

It's All Grace

2.1.26

Romans Series

Message 47

Romans 12:3–8 (CSB)

³ For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one. ⁴ Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, ⁵ in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. ⁶ According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; ⁷ if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; ⁸ if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

A. I have discovered a sure sign of old age.

1. Shows that were on TV when I was a kid and hated, I now enjoy.
2. The other day I was watching one of my mom's favorite shows: Diagnosis Murder.
 - a. I hated it as a kid.
 - b. I now own the complete series box set.

B. Another show I now find myself enjoying in small parts: Antiques Roadshow.

1. My favorite stories are the ones where a parent or grandparent leaves behind a rare something and the family doesn't realize how amazing the piece is.
2. I can also tell I'm getting older when I watch shows I used to love, and now I find myself yelling at the screen.

C. One of those shows is Pawn Stars.

1. I have really enjoyed that show over the years.
2. But when a person comes in, and they are selling grandpa's old gun or a gift they were given in college because they don't appreciate it or want it anymore, I get angry.

3. Why don't they appreciate the gift?

- a. What really makes me mad is not when they say they are having a hard time.
- b. That is understandable.
- c. But when they want to sell a family heirloom so they can have fun in Vegas, or for some dumb reason, I get pretty wound up.

D. I know I haven't appreciated every gift I've been given over the years, but there are many I will cherish for as long as I can.

1. Some gifts are valuable because everyone values them.
2. Some gifts are valuable because of who has given them.
3. **The value of the gift isn't only in the intrinsic value of the item but in the person who gave it to you.**
 - a. A diamond ring has a market value: the value of the diamond and the metal.
 - b. A diamond ring for someone you love is has even MORE valuable.
 - c. The gifts of God are valuable because they are valuable and because who it is that is giving it to you.
4. The Apostle Paul spends the next 6 verses talking about grace.

A Grace-Filled Warning

A. Paul's reflections on grace, ministry, and being part of a church begin with a warning.

1. Don't think too highly of yourself.
2. As we undergo transformation, we forget or minimize where we come from.
3. Paul often called himself the chief of sinners, a reminder of how gracious God had been to him.

1 Timothy 1:12–16 (CSB)

¹²I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry—¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But I received mercy because I acted out of ignorance in unbelief,¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: “Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate his extraordinary patience as an example to those who would believe in him for eternal life.

B. The Apostle Paul remembered where he was when Jesus found him.

1. What did Paul do to deserve salvation?
2. Nothing.
 - a. What did Paul do to deserve being the Apostle to the Gentiles? Nothing.
 - b. What did Paul do to deserve any of this? Nothing.
3. The work of God begins with His love, grace, and mercy.

C. Paul warns that a renewed mind and a transformed life can tempt us to think we have done this ourselves.

1. A renewed mind cannot lead to elitism.
2. We are all called to have our thinking and our minds changed and transformed.
3. The transformed mind, however, should not lead us to be haughty and arrogant.

D. This is a real danger.

1. We forget what Jesus has done for us.
2. We forget how messed up we really were.
3. It's easy for us to believe that we deserve all the good that comes our way because we've earned it.

E. But Paul emphasizes that the Christian life is not because we are worthy.

1. Only Jesus is worthy.
2. But, because of grace, we have a part in the body of Christ.
3. By God's mercy, we are not killed for our own sins but get to offer our lives as a living sacrifice.
4. Because of God's grace, we have something worth giving.

What is grace?

A. Grace is unmerited favor.

1. It's favor that we did not earn and don't deserve.
 - a. Do you have people in your life who like you, and they have no reason?
 - b. People who love you and you've done nothing to earn it; they just like you.
 - c. Walking with Jesus is like this.
2. Why does He love me? Because He does.
 - a. Why does He care for me? Because He wants to.
 - b. Why does He bless the way He does? Because it's grace. It's a gift. It's unmerited, undeserved.

B. If you want wages, live in sin.

1. If you want Karma, reject Jesus and do your own thing.
2. If you want undeserved gifts, accept God's grace.

C. Grace and gift are similar words in the Greek and sometimes feel interchangeable.

1. The root word for grace is also the root of "gifts".
2. What does this mean?

D. Not only do we not earn the favor of God, but we also don't earn or deserve the gifts of God.

1. God does not use you to prophecy, work incredible faith, serve, teach, exhort, give, lead, or demonstrate mercy because you deserve it, but because God gifted it to you!
2. It's all grace!

What does grace do?

1. Grace keeps us humble.

A. "For by the grace given to me, don't think too highly of yourself."

1. Paul says, "Think sensibly".
2. This is literally, be sober in how you view yourself.

- a. Don't be intoxicated over your gifts, your success, your opinions.
- b. Instead, think clearly about who you really are.

3. But why would believers not think soberly about themselves?
4. Because success and transformation can cause us to forget what Jesus has done.

B. It is only because God is gracious that we have anything at all.

1. It is all grace
2. When we see people living in sin, how many times do we point at them while forgetting that that used to be us!

C. Grace doesn't give us permission to live in sin; it enables us to leave sin.

1. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
2. But because of Jesus, grace permits us to leave sin.
3. Don't let success cause you to forget that it was Jesus who saved you.
4. Don't take credit for what God has done.

Be saved, Be Holy, and Be Humble.

2. Grace holds diversity together.

A. The Apostle Paul loved to use the human body as a picture of the Church.

1. Every part, distinct and useful in its own way, working together, makes a unified person.
2. A person is more than an appendix, a liver, a hand, or a foot.
3. All the unique parts together make the One body.

B. Christianity, the Body of Christ, consists of millions of individuals brought together by the Grace of God.

1. The Apostle Paul, in one of the letters to the Corinthians, described people as hands, feet, and eyes.
2. At this point, 2000 years later, I'm not so sure I'm an eye or a foot as much as I am a cell.

- a. The human body has somewhere between 30-37 trillion cells.
- b. When we consider all the people who have ever professed the name of Jesus... I definitely don't see myself as an important body part, but probably a liver cell or something.
- c. No matter my assignment, gift, design, or function, I'm so thankful I have a place in this Body of Christ we call the Church.

C. I'm always amazed that this thing we call the Church works at all.

- 1. So many personalities, experiences, understandings, and diversity all under One Name and one roof.
- 2. **The body of Christ isn't perfect; at least not yet and not here.**
 - a. There are so many decisions and actions that people make that frustrate me, anger me, sadden me, and grieve me.
 - b. I certainly understand why people would be tempted to quit the Church and the Body of Christ altogether.
- 3. Yet, I am also amazed at the Grace of God that holds it all together.
 - a. We don't deserve to be loved, yet we are.
 - b. We don't deserve salvation, but it is available to each of us.
 - c. We don't deserve gifts; we all deserve something far worse than coal in our stockings.
 - d. Yet, here we are!
 - e. My friends, in view of God's great grace and mercy, don't quit on each other, but remember that we are individually members of one another.

D. God's grace is holding us all together.

- 1. Someday, when Jesus returns, all will be perfect.
- 2. All of our faults will melt away in the presence of Jesus, the King of Glory.
- 3. In the meantime, we are held together by God's grace.
- 4. BE graceful. Don't think too much of yourself.
- 5. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Grace equips us with something worth giving.

- A. Romans 12 is often included in the conversations of the Spiritual Gifts.
 - 1. There are many gifts that the Holy Spirit entrusts to the Church for its edification and strengthening.
 - 2. Gifts like prophecy and prophets. Teaching and pastors. Administration and Apostles.
 - 3. God gives gifts to His body so we may accomplish His work.
- B. Paul is describing gifts, not positions.
 - 1. The gifts don't require an office.
 - 2. They don't require a formal offer and a W-2.
 - 3. The gifts only require grace, the measure of faith that Jesus has given you, and a relationship to the Body.
- C. Grace and faith both come from God.
 - 1. Paul said that to each is given a measure of faith.
 - 2. It isn't clear if Paul means that everyone is given the same measure of faith or if the amount of faith is different for each.
 - 3. While it is true that not everyone has the same gifts and that some are stronger in their faith, it seems that Paul is emphasizing that God has given grace and faith to all of us, and therefore, there is no reason for anyone to be puffed up.
 - 4. If God had not given us grace and faith, we would have no ability to use the gifts and serve God.
- D. We have the responsibility to find the opportunity.
 - 1. We do have a part to play in using the gifts.
 - 2. The gifts don't work in isolation: they are never for our sake alone.
 - 3. Instead, God gifts His people so they can serve the Body.
- E. God gives us the grace, the faith, and the gift, we provide the faithfulness.
 - 1. We stay connected when we want to run away.
 - 2. We serve when we would rather stay silent.

3. We abide and remain instead of isolating ourselves.

What has God gifted you with?

A. Don't overcomplicate this.

1. It would be easy for me to spend months going through each individual gift mentioned in Scripture and, to be sure, not all gifts are even mentioned because God is infinitely creative.

2. Many people spend a lot of time trying to discover which spiritual gift they possess.

3. Sometimes the answer is found in the question God asked Moses: What is in your hand.

4. Sometimes the gift God has given us is something He hid inside you from the beginning.

a. The gift is perfect, it just needs to be developed.

b. I love what my sister Sharon said about her oldest daughter.

c. Finley is 12 now and growing into a beautiful young lady.

d. And she has this gift and talent for leading others, and when she was young, that gift looked kind of like bossiness.

e. Sharon said this about her daughter: The gift is perfect, but she's 5.

5. God did not give you a defective gift.

a. It might not be developed yet.

b. That gift won't look like someone else's.

c. But the Gifts of God are perfect.

6. Don't over complicate the gifts.

B. The gifts of God don't require a formal promotion.

Romans 12:6–8 (CSB)

⁶ According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith; ⁷ if service, use it in service; if teaching, in teaching; ⁸ if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

1. What the gifts all require is a relationship.
2. If you refuse to be part of a Church unless they use your gifts, you are out of God's order.
3. Too often, people are looking for platforms instead of opportunities.
4. There may not be a big platform for your gifting, but there will be opportunities.
5. And those opportunities are found in community.

C. We must not elevate the gifts above the Giver.

1. Two dangers here.
2. Danger #1: We pursue the gifts of God at the expense of pursuing God himself.
 - a. We might desire to prophesy, speak in tongues, or be used in some way so much we neglect that our first and primary call is to seek after God.
 - b. The gifts find their greatest fulfillment in a deep relationship with Jesus.
3. Danger #2: We use the gifts for self-promotion instead of Kingdom Promotion.
 - a. This is a temptation for any of us, not just those on TV or YouTube.
 - b. The gifts that GOD gave us become a way for us to celebrate ourselves.
 - c. We forget that only by God's grace are we given the gifts of God.
 - d. I didn't earn them or deserve them; I was given them.
 - e. I steward the gifts, but I don't deserve the gifts.

Grace Keeps Us, Grace Holds Us, Grace Equips Us.

A. Charles Spurgeon said, "While others are congratulating themselves, I have to sit humbly at the foot of the cross and marvel that I'm saved at all."

1. Today, if you have forgotten how gracious God has been to you, would you take a moment and consider how far God has brought you?
2. Today, if you look around at all that God has done and you feel prone to take the credit, would you take a moment to remember that it is all God's and it is all grace.
3. Today, if you wonder how or why God could ever use you, I want to remind you that Grace is given because God loves us not because we deserve it.

B. When we think about what God has done, sending His only Son, we realize that we don't deserve any good thing.

1. **There has only been one truly Good man, and He died a criminal's death so we could live as members of the family of God.**
2. Let us think soberly about what Jesus has done.
3. Let us worship because we have not received what we deserve.