

LIVING ACCORDING TO THE

The Measure of Grace



Key Verses

- **Ephesians 4.4-7**
- **Romans 12.3-8**
- **Matthew 25.14-30**



Ephesians 4:4-7

⁴ There is **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as you were called in **one** hope of your calling; ⁵ **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism; ⁶ **one** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.⁷ *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*



Romans 12.3-8

³ For I say, *through the grace given to me*, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, *as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.* ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.



⁶ *In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. (NIV - We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.)* So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.



Matthew 25.14-30

Parable of the Three Servants

¹⁴ “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone. ¹⁵ *He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities.* He then left on his trip. ¹⁶ “The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. ¹⁷ The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more.



¹⁸ But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money.

¹⁹ "After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money. ²⁰ The servant to

whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, '*Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.*' ²¹ "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'



²² “The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said,

‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.’

²³ “The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful

servant. *You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities.* Let’s celebrate together!’

²⁴ “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. ²⁵ I was afraid I would lose your money, *so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.*’



²⁶ “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, ²⁷ why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

²⁸ “Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. ²⁹ *To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.* ³⁰ Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’



What can we learn from these passages?

- We have each been given a measure of grace
- Not necessarily the same measure
- Whatever we have been given is a gift
- We are to use what we have been given well and faithfully



WHAT ARE THE GIFTS FOR?



1. To glorify God

*1 Peter 2.12 - Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and **glorify God** on the day he visits us.*



2. To equip God's people and build up the body of Christ

Ephesians 4 – ¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

¹² Their responsibility is *to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.* ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.



3. To help, and be a blessing to, others

1 Cor 12 – ⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us *so we can help each other.*

1 Cor 13 – ⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!....¹³ Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.



EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO USED THEIR GIFTS



1. DORCAS (TABITHA)

Acts 9.36-41

³⁶ There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas) *She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.....*

³⁹ So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. *The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them.*



2. PROPHETESS ANNA

Luke 2.36-37

³⁶ Anna, *a prophet*, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and *she was very old*. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.

³⁷ Then *she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.*



WHAT STOPS US FROM USING OUR GIFTS?



1

‘I don’t know what my gifts are!’

Waiting for special revelation?

Ecclesiastes 9.10 - Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.



2 'My gift is too small or insignificant!'

So, we look down on what we have been given. We take our gifts for granted and do not value them.

But no one is insignificant. Nothing God created is without purpose.



**On Sunday 24 April 2022, Paul
Lynch preached here on ‘The Power
of Small’**

**On Sunday 21 May 2023 Brian
Spencer spoke about ‘Faith the size
of a mustard seed’**



Oxygen - we can't see, touch or hold it in our hands yet we cannot live without it.

The God who made the elephant and mount Everest the highest mountain in the world (standing at 8,848metres. 29,029 feet high) also made the microscopic organisms barely visible to the naked eye but are so crucial to our very existence.



On the question, 'What would happen if there are no bacteria?' I came across this:

We wouldn't be able to digest our food properly without our gut bacteria. Crops around the world would start to die without the nutrients generated by microbes. Dead fish would float to the surface of lakes and oceans, and ocean life would be extinguished.

When last did you thank God for bacteria – we don't do we, but we should!



Zechariah 4.10

Do not despise these **small beginnings**, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand."



BRITISH AIRWAYS FLIGHT 5390

British Airways Flight 5390 was a scheduled passenger flight operated by British Airways between Birmingham Airport and Málaga Airport. On 10 June 1990 a panel of the windscreen failed, at 17,400 feet, blowing the plane's captain, Tim Lancaster, halfway out of the aircraft. He was held in place through the window frame for 20 minutes until the first officer managed to perform an emergency landing at Southampton Airport. Fortunately, there was no loss of life.



THE INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

Accident investigators found that a replacement windscreen had been installed 27 hours before the flight, and that the procedure had been approved by the shift maintenance manager. However, 84 of the 90 windscreen retention bolts were **0.66 of a millimetre** too small in diameter, while the remaining six were **2.5 mm** too short.



SOME OTHER EXAMPLES OF 'INSIGNIFICANCE'



1. NAAMAN'S WIFE'S MAID

2 Kings 5

² At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and *among their captives was a young girl* who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. ³ One day the girl said to her mistress, *"I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy."* ⁴ And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel."



2. LITTLE BOY, 5 LOAVES, 2 FISH, 5000 MEN FED

John 6 - ⁸...Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. ⁹ *"There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"*



3. WIDOW'S OIL AND FLOUR

1 Kings 17.1-16

....”¹² But she said, *“I swear by the Lord your God that I don’t have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug.* I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.”....



4. GIDEON'S ARMY

Judges 7

² The Lord said to Gideon, “**You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength.....**



3

Not content with the gift given

1 Corinthians 12

⁴ There are *different kinds of spiritual gifts*, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are *different kinds of service*, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ *God works in different ways*, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.



⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ *It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*



18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. **19** How strange a body would be if it had only one part! **20** Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. **21** The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” **22** In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. **23** And the parts we regard as less honourable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, **24** while the more honourable parts do not require this special care. ***So God has put the body together such that extra honour and care are given to those parts that have less dignity.***



4

We compare ourselves with others who we feel are more gifted than we are or seem to have more than we do

1 Corinthians 10.12

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. *When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rr_5wDmX3kY



IN CLOSING

God's graces and giftings vary and are different for each one of us.

He does not reward us according to the weightiness or impact of our giftings in our own eyes or the eyes of others.

He rewards obedience – are we doing what He has asked us to do? Are we good and faithful servants?



LET US:

- Thank God for the gifts he has given us
- Thank God for the gifts he has given the church
- Ask him to help us be all that he has created us to be



PRAYER

Dear Father, you made me in your image and likeness and I know that you have such wonderful plans and purposes for me. I want to be all that you have created me to be and I want to fulfil your call and purpose for my life. I ask you to continue to work in me so that each day, I have both the desire and the power to do what pleases you. In Jesus' name I pray – Amen.



God bless you

