

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

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[0 : 00] Chapter of Ephesians, 7th verse, that unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Wherefore, he saith, when he ascended up on 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.

I believe these words commend to us the real gospel of the grace of God.

It speaks of who brought that grace. It speaks of those who received that grace. And it speaks definitely of who performed this great work from heaven, even upon earth.

[1 : 08] And there, what is left, friends, is for us, I hope, to be concerned as to whether we are partakers of this grace.

There's plenty of religion about. Many are religious people, but the people of God are those who have received a measure of the gift of Christ.

Christ. And Christ's gift, well, to give it himself. And the Father, God the Father, gave the Son.

And the blessed Holy Spirit presents us up. So that the Church of God will ever be made to know that the religion of Jesus Christ was that gift which Christ himself brought to earth.

And even though now he has ascended, still the blessing comes down. And the Church of God lifts up their eyes and hearts to heaven to receive this precious gift of the grace of God.

[2 : 28] And we want to bear that in mind because grace is the unmerited favor of God. It's not given for man's goodness or for what he is.

That is the favor of God. Unmerited, unearned. That is precious gift.

So that it always, when rightly applied, causes there to be that question within us, have we received this gift?

We can't earn it. And we never deserve it. It's a gift of God. And what do we read? The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So that there's a fullness resides in Jesus our head and ever abides to answer our need. Once he has given himself, and he did give himself, but we make a personal point of it, once he has given himself to us, then the gracious dealings of him towards us is this, to put us in wants and to supply our wants, even from himself, even from heaven itself.

[3 : 59] And the apostle speaks, these Ephesians, they were a Gentile race. There had been a time when they were idolaters and had worshipped Diana the goddess.

And as a nation they thought much of their great goddess. But God had his people, an election of grace amongst this Gentile race, the Ephesians, and the time come when he must call them out of nature's darkness into light.

He did use the apostle Paul very much for this great work. So even now, in the chapter which we are dealing with, the apostle Paul is giving this people the instruction that they stand in need of and which causes them, no doubt, to have the concern that all God's people must have.

A religion without a concern as to where it comes from, what for, what does it does, such a religion is void of understanding and is not of grace.

But first of all, the apostle here in this chapter is speaking of unity and he gives them a reason why they can hope for this unity because in nature, how far does our unity go, friends, with one with another, even in natural things, we soon come to a point of disagreement.

[5 : 41] It's not in us to be one. Every mind is different, every thought is different. But what a mercy in Christ, there it can be a oneness.

that oneness that resides in Jesus, our head, and ever abides to give us our needs.

That this is what the apostle is speaking of at this time, of this unity. unity. And he made manifest, he said, by the grace that is given.

grace, and this grace, friends, is the gift of God through Christ and it's especially for the church of God.

The world knows nothing of this grace and never wanted it. Man can have a knowledge of it as regards in the letter of the word, but when the Lord puts him and brings him in the want of it, then he knows that grace is God's peculiar and special gift.

[6 : 57] So we've come back to the point, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Now we have to consider this grace, friends, because by grace we're saved.

The favor, the unmerited favor of God and it unites. You may meet and have business perhaps sometimes to do with religious people, but where there's no evidence of saving grace, you've got no unity.

You may conduct a conversation but you'll never get to the point of feeling unity one with another. There must be the work of God's grace.

grace brings all his people together. Yes, everyone. Those who are taught of the Spirit are taught of the things which we can find in our text as we go along.

But let us look first in the seventh verse. It's given is this grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

[8 : 17] So, friends, what a mercy that this grace is not something that we can cultivate, something that we can accumulate in.

No, it's God's special gift. And we're told how this gift could come that Christ himself must come right down to earth, perform that which would purchase and make known this precious grace, and then he would ascend into heaven as he did.

And then the grace must come down and find the hearts of those whom he's appointed to receive it. See the order of grace, friends.

It's in Christ, the eternal Son of God. It's his divine nature to bestow gifts, friends, from himself, from himself.

As God the Creator, he gives gifts to men in nature. He feeds all men. He feeds even the flocks of the earth, that it's his dear Son, Christ Jesus, that gives grace to those who are humbled in spirit, given want in their soul, and given and need of his salvation.

[9 : 46] It's not offered. Oh, no. God doesn't offer his gift, friends. He gives them. An offer is not a gift. Friends, it's not for us we can never choose ourselves to receive this grace.

It's grace which gives the gift and is unearned, undeserved, unwanted, until life is planted in the soul.

Then it's given by measure, friends. Measure. You would perhaps heard people say, oh, if only I had the grace that man's got.

What do you want that man's grace for? You don't want another man's grace, friends. You want that which God gives you. He gives you the measure that he will work upon and in.

He measures it out. Yes. grace. But you say, I want more grace. Well, he said he would give it. He gives more grace. He gives grace to the humble, those who feel they want and need, those who so often moan because they feel more often to be graceless than to have it in that grace.

[11 : 10] but nevertheless he measures it out. And sure enough, what grace he gives you, friends, and if he gives me it, we should want it.

We should want every bit of it, every part of it, all the power of it, working in us because our sins are great. If you noticed, I noticed from his reading this chapter, the apostle was warning these people who had said at the beginning they were united by the spirit into this grace, and yet he speaks of them in this way, that all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be done away.

Friends, you would say, well, surely these people have not got that in them, that sin in them, they have and so you and I, friends, we are sinners and if we are sinners saved by grace, we are saved by that measure of grace which is meted out to us.

So I come back to my point, we want just that grace that he's pleased to give us, to give you, to give me, if he's so kind and merciful to us because grace can never be earned, friends.

No, people might make themselves religious but they never make themselves gracious. Oh no, grace, the sovereign gift of God, he who brought it down from heaven and yet he returns to heaven with the full power and authority over all the work that he did whilst upon earth.

[13 : 07] But it remains in us, friends, that which is our fallen nature. Yes, if you have received this grace, you've been born again and you've been born in the second Adam, Christ Jesus.

The first, your first Adam, was a sinner. He passed that sin on to you in blood, in life and all that is in your nature.

You are of the first man Adam and Adam died. But there's that birth in Christ through grace and that birth is a new birth in Christ Jesus.

By his gracious dealings with you, so you're kept alive death. No man can keep alive his own soul and no man can rid himself of all this that may be of his fallen nature.

Sin remains, friends, but not its power, not its authority. If this God is your God, if Christ is your Savior, he has ascended on high.

[14 : 27] He went up. He took captivity captive. That is, his people have been captivated with sin and always will be left to themselves.

But he came down. He performed that work of liberation to keep them free. And instead of them being captivated by sin, he himself captivates them for himself.

And he takes them up to heaven. He led captivity captive. And he takes these people unto himself. All that they stand in need of is his precious gift.

It's in grace. But we don't want to get too far with that point. we want to get this will to the fore that it is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

And friends, he measures it out. It's his measurement. Oh, you think perhaps sometimes and people have said and I have said to myself, oh, for more grace.

[15 : 49] What would you do with more grace? Well, the devil will encourage you to say you'll be this and you'll be that. And you'll do this and you'll do all that's right.

But friends, you've got to measure. You've got a goodly measure of your sinnership. And if you've got to measure, even a grain of grace, that's your salvation.

a grain, a grain friends, because there's life in that grain. Grace is grace. Works are works.

It may be that for a time you rested on your works and you thought perhaps you were satisfying God with your religious behaviour and your honesty and your desire for religious matters and you've shouted behind it.

but you know, the Lord didn't descend and then ascend to help you in that matter friends. No, that's of the earth, earthy, but the God of heaven, he, as a man, Christ Jesus, he comes down to perform all that must be performed on earth for his special and peculiar gifts to those whom he has chosen for himself.

[17 : 13] And so we get the true doctrine, do we not? The eternal sonship of Christ, he could never have been sent down if he'd not been a son.

God, the Father, sent the Son, so he was a son. He couldn't send him if he wasn't a son. no, God the Father sent the Son, the eternal Son of God.

And his work is eternal, and his life is eternal. And he says, I give unto my sheep, my people, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

What a wonderful work, friends. But what an important people, not important in themselves, but that God should choose them. God should find them in nature's darkness, and fill them with light and knowledge, that he should measure out to them a little of his grace, his favor, his great mercy, his goodness.

And sometimes his acting like this, that little grace, made you to say what was there in me, to merit esteem or give the creator delight.

[18 : 43] It is even so far that I ever must sing, for so, it seemed good in thy sight. Grace given, good in the sight of God, so that he'll never waste his gift, friends.

Oh, no. You know, there's plenty of religion about, people try to cultivate it, that is, to become more Christian-like, and take up this work, you'll find they all work, all got something to do, and they've become very energetic in religion.

But, friends, think of those, made manifest in the days of his flesh, when upon earth he met these poor sinners, and he imparted his grace.

There's no evidence whatever of their own work, no poor forlorn creatures they were, and the Lord not only healed them in body, but healed their souls and blessed them, and they were not all found in the highest place.

There she was, the poor woman that anointed it, and was there in a matter before man as disgraceful. Said the man that gave the feast, if he knew what woman, what sort of woman she was, he wouldn't let her touch him.

[20 : 15] Friends, a vilest sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need is welcome at the throne of grace, grace, a saviour's blood to plead.

Very sweet words. I remember a place where I was when the words were given me. The only answer I could give, the vilest sinner out of hell, who lives to feel his need, is welcome the throne of grace, a saviour's blood to plead.

bless this poor woman. It was given to her, this grace measured out to her, sufficient to bring her to the feet of Christ, sufficient for her to make it known in public, yes, what she was doing, sufficient to pass by all their smears and all their insults, grace, and she received her measure.

Friends, if you've got a little measure of grace you feel that God really has given you, then you can surely boast of it. I mean, I say boast of it, I mean speak even then according to the measure of grace that he gives you.

Because you can't enter into another man's line of things. No, your life and my life is our own. Our soul is a personal matter when the spirit applies his almighty power.

[21 : 52] And a sinner is a sinner before God as his own. And he came right to heaven after them, everyone.

Think of where he found the thief on the cross friends. a measure of grace made it out to that man. What had he done for it?

He hadn't done anything for grace. What have you done for your grace? What have I done? If so be we received our measure. No, grace is grace.

You get the meaning of it. It's unmerited. It's a favour of God, a choice favour. and the thief on the cross received it.

Oh, yes. What did he leave in evidence of his past life? Friends, it brought him to the penalty of death.

[22 : 50] Naturally, that brought life into his soul by the presence of Christ. He descended that he's hanging upon the cross beside that man who be chosen for salvation.

What a mysterious work, his grace. Who can understand his grace? You won't understand his grace and if grace is working, friends, you may not be able to understand yourself either.

Because what gets to heaven, friends, must first of all come down from heaven. You can't work grace out of earth, friends.

No, vegetation, the things of man's use may come from the earth by God's gift, but the gift of God is eternal life, which came down from heaven.

And he returned with it, he returned with it. He brought it to the Father. These are mine, he would say, thou gavest them me. So, friends, the measure of grace.

[24 : 02] What a wonderful thing. In the favour of God. Well, many people in life, you know, they want to work up to a certain position, and they poke about and try and get in favour of someone, and so they work up their position.

But God takes his people up. Poor, healthy, serving, sinners, the worst of sinners, he favours them, why we cannot tell, he loves because he will love them.

His grace is ever sufficient. And why is it? It's the God in heaven taking up a sinner upon earth. And what is this earth, friends?

The longer it goes on, the more sinful it is before a holy God. The time will come when they must be dissolved. But those who receive his grace, they receive it unto eternal life.

And what a wonderful thing, he measures it out, the measurement of it, friends. As I've already said, we may desire that we might have more grace, but you want grace even for the desire.

[25 : 25] There's no approach unto the things of God in reality unless it's the grace of God leading you and I to it. That's the difference between a natural religion and a God-given religion.

And before we got to this verse, there's so much that might have been said, but I couldn't speak of the old chapter. He says here, speaking of the unity of the spirit, he said it's a bond of peace.

Bond of peace. Do you know any other bond of peace in life, in the flesh? Bond of peace, bound to joy into everything that is peaceful.

No, friends, we can't do it and it's not for us. The bond of peace is the holy spirit's work. It's the spirit must perform the work for it is all of grace.

And he takes that work and he brings a sinner to the footstool of mercy and he permits it to plead the blood of Christ and salvation through Christ.

[26 : 42] And he brings peace into his soul. soul. And there's a unity with that. It's a peace of God that passes all natural understanding.

It's that which will keep your heart and mind in his fear because our nature is sinful, friends. Nevertheless, he said to these Ephesians, there's unity with you.

There's unity. Now, as he said, may be kept with a bond of peace. May be evidence in this that there's an agreement. For he says, now look, this is what you've attended to and it's brought you together.

He says, there's one body, yes, that belongs to Christ, that spiritual body. and there's one spirit as the spirit of life of God in your soul and you're called and one hope of your calling, yes, all hoping for heaven, all hoping to see him and to know him and to know his life eternal.

Now he says, and this is what you've passed through. There's been with you one Lord working in your heart, one faith and one baptism.

[28 : 12] I know there are those, of course, who will turn away from water baptism and immersion and they say, oh, it's the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Well, friends, it is. It's the Spirit's work to be baptized with that. Maybe at the same time when you can evidence it openly with the water but that is the Word of God.

And so he says, you're united, one Lord, one faith and one baptism. Why? Because there was measured out to them grace. So, friends, there can be, should be perhaps no fear in following his commands.

If they measured out to you, a little of this grace, yes, a little, I say, it's your measure of mine because a grain of grace is a gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, as I'm speaking, it looks as if I'm working backward, but I just want to endorse this, this measure of grace, how it unites, and how it unites you on those eternal realities, friends.

[29 : 29] Oh, there's, in places of worship, you know, they would tell you, we're so united, we've got this on and that on, and we do good kinds together, and you find there's no grace here, friends, it's just something to please the flesh, something that the flesh can take and enjoy, but the spirit's work is left out, but not so, grace, the grace of God is the favour of bringing poor, healthy sinners, deserving sinners, to know the one of salvation, and to walk humbly in his fear, and to be taken to heaven with him, and friends, the work was so great, and so important, none but the Son of God could carry it out, and he could not carry it out, unless he was given a body to come down to earth, when he came, it was still glory to

God in the highest, peace, goodwill to man through the man that yet and was yet time born, Isaiah said, unto us a son is given, and a child is born, the given son was the eternal son, child born was the man Christ Jesus, even the eternal son of God, so there's much to know, and grace will impart it, friends, yes, if you're favoured to receive the knowledge of this in your heart, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is a wonderful grace, when you think of the millions of pounds poured out on education so-called,

I say that because there's nothing more wasted because of the so-called education, to have knowledge, friends, must be imparted where it's wanted, and where it can be used, but God gives the knowledge, the saving knowledge, for the soul, and the Holy Spirit becomes the teacher, and the leader, and he leads into all truth, nevertheless, what is of nature, we leave that, what the Lord is pleased to give us naturally, we would thank him for, that what he gives us in grace, if so he gives us grace, we should never have grace enough, I was going to say, to thank him, but what a mercy, grace will give place to glory, that that will be the grace given for us, in glory will it stand, there be the full fruition, and the fullness of glory, glory,

God will give grace and glory, no good thing will be with old from them that walk up rightly, so friends, that the church of God should fulfill these great gifts and mercies, this is that which God gives them in himself, when God the Father gave the Son to the church, then truly the embodiment of all that is holy and good, was God's gift through Christ himself, he couldn't find a man, no, he couldn't find a man, not a prophet, not a king, not the best of men perhaps we should say that ever lived, but this man, this man, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, he took flesh without sin, he filled the space and place of God himself, when he was present, this man, friends,

God was present, when Christ comes into the church, God is in that church, when he departs, then he has left the church, and the church have no standing, only in their own carnal nature, which is of no avail, but he measures out his grace, to his own people, at every time of need, they can look to him, they'll never turn away from him, it's an eternal gift, which I already said, must bat forth into glory, for when you and I finish with this body, which you want no more grace, which you want no more favor, it's all being wanted in one, in the glory, of the immediate presence, of a holy God, who is able to speak of such things, to rightly set them forth, we have to leave that, but there's a peace, which passes all understanding, that causes

[35 : 21] God's people, to be united, in his truth, yes, you've heard people say, well I can receive this, but I can't go so far with them, and then I say to you, I can see you in something, but I can't go all the way with you, friends, those who are brought of the spirit, and taught of God, they won't go part of the way, they go all the way, they will, they'll know that their life is in with Christ, in God, and all that is done, for them, is for their eternal good, and all that he has promised, he will carry out on their behalf, his faithful promise, oh, friends, the gift, yes, he ascended on high, but first of all, says our word here, he must descend, he must descend, think of it, there were those on earth, friends, like the poor woman, she tried all the physicians, she spent all that she had, but she got no healing, no one could meet her case, naturally, or spiritually, but this man,

Christ Jesus, he come right down, friends, yes, he took a body, he came down to this earth of sin and shame, suffering, and shame was eat upon him, and he was a stranger upon the earth, but known only to those to whom it was revealed, good, Simeon, the poor man, could take this man as a babe in his arms, now let us, thy servant, depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, whilst there were those away with him, we will not have this man reign of us, friends, grace makes a grand distinction, when I say grand, it's not considered grand by many, but it is to the church of God, God's special and peculiar gift, whereby you can receive the son of

God, coming down from heaven, on your behalf, and so there were those, you see, that received him, the preparation was sometimes through the body, wasn't it, like the blind men, some of the poor maniacs, it was through a disordered mind, which tore them about for many years, till Christ came, the woman, as I've already said, went to their physicians, here, there, and everywhere, until last, this man came, and what came with it, the gift of faith, faith, yes, he descended with that gift of faith, he lighted with it upon that poor woman, and in her heart, she says, if I can but touch him, but, if I can but plead that he would do it for me, for everything else has failed, make known my want through the measure of grace has given me, and he said, none, away, who sought him, he descended to earth, and then he ascended, having accomplished everything, that which was captivated, and those who were captivated by sin, even the church of the living

God, he sets them free himself, he takes them captive, they are mine, the father gave them to me, I've set them free from sin and death, by my own precious blood of merit, he ascends unto the father, and not a hoof will be left behind everyone, yes, grace, a measure of grace given to every one of his people, and you sinner, who may feel so gracious at times, but you know, a little grace will give you want, a little grace will make manifest a need, and a little grace will supply all that you stand in need of, we must remember this, that as poor creatures, we may run ahead a bit and say, well, we want more grace, grace is God's gift, and every gift of God is meted out according to his own purpose and goodness, and friends, you could have grace enough to satisfy your religious mind, but to have grace in your soul is the spirit's work, the spirit must work performed, for it is all of grace, well friends, we just have to leave it here for this morning, but let us remember, there's a unity here, and the unity of the

Holy Spirit is our real and true teacher, to be taught of God, the Holy Spirit, is to receive the things of God, right and savingly, without grace, there's no salvation, too.

[41 : 23] Thank you. Thank you.