Grace. May they sense Your arms of love wrapping around them today. For those who are carrying a heavy load, help them understand Your power and Your peace is available. For those who are tempted, for those who are addicted, for those who can't stop what they don't want to do, may they find relief in Christ. For those who are depressed, would You restore their joy? For those who are separated from a loved one, for those who are in conflict with a husband or wife, may they find restoration or reconciliation. For those who are guilty and ashamed, help them to sense the freedom of Your forgiveness You so graciously give. For those who lack purpose and meaning and salvation, may they find You.

Now it's your turn to pray. Pray what's in your mind ... in your heart ... what HURTS? ... ***"Lord Jesus, I need Your Sustaining Grace in my life."*** If you've never asked Him for His Saving Grace, say, ***"I need You to save me and then to sustain me. I'm giving myself to You. Help me to cry out to You for help and not try to do it all myself. Help me to fill my mind with Your Word. Help me to accept help and support from Your people and help me to hold on to Your promises. Thank You that I'm going to make it to the finish line in heaven. Not because of my performance but because of Your sustaining grace. I love You and I want to trust in You. In Jesus' name. Amen."***