

SALEM HOUSE OF PRAYER EGS

December 8, 2017

Stewarding The Gift of Grace Jim Moore

1 Peter 4:10-12

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.”

Romans 11:29

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

As each one has received a gift...

Grace: G5485, **charis**, khar'-ece

From G5463; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy).

Compare with:

Gift: G5486, **charisma**, char'-is-mah

From G5483; a (divine) gratuity, that is, deliverance (from danger or passion); (specifically) a (spiritual) endowment, that is, (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty: - (free) gift.

The first thing the Holy Spirit draws our attention to is the subject of gifting. We are told that every one of us have *received* (as opposed to earned) at least one gift from God. Each one of us has been given something that we did not deserve or perhaps even ask for. We would not...could not, receive the gift from ourselves. We may have worked hard in cooperating with the development of the gift (like with a musical talent), but even the ability to do that, or the desire to pursue it, came from the Father above.

*“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards** of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in **stewards** that one be found faithful...Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? **And what do you have that you did not receive?** Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 6-7)*

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Recognizing Our Endowments

We have all been endowed with one or more gifts. At first, we may not even recognize the gift that we have been given. And then once we do recognize our gift, we may not understand that it is the Lord who has given it to us. If one has the gift of speaking, or writing, or giving, or encouragement, we may feel that we have the right to do with our gift what we wish. And this would be true if it was our gift alone, but it is not. It's God's gift, *and* it is our gift. That's why we are called to *steward* the gift, because it belongs to someone else and has been entrusted to us.

So it is not an either—or proposition. It is a matter of partnership of God. We may think that we have acquired the gift of our own doing, without the help of God, but this is not the case. A gift from God does not necessarily mean that we, like a virtuoso, are born with it. God gives us the desire, the breath and determination to learn, train, and develop our gift. We are given the opportunity to partner with God concerning our gifts, but it is up to us if we accept that invitation.

So first, we all have been given one or more gifts, even if we don't recognize them or they have gone dormant. Secondly, since the gift is from God (even if we've worked hard at developing it), it was given for the purpose of bringing Him glory. This of course includes the enjoyment of the gift by the person to whom it has been given. God likes it when we enjoy the gifts He's given to us, just as He does!

Minister it to one another...

Now we see a more detailed reason for the gift. My gift is meant to be ministry to someone else, and not just primarily for our own enjoyment. It is easy for our gifts to become something we do because we like to do them. It's good and right to enjoy the gift of God, but the fullness of the reason the gift was given was to bless others as well as ourselves. There are actually three who are meant to be blessed by our gifts. God meant our gift to bring Him satisfaction, then for it to minister His grace to those around us, then finally that we would receive the joyful benefit of its exercise. So in order: First God, then others, then you. As a much used acronym defines it: JOY means, Jesus—Others—You. All are important, but the order of priority is important too.

This divine order keeps our hearts pure and our flesh at bay. If we think the gift is *primarily* for us and our personal enjoyment, then we will likely grow weary or bored or disappointed during hard times and eventually disengage from using it. To be a faithful Steward of the Lord's gift, we must have a right heart about why we are using it. I am motivated first by a desire to love and glorify God with the gift He has loaned me. Then, I am motivated by a desire to bless others with His gift, as His representative, acting as His arms and legs and voice. Finally, I desire the satisfaction and personal blessing of interacting with God as He moves and empowers the gift He has given me. I am not working *for Him*, I am working *with Him*. Along side of Him. And this brings us great joy.

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The Value of Our Gifts

The phrase “one another” also indicates that we actually *need* one another’s gifts and ministry. Sometimes the gifted begin to think they need no ministry from others in their spiritual community. And in other cases, the seemingly less gifted begin to think they have nothing of real significance to give, or that theirs is a “little” gift and doesn’t hold much value. But God foresaw that human tendency and said *He* would place more emphasis upon what *we* may tend to put less emphasis upon:

1 Corinthians 12:20-27

*“But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’ No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. **And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.**”*

When we value each other the way heavenly Father does, honoring each one of His children as we would our own, then we will also value the gifts they have, whether we consider them great or small. From the janitor to the cook to the prophet, every gift matters to God because every person matters to God.

As good stewards...

Steward as defined by Strong’s Concordance:

Strong’s: G3623, oikonomos, oy-kon-om'-os

From [G3624](#) and the base of [G3551](#); a house distributor (that is, manager), or overseer, that is, an employee in that capacity; by extension a fiscal agent (treasurer); figuratively a preacher (of the Gospel): - chamberlain, governor, steward.

Steward as defined by Merriam Webster:

Steward: one employed in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns (such as the supervision of servants, collection of rents, and keeping of accounts)

A Steward in its original biblical usage was simply someone who was entrusted to take care of another’s possessions or family. Typically this was a wealthy person. Joseph, after years of being in prison, won the trust of the Leader of the country and was permitted to take care of the finances, goods, and affairs of not only Pharaoh’s

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personal home, but of the entire nation as well. Joseph became second in command only to Pharaoh. Needless to say, a Steward had to be 100% trustworthy.

Genesis 41:39-41

*“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be **over my house [steward]**, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.’ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘See, I have set you **over all the land of Egypt.**’”*

A Steward is someone who has been given the property of another person to oversee faithfully on their behalf, just as they would. We are called to be Stewards of God’s household in many ways; His finances, His words, and even His children. As it has been said, we are His hands and feet. In this scripture passage, Peter by the Holy Spirit indicates yet another way we are to be stewards. We “steward” His gifts as a means of grace.

Of the manifold grace of God...

Manifold means various, varied or simply, “many.” The grace of God comes in many forms. Like the vast definition of “Love,” men and women have been attempting to grasp the fullness of the meaning of grace for centuries. Suffice it to say that grace is something God gives from Himself to us, to meet some need, and we don’t deserve it. What that “something” is can be a manifold or multitude of things. In this passage in Peter, it is as many as each one of our gifts. *Manifold gifts = manifold grace.* God gave you and I a gift as grace to someone. That’s a lot of grace because there are a lot of gifts.

In the first two phrases we find that we have all received a gift, and we are called to steward that gift by ministering it to one another. So the scripture declares that we cannot be a good steward, if we can not recognize our gift. The scripture likewise declares that we cannot be a good steward if we do not “minister” that recognized gift to one another. We also recognize another principle at play—that the gift we have been is actually grace to someone else. *“Minister it...to one another...as grace.”* So then we are not just stewards of a gift, we are a steward of grace. We are told to be: *“Good Stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

My Gift Your Grace

My gift is grace to someone else. Allow that to sink in. Often we ask for grace from God for some need we have, and expect to receive it, and that is good and right. But what of another who is praying for grace for their need? How will God answer their prayer? Sometimes God’s grace comes to us directly from the Holy Spirit, and other times grace comes from another source. Often we don’t think of being an answer to someone else’s need. A word spoken by someone at just the right time. A prayer prayed over us. A story told. A gift of kindness that simply communicated love. Money given. A listening ear.

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There are so many ways the things we do and say can be grace to someone in need. Consider this statement:

“Today...I am God’s grace to someone.”

So let us attempt to define the word “grace,” more completely:

The Hebrew word for Grace is:

H2580, chên, khane

From H2603; graciousness, that is, subjectively (kindness, favor) or objectively (beauty): - favour, grace (-ious), pleasant, precious, [well-] favoured.

The Greek word for Grace is:

G5485, charis, khar'-ece

From G5463; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy).

Webster’s Dictionary defines Grace as:

- A. Unmerited divine *assistance* given humans for their regeneration or sanctification
- B. A virtue coming from God
- C. A state of sanctification enjoyed through divine assistance

The phrase most used for grace is “Unmerited Favor” because it takes in both the undeserving or unearned condition the person seeking God, as well as the practical help given by God. In other words, grace is not just God happily smiling at someone in divine favor when they don’t deserve it, but it is also can be something very practical. It is grace “to help” in the time of your and my need. It is God giving you a measure of His strength to accomplish what you cannot accomplish by yourself:

Hebrews 4:15-16

*“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find **grace to help in time of need.**”*

This is what is meant by “grace” being made perfect—or complete, in our weakness. Grace is something that can be added to our limited ability and makes us stronger, mentally, spiritually, and even physically, than we are in ourselves. Grace is like a man bench pressing more than he is capable of. Jesus is like the spotter—the man who stands

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behind the lifter of weights. He encourages him to press and do his best to lift and then when the time is just right, adds his strength to that one lifting and together they pull the weights up. Grace is not God doing it all. Neither is it me doing everything. It is me doing my part and God adding His strength to mine. His strength is *perfected* in, or with, or along side of, my weakness. As in all things, grace is most often an issue of partnership with God.

Once I had a preaching engagement and was in a church with my Wife and family. My kids were small, about 4-6 years old. The service ended, we gathered our things and headed for the door. As we approached the double glass doors, Linda and my hands were full and so we asked the kids (all 3 of them) to push open the heavy glass doors in front of us. They put their tiny hands on the glass and pushed pretty hard, but couldn't make the thing budge.

They turned around and fell with their backs to the doors, and their little red faces laughing as they said, "Dad...we can't! It's too hard!" So I put down my sack of stuff and told them, Ok...turn around and try again. Push as hard as you can! So they did as I asked with sounds of grunting and puffing. Right then I put my unseen hand above them and added my strength to theirs, and the doors miraculously swung open. They never did know I had helped them. Just then the Lord spoke to me and said: "That's a perfect picture of my grace."

The Holy Spirit is called the "Helper" not the "Doer." We don't do it alone without His help. He doesn't normally do it without our participation. I say "normally" because God sometimes does what He does without our participation permission or petition. He is after all, God. As one person said: "You *can't* do God's part and He *won't* do your part."

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.

The Holy Spirit now addresses the two main categories of gifting. Speaking and Serving. Talking and acting. Mouth and hands. That pretty much covers everything. Colossians 3:17 says: "*And whatever you **do in word or deed**, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*" When describing the ministry of Jesus, Dr Luke said:

*"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began **both to do and teach**" (Acts 1:1)*

The gift of speaking is addressed first. The main emphasis of verse 11 is God receiving the glory that is due Him. Whether speaking or doing good deeds, both are to be done *by* the power of God so that God gets recognized and His goodness manifested.

The general term "*speaks*" is used, rather than a specific term such as: If anyone teaches, preaches edifies, prophesies, or any other gift the utilized the tongue. So it is not just pulpit preachers or teachers being addresses here, but all who would take up the cause of

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speaking on behalf of the Lord. The “gift” of speaking would surely indicate something more than the day to day conversation one might engage in with a friend or casual acquaintance. The ability to speak itself is a gift of the Lord. To be able to breathe, think clearly, form words, and communicate is a gift we don’t consider much because it is so regular to us. But it is a gift none the less.

We should carefully consider the vast amount of concern God has placed upon speaking, and the volume of revelation He has given concerning the power of the spoken word. Worlds are created with words. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. God does not consider speech a casual thing and neither should we. It’s not “legalism” to watch over the words that come out of our mouth. There is not enough time to fully cover the subject of our talk, but here are just a few more stunning scriptures relating to its eternal importance:

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14)

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” (Proverbs 18:21)

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:35-37)

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48)

“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” (James 3:2)

What is an Oracle?

Oracle: G3051, logion, log'-ee-on

Neuter of G3052; an utterance (of God): - oracle.