

Sunday, October 9, 2022 pm

## STUDIES IN 1 PETER (25)

### 1 Peter 4:10-11

### Gifts According to Ability

Tonight, we continue our study of 1 Peter. This is a letter of encouragement to brethren who were facing trials and tribulations, likely to get worse as time progressed. In this text we find Peter's encouragement to these brethren to prepare for whatever they might face. In our last lesson he challenged them to: 1) Be watchful in your prayers; 2) Have fervent love for one another, and 3) Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. Continuing in this vein, we now find encouragement to use whatever abilities you have for good. That will be our lesson tonight.

#### I. Good Stewards of the manifold grace of God

- a. *As good stewards* - The Bible speaks of stewardship – we are responsible to be stewards. As previously noted, a steward was one entrusted with the affairs of a household, usually a trusted slave. This is one who had proven himself trustworthy – 1 Corinthians 4:2. In this, we are reminded of our responsibility AND accountability for managing whatever we have been entrusted with.
- b. *The “manifold grace of God”* –
  - i. One way we ought to view our abilities is as a blessing from God. We know that grace is God's undeserved favor, and it is abundantly poured out upon us. This is doubly true in the society we live in where we have so much above and beyond the mere necessities of life.
  - ii. God's grace is seen in our justification (being forgiven) – Romans 3:24, Ephesians 2:8, His mercy – Hebrews 4:16, His Spirit – Hebrews 10:29 – the giving of the Holy Spirit is another God-given gift (manifested today to us through His word), and in our abilities.
  - iii. God's grace is “manifold” – meaning multi-faceted – seen in many different ways.
    1. Romans 12:6 speaks of gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.
    2. 2 Corinthians 9:8 speaks of God being able to make “all grace abound toward you...”
    3. Ephesians 2:7 speaks of, “the exceeding riches of His grace”.
  - iv. The point is God's grace is abundant and has been given to each of us. Whatever abilities we have, they are ours by the grace of God. 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul notes, “By the grace of God, I am what I am”. While he is addressing his state before God, it also has bearing on his abilities. And that leads us to the point of this text.

#### II. The gifts we have received

- a. In our text, the grace of God is described in terms of a gift.
- b. The word for gift is χάρισμα (charisma) – it means a present, something given generously.
  - i. The word is used of our salvation – Romans 6:23, ...the gift of God is eternal life...
  - ii. The word is often associated with miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit in the NT. Especially in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 where Paul describes various gifts of the Holy Spirit and how we ought to be content with whatever gifts we have.
  - iii. BUT these gifts do NOT have to be miraculous (the direct operation of the Holy Spirit). They can be natural gifts – abilities, etc.
    1. Consider Romans 12:3-8. While prophecy is certainly a direct gift, the rest of that list could be either supernatural OR natural (ministry – meaning to serve), teaching, exhorting (encouraging others), giving (one blessed with resources), leadership (can be naturally developed), and mercy (something we ALL need to develop).
    2. Indirectly, this could also be said of some of 1 Corinthians 12 (wisdom, knowledge, faith – all can be developed naturally).

3. Ephesians 4:11ff speaks of God giving apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. While some were supernatural, others CAN be natural (while guided by the words of the supernatural). The goal is to equip the saints for teaching and standing firm in the face of falsehoods.
  4. Consider James 1:17, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*
  5. Our text is describing “gifts” that could be either supernatural or natural.
- c. *As each one has received a gift –*
- i. Recall that previously, Peter has just mentioned prayers, love and being hospitable. These are things every Christian can and MUST engage in if they are to overcome the world.
  - ii. But, beyond that, we all have different abilities – talents, resources, and qualities (and we all have limitations). Peter is simply emphasizing that we must develop and use whatever abilities we have.
  - iii. Colossians 3:23 – whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord. Ecclesiastes 9:10.
  - iv. Cf. Matthew 25:31-46 – the judgment scene portrayed will find us judged by how we used what resources and opportunities he had. Think also of the prior parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) – where they were given resources to manage “according to their ability” and held accountable.
- d. *Minister to one another –* we are again reminded that WE NEED EACH OTHER, and our concerns need to be for our brethren. Recall the context of 1 Peter – in a hostile and ungodly world that sets itself against truth and God, our brethren are a source of refuge.
- i. Jesus emphasized the importance of service. Matthew 20:27-28, *And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*
  - ii. Galatians 5:13, *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*
  - iii. Hebrews 6:10, *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*
- e. *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God –*
- i. A powerful statement. One of the primary ways we minister to one another (and this is NOT limited to public teaching) is through teaching. Galatians 6:10 says, *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.* In context, the PRIMARY emphasis is spiritual, including the sharing of God’s word with others – that goes all the way back to vs. 1ff. We strive to bring back the one overtaken in a trespass. Vs. 6 speaks of the teacher and the one being taught sharing in all good things.
  - ii. We need to understand that in matters related to God’s word, what is taught needs to be, **“as the oracles of God”**. It ought to be “as if God Himself were speaking it.” The Greek word for *oracles* is found 4 times in the NT (Acts 7:38 – of Moses receiving the message from God on Mt. Sinai; Romans 3:2 – the advantage Jews had because to them was committed the “oracles of God”; Hebrews 5:12 – they ought to have been mature but needed “the oracles of God” repeated to them again. EVERY time the word has reference to God’s revealed will.
  - iii. Whenever we are teaching or sharing God’s word, we need to make sure that it is TRUE to God’s intent. That means the message needs to be presented in context and accurate, AS IF God were saying it. We have serious concerns today, as many water down the message of God’s word. Consider 2 Timothy 4:2-4, 1 Corinthians 2:1-2, etc.
  - iv. We need to let the word of God do the convicting – Romans 1:16, Hebrews 4:12.
  - v. And we must realize we are accountable as we teach, especially leaders – James 3:1
- f. *If anyone ministers –*

- i. This is a derivative of the same word found in vs. 10. It is the general word for serving (also the word from which we derive our word deacon – which describes an appointed servant). And, as previously noted, we are all to be servants in one way or another.
  - ii. cf. 2 Corinthians 8:7 – as Paul writes the Corinthians, he is concerned with their commitment to share with needy brethren, something they had promised earlier. In our text, Paul calls it a “grace”. What we are blessed with by God, will we share with others, especially our brethren? 1 Timothy 6:17-19 finds Paul exhorting Timothy to remind the wealthy not to trust in their riches, but in God and to be willing to share with others. Hebrews 13:6 notes that we are not to forget to do good and share, “for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
  - iii. Consider this in the hostile environment of this world. When the world turns against ONE OF US, are we there for them and will we stand with them. That is likely much of what was behind the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea as the church was growing.
- g. The result –
- i. ***That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*** Whatever we do, God needs to be focus. We just concluded a gospel meeting where that is the answer to overcoming our struggles with temptation and sin. If we are glorifying God as we ought to, we can overcome. AND when we do as we ought for others, He is glorified. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:31 – where Paul encourages them to think about their brethren in making choices - *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Recall how in 1 Peter 2:5, we are a royal priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
  - ii. To whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Peter gives a concluding description of God, typically found at the end of letters. Here it concludes a section. The point: God is worthy of our praise. He is the essence of glory and He rules forever – always has and always will. As we strive to live our lives, let God ALWAYS be at the foundation of what we do. Colossians 3:17 – do all in the name of the Lord. Typically, we attribute this to His authority – and it is! But the reason He has that authority is because of who He is. Let us never forget that – whether we are teaching or serving others.

In addition to being saved by God as we obediently respond to His grace, we by that same grace all have abilities. We can choose to use those abilities for His cause or against Him. How are you using what He has given you? Think about it!