



January 2019

Dear Praying Friends,

Have you ever gone through seasons where the difficulties of life relentlessly reveal how weak you are? Those are the times that remind me to cling to the promise of Jesus when He says, *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* Praise Jesus for sufficient grace! Grace that is so overwhelmingly powerful that my weakness becomes the means through which the glory of God is on full display! This has been my prayer: Jesus, glorify YOUR strength in my weakness!

WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

In our last letter, I asked that you pray for Bethany's mom Judy, who has been enduring severe medical difficulties. She has continued to be in and out of the hospital over the last two months. Just yesterday, we received some great news that her health is improving, but there are other aspects of her health that still require constant care from Bethany. Bethany is continuing to care for her mom, but she may also need some medical treatment as well. Please pray for the health of both Bethany and Judy. Because of responsibilities in Japan, it was necessary for me to leave Bethany and our children in the States, and head back to Japan at the end of November. Honestly, these last few months have been very difficult for our family, and we have been constantly relying on the powerful grace of Jesus to give us strength when we are at our weakest and feel the most helpless. Would you pray with us for wisdom and grace? There are a LOT of contingencies to our current situation: financial concerns, church responsibilities as well as other responsibilities here in Japan, how best to care for Judy long-term; these are just on the surface of things that we're really not sure what the best path for us to take is.

EVIDENCE OF SUFFICIENT GRACE: MY PARENTS

One of the ways God has been gracious is by making it possible for my parents to be here with me in my family's absence. Mom has been teaching at the school in Bethany's place, dad has been working with me on several long overdue projects at the church. Their presence here has been a clear evidence of Christ's sufficient grace, especially to me, personally!

MORE EVIDENCE OF SUFFICIENT GRACE: THE GOSPEL

Just as the grace of God is sufficient for us as a family, God has been overwhelmingly gracious to our church family here in Japan. Throughout the year, we have been showing the love of Jesus through different acts of loving our neighbors. In December our church went to nearby train stations to hand out hot chocolate and invitations to our Christmas Service to people heading home from work. We also invited many family members and friends to come to the service. And wow, was there a great response! For both our children's Christmas service, and our candlelight service, we had a combined total of 24 visitors to our Christmas service, with 14 of them being first-time visitors. One of the ladies who received hot chocolate brought her family to the service. Ai san, whom I mentioned in our last letter (which you can read here) also attended! I shared the gospel through the Christmas story, and it was amazing to see hands raised all over the room of people who had a desire to trust Christ! Reiko, a faithful sister in our church has been in continual contact with Ai san, and again witnessed to her over the next week. This Thursday, she told me that Ai san is now a sister in Christ! I reached out to Ai san today and she gave clear evidence of her faith in Christ. Praise the Lord! Ai san (her name means "love" in Japanese) is one of several who trusted Christ during the Christmas season. How thankful I am that even in our weakness, God continues to add brothers and sisters to our family through the power of the glorious Gospel! Thank you for praying for us! Please keep praying!

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan