

# Grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (i) (Quality: Very good)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Ephesians and in verses 7, 8, 9 and 10. They are the words concerning our thoughts on this subject today.

Seventh verse, but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.

Now that he ascended, what is it? But that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fulfill all things.

And friends, these all things that Christ had purpose to fulfill, he must come down to earth. He must take a body like our own yet without sin.

He must fill that which was the purpose of God, to have a people unto himself from all eternity. And they could not be his unless, manifestly they could not be his unless, God himself visited them, gave them their measure of the gift of his grace, that they might understand and be brought to the knowledge of the great work of Christ in heaven and even upon earth.

[ 1 : 51 ] It's so clear what it says in our text, that the Lord must first descend into this sinful earth.

He was to come to deal with sin on behalf of his people. And it's spoken of here, and we must consider it as captivity, that sin captivates us.

We are fallen creatures by nature, and we must be recovered if we are his. And he came to perform that work, to set the captive free.

And friends, that work must go on. So long as we live on earth as creatures, if this measure of grace which has brought knowledge to us has been given us, we shall be concerned about that which captivates us and is against the will of God and his holy law.

And he ascended according to the purpose of the Father. He comes down as the Son of God.

[ 3 : 10 ] And he takes for himself and unto himself a form, a man, flesh, yet without sin, because sin is to be captured.

And it's been captured by a holy one who has power over sin and sets the sinner free.

So his work must be won to bring liberty. And you and I, friends, must have that liberty, not take liberties in the gospel, but have the liberty of the gospel.

There are some people take liberties. That is, they say they believe the gospel. They know, they love the gospel and so forth, but they take a liberty inasmuch that the gospel may never have been brought to them savingly.

They've been captivated by sin and they've been unconcerned about him who sets the captive free. He came down to earth, friends.

[ 4 : 17 ] He gave himself, what for? A ransom for many. He paid the ransom price. Everything that holds a sinner away from God, he breaks that band of captivity.

He pays the price. The sinner goes free. And our freedom alone is in Christ himself. And that which was captivated by sin, himself now takes them.

He takes them as captive. They are his. They are the election of grace. He knew them before ever they knew him.

He knew them. He saw them ruined in the fall, yet loved them notwithstanding all. He saved them from their lost estate.

And one says, there's loving kindness. Oh, how great. He makes it manifest. That which was captivated by sin and held by the world, he takes unto himself.

[ 5 : 31 ] And he says, when upon earth, to the Father, these are mine, and thou gavest them me. He was sent to set the captive free and bind them unto himself.

His ransom is for the church of the living God. And the church must know of this, friends. This is not just a theory of religion.

It's the actual truth in operation for salvation. The church itself, in its real own state, is captive to sin.

We are by nature of the earth, are they? But the God of heaven has taken mercy and pity upon us and comes forth to deliver us.

He sends a son and the son claims him for himself. When he returned to heaven, he'd taken the captive unto himself, the man that was captivated by sin and held in bondage and who served the devil.

[ 6 : 46 ] Now the blessed spirit deals with him, brings such a one to Christ, and Christ receives that one and captivates him with love and mercy and, as we said this morning, a measure of that grace.

God having taken them to himself, this people, that he is from the very foundation of the world, a people, because Christ is offering, he was offered in the purpose of God in eternity before whatever the world was.

Christ was now come to fulfill the purpose of the Father and the saving need of the church of God. And so he's put in this way, he led captivity captive.

No more that they could serve sin as being bondmen, but they're given liberty, that liberty in Christ.

And that brings us to this thought, friends, that means to say that liberty will give you and I to know the truth of the gospel of his grace.

[ 8 : 09 ] He came to earth, friends, sinful earth. He made manifest his powers we mentioned this morning. And we met certain people, even the thief on the cross we mentioned, and the poor sinful woman at his feet.

He met with them and he made it manifest that he had taken them unto himself. Inwardly, the witness was within, and there it was working.

The Holy Ghost had taught these men and people whom the Lord met, taught them that Christ may come into the world to save them.

And so the apostle said, the very man that penned these words, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

And the apostle says, of whom I am chief. And that is how a man may feel, that of all sinners he's the greatest sinner, but nevertheless his captivity must be broken.

[ 9 : 18 ] He must be made a free man in Christ Jesus. The devil had never set a man free. He had only been bondage forever if this great man and deliverer does not come forth to break the power of the devil and the bondage of sin.

That, friends, there's much to know and to receive in regarding to this great work. And this is how the word puts it, that he ascended also into the lower parts of the earth.

He descended. Then he went above, having completed the word and work, he returns to the Father. And then he carries on that which he has also performed in his ascending and descending.

That is, he brought his living word and established it with power and authority and he must have it published.

Yes, friends, the publication of the gospel is made manifest here that Christ was sent and he being sent to break the captivity of sin must make it known to the sinner by the power and teaching of his gospel.

[ 10 : 56 ] Without that, man could have said, what was his purpose of coming? Some would have said, well, he came to give me sight, I was blind.

Another might say, he came to give me strength, I was weakened, I was a cripple, I was unable to perform the usual task of man and there could be those that receive him as even as they do.

A God of almighty power and many works in nature that here is a work of grace and he gives a measure of grace as I've already said to receive this knowledge so that he gave gifts to men.

They must know this by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It's given them to know, it's a special peculiar gift and the apostle puts it like this, he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Think of that, edifying the body of Christ, that, the body of Christ is the mystical body, his people, his own people, the members of his mystical body, and that body must be edified, it must be shown and taught the truth, every one of God's people must be taught the truth, and taught by the Holy Spirit, and in that teaching the church is edified, we can talk of the church of God, in the doctrinal sense, we can keep right close to the fact that God has chosen the people, and they belong to him, but, there's that edifying, that is, the blessedness of these things, brought right into the soul of those who were one time captivated by sin, and knew not Christ, it brings, they're brought to a knowledge of him, and a knowledge of the almighty power, and it's not for man to explain this matter in and of himself, it's not by carnal reasoning, it's not by mere religious instruction, it's by gift, the Holy

[ 13 : 51 ] Spirit is here working, and the Lord Jesus Christ came on earth, and by his work, by his power, by his blessed name, he gives to man this great gift, France, it means this, it is a gift, France, for to receive the word of God, the gospel of his grace, how much gospel is preached, France, how many millions have died, have heard the gospel, has never given to them as a gift, the question arises in our hearts and minds as this gospel be given to us by sovereign gift, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel that tells you that Christ came down from heaven, took upon himself the form of sinful man without sin, and fulfilled the word of

God the Father, and sacrificed himself, because the word is said, by one offering, he is perfected forever, them that are sanctified, he came to perform this work of sanctification, people think they can sanctify themselves, people think they can set themselves apart, but friends, this cannot be, it's a work of Christ, it's the gift that he gives unto his people, he makes the truth known, as it is in himself, the truth as it is in Jesus, and they become united because of that, they believe this one truth, you hear people talk like this sometimes, well, I believe this and you believe that and we all serve the same master, all that sort of talk is rubbish, there's one gospel, one way of salvation, and one

Christ that brings it, and one special gift, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit through Christ, what is the gospel to you and to me, has it enlightened us, has it instructed us, has it made us to know that whilst we were once captivated by sin, the world and the devil, now he has taken us captive, we find that we must serve him and the Spirit informs us, yes, and serve him in spirit and in truth, there's no real service in our works, friends, many live upon it, their own works, but it would not do, Christ came into the world to save sinners and to overcome their sin, by the power and virtue of his own precious blood, they're ransomed, they're redeemed people, they're brought back to him, when the

Father gave them to him in eternity, they're not yet sinned, they were not yet beings, but they were known to God, their name was written in heaven, men, and they were then of the mystical body of Christ, but they are born into this world, they must come forth as men, it is the purpose of God in this world, he will find his own body, the mystical body, and they must be edified with this knowledge, friends, there are many who rest upon religion, and it's no edification, well they don't want it, because they're not concerned about the body of Christ, they're concerned just about their own wants and feelings and religion and such as by him in it, but think of this, Christ must take upon himself a body like our own, walk this earth, mingle with sinners, and yet he must perform such a work as to set his own people free of the power of sin, in other words,

Christ died that the church might live, and that life is eternal life purposed in himself, what would be left to a sinner to do, what could he do the work of Christ, many think they can, think they can edify themselves, sanctify themselves, justify themselves, but says the apostle, is our wisdom, our sanctification, our justification, and our redemption, that he is all himself for the church of God, not a part to Christ, then, not a part to Christ, some part of him that you can understand, another you cannot, this is his gift, and so that it is a great concern to those who are put into this position, that can be termed here as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, they belong to Christ, it's a gift for the church, church, church, yes, a gift to edify the church, that the church would never be able to say, we were left in ignorance, friends, whilst the gospel is preached, there will be no excuse to say, we have no gospel, the gospel, the Lord said, shall be preached, preached, and he sent forth in his own time upon her, his own disciples, and they take up the strain as here in our text, to teach and instruct, and by their teaching to edify the body of

[ 20 : 21 ] Christ, and so here it is, the Lord Jesus Christ performed this great work, and the sinner sat free, and he would be taught, the important matter of understanding what this freedom is, who it is for, and how it is brought.

There must be a saving knowledge, it must be not said like this, anyone might say, in religious circles, it's something I've always heard and believed, and they talk and talk as if there's been no change, they've always been the same, their friends, what about their captivity, you know what you were as a sinner without grace, and now you're a sinner with grace in your heart, what a difference, what a concern, how much Christ is to you now, than when you were not in want, and what was his work to do, he came to the very lowest part of the earth, he descends, he descends rather, right into the bowels of the earth, he was laid in the grave, friends, and he must lay there until the

Holy Spirit remove his sacred body, then he comes forth, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the earth cannot receive him now, cannot hold him, he must now soon ascend into heaven, for he has accomplished the work which the Father gave him to do, and he ascends now far above the heavens, how the heavens, declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork, but he ascended above all that, because that can be viewed or understood by nature, by man, but he ascends beyond the heavens, the heavens that you can see, the starry heavens, the firmament, he ascends above that, why, to take up his throne, and he ever lives, to make supplications unto the

Father for you, who have been brought to know your need and want of him, descended on high, he left captivity captive, and these captives now are dependent upon him, who has overcome their sin, and pardoned with his own grace, and washed with his own precious blood, and paid the price of their redemption, there he ascended far above the heavens, so we've got to get, by feeling, sense of his goodness, far above the heavens, how many will acknowledge God for his creation, salvation, perhaps you've got so far, say this, why I can't think of anything, but what God has made all these things, made the earth, made the universe, and all things work according to his appointment, that's a natural religion, that's a knowledge in the creator, which is good, that Christ, the son of

God, who brought salvation, and captured you as a sinner, and took unto himself, he ascended far above the earth, far above the feminine, and yet is not out of reach, and is not out of hearing, he will hear the prayers of his people, those for whom he died, he ever lives to make intercession for them, wonderful fulfillment, friends, and it's all the purpose of God, to edify the church of God, the body of Christ.

[ 24 : 48 ] When people say they don't understand it, well, we do know this, there's everything that God does is beyond our natural understanding, but those who are appointed thus as apostles, teachers, that speaks in the word, they can do nothing themselves, and their word will be nothing unless clothed with the Holy Spirit's power.

The same Spirit, the Holy Spirit that brought Christ from the grave, thus bring the sinner knowingly and feelingly out of this captivity.

so that is what we must teach. The man that preaches and does not speak of the Holy Spirit is of no value, friends.

If he tells you what to do, and grace tells you you can do nothing in and of yourselves, how valueless such a preaching.

that if the man says, I tell you what the word of God is, what I felt, what the Lord has taught me, and now may the blessed Spirit work in your hearts to bring you to know this truth as it is in Jesus.

[ 26 : 16 ] Yes, and friends, how secure to all is Christ. He ascended into heaven, and even before he ascended, on the cross he said, it is finished.

The work is finished, salvation is secured, the price is paid, the freedom must be given to those who have known and felt their captivity and sought after him who alone can set the captive free.

But there is his part, his own part. They are precious in his sight. He pleads still on their behalf.

They carry about with them still a body of sin and death. As we noted this morning, in this very same chapter, the apostle has to warn the Ephesians, as he warns all the church of God.

They are still sinners in themselves and they need that power of his almighty grace to prevent, preserve, and to keep, so that the word of God comes forth as a warning, as a blessed instruction, and a wonderful keeping.

[ 27 : 44 ] God's God's God's heart. He knows how when you poor sinner are in doubt, you can't go to him. He knows your real estate.

He came right to earth, apart from him being God and knowing all men's hearts. He mingled as a man and mixed with man, and he saw the sin with the eyes of a man.

He heard their sins and their blasphemies with the ears of the man, with his man, Christ Jesus. What he heard was for his own glory and be made known to the edification of the church, the body, his own body, that he would come right down to the lowest state.

It's a low state, sin brings us, friends. It brings us into this wretched state that if God forsook us, hell would be our portion.

Many there are that fancy heaven, yes, it's man's nature, to choose the best, but here is not man's choice, it's God's choice.

[ 29 : 07 ] In pleasing him, our pleasure is placed, and it's God's own work. He chooses whom he will and when he will. As the scripture makes it plain, before other children were born, that the self and election of his grace might be made known, he said, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

What a mercy, all the work of Christ is, all his captivating power, to break the chain of sin and hell.

You remember how distinctly the Lord spoke to the Pharisees of old. You know they said, God is our Father, God is our Father, and as many say it still, they repeat the Lord's prayer with indifference.

Our Father, they chant which art in heaven, and they have no knowledge of sonship, nor do they desire it, but yet they call this God their God.

But God is in heaven, who can know him, who can understand him, and so come to my point, the Lord said to the Pharisees, you call God your Father, you are of your Father the devil.

[ 30 : 36 ] That's what Christ said on earth. How many will turn the gospel into such a soft and kind way in their own way, as if the word of Christ was in the state of a softness of nature, and not with the power of his truth.

He said to the Pharisees, your Father, God your Father, the devil is your father. That's very solemn, France, very solemn, because we might say God is our Father, because we're in want, because we know he has all power to give, and because he gives that which his people stand in need of, so we ask, we vainly ask.

He can do it, we say, he's all powerful, his almighty God. Friends, the captivity of the sin must be broken. You must have realized that this Christ came into the world to save sinners, and if you are not a sinner knowledgeable, now you are a sinner feelingly, which is that which the Holy Spirit imparts.

Often repeated, and that is this, when Christ was on earth, and about to leave his disciples, he said, I will send the comforter, and he will guide you into all truth, he will take the things of mine, and reveal them unto you, and friends, he also said, and he will remain with you forever, as long as there is upon this earth, that part of the body of Christ, the church, so the Holy Spirit will remain, and perform that work which is appointed for him to do.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove, with all thy quickening power, come shed abroad, a saviour's love in these cold hearts of us, it's the work of the Holy Spirit, a religion without the spirit, friends, is of no avail, there's many who tell you what work they've done, and I'm right, am I not, because the Lord said, they will say in that day, did we not prophesy in thy name, did we not in thy name cast out devils, have we not done good in thy name, but what will be the answer, if it's our own work and not the work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will say, depart from me, ye curses, I never knew you, you say, you knew me, but I never knew you, our solemn friends, and if the Lord puts you in want, it's because he knows you're in what, if he gives you grace, he knows it's grace you must have, and as we come to the beginning of our text, he will grant unto you that measure of grace, which he's pleased to give, and which the Holy

[ 34 : 05 ] Spirit works in and upon, yes, it's not your fallen nature, that would certainly be controlled, but he gives grace for grace, he doesn't give you to rest upon your good works or your good deeds, but that softening influence of his sovereign grace and mercy, he sheds that abroad in your heart, many of they say that love God, parents will vainly tell the child that God loves them, how do they know that?

it's this, it's the Holy Spirit that sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, why can he do it?

He's co-equal with the Father and with the Son, he knows whom the Father loved from all eternity, the Spirit knows for whom Christ died, and the Spirit knows the whole important matter of the grace God, that saves and meets a poor captive's need, grace to set him free, grace to control him through his days, grace to conduct him to heaven, so that when the Lord deals with his people, as I said here, he's taken captive, captive, those who were captivated by the sin of the devil, no, the Lord takes them, I will have them, they're mine, they're mine, they were given to me in eternity, and he says to the Father, and I've kept them, and not one is lost, they're mine, from all eternity, and this is the gospel as I know it, friends, and that's a captivated, fear, feel the captivation of sin, the degradation of their own heart, know that they were ruined in the fall, yet love him not withstanding all he cares, that's the

Holy Spirit that sheds abroad, that love in their heart, we can love many things in our measure of love, but the love of God, friends, who loved before ever, we were what we are, loved us beyond our understanding and realization that Christ must descend right to earth, friends, mind you, that was the completion of his work, friends, he was the son of God from all eternity, but he was never a man until the father sent him to earth, then he takes upon himself a manhood, yet without sin, with that manhood, you see, he can bring a brotherhood in, whereas the man, he can bring in the sonship, see what he does in all this great dissension, he came to earth, you and I have learnt the gospel on earth, if we've learnt at all, if we're right in these things, we've received salvation whilst on earth, if on earth we do not receive it, friends, we shan't go to heaven for improvement, no, those who are taken to heaven will be those for whom Christ died, and he ascended with them, before he ascended, he said, it is finished, upon the cross, now he must come to the father, and he does, and he leaves the holy spirit that the truth, that is in himself, might still be preached and made known, so friends, it's no small matter to receive the knowledge of salvation, and to know Christ as our salvation, is in heaven, and what is it still, he fulfills every promise, every grace, and every favor, comes through us, through God's dear son, and friends, he never came to earth, to view the earth, the earth is the

Lord's and the fullness thereof, and amidst the fullness of it, he knows where his people are, and he cares for them still, he represents himself in these words, makes himself known, the good shepherd, that gave his life for the sheep, and he says of himself too, and they shall hear his voice, and they will follow him, they that are not of the fold, hear not his voice, therefore they follow him not, my sheep, hear my voice, and they follow me, and I lay down my life for the sheep, and I take it up again, he says, he laid it down and took it up, no man could prevent him, no power on earth could prevent that, if the work of the blessed spirit of God going forth, not in a human man, as a man, as we know a man, but the man Christ

[ 39 : 55 ] Jesus, the holy son of God, he completes his work, the father receives him unto himself, and he receives his body, yes, the church, and they are to be edified by the operation and knowledge of this slave in mercy.

Now, we come back again to the beginning, and these who know these things are given a measure of grace to receive him.

No good us saying, friends, without many doubts and fears, such a creature as I could never perform this, could never do this, never do that. Friends, it's the work of Christ, it's not your work or mine, it's the grace that overcomes the captivity, that was taken captive, broken, the sinner liberated, the knowledge of God made known unto salvation.

Well, I suppose we could go on talking a long time because it means so much here in our text, that's in this chapter, because, friends, it's on earth it's got to be performed.

it's on earth we've got to be taught, it's while our soul is in need and the spirit will show us our need, he alone is our only help, a true liberation, our ransom, our atonement, all must come about, Christ said, it's all finished, and he ascends into heaven and he cries unto the father that the father would receive him for when he was on earth, the father said, this is my beloved son, hear ye him.

[ 42 : 04 ] Some heard his gasping breath, the moans of his pain, but they looked on him and were not saved, but they are those who by the spirit and feel in their measure which grace teaches them, that he died for the ungodly to bring them to God.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.