

A Gift of Grace - Romans 12:3-9

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Date: 19 August 2026

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[0:00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast. I will walk by faith and not by sight.

We can open to Romans chapter 12, if you would. Romans 12.

Right. I forgot. I forgot my little slide with the bus. Oh, man. Well, as long as you're on the bus, it doesn't matter.

Right, so, you know, I was thinking, the longer you walk with the Lord, the things you appreciate most about Him is just the stability, just how steady the Lord is.

Because you find out in all of your instabilities, because you have a lot of them, He doesn't change. He's just as stable. And I think as we've been going through this series on the Holy Spirit, He's the same.

[1:49] He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. It's not like, it's not like we're waiting for someone to discover something new about the Holy Spirit. Like, oh, well, now, finally, in the last hundred years, they figured it out.

Or this movement got it. Or these people got it. He's the same. And He's accessible just as He's always been. And He's neither more nor less than what the Word says.

Right? He's not going to be extra beyond what the Word says. But He's also not less. He hasn't ceased. He's not, like, done. And I just love the stability of God's Word and God's Spirit and just His presence.

It's wonderful to see. So, we will be looking at the fruit of the Spirit tonight. Last time, I mean, not the fruit of the Spirit. Last time we looked at the fruit of the Spirit. We're going to look at the gifts of the Spirit.

And we're going to cover it all in one night. And there will be nothing left. We are going to cover all we're going to cover about the gifts of the Spirit. And then this will end our series on the Holy Spirit.

[2:52] And then we'll see what's next. But we're going to look at it a little different. And not so much looking at each individual gift and going through every little gift. So much as what it is to be gifted and operating in the gift of the Spirit.

Last time we looked at the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5, 22 to 23. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. The fruit of the Spirit is love. Singular fruit. With all those attributes. And there's no law against love because love is what? It is the law.

Love is the fulfillment of the law. The law of love is to owe no man anything but to love one another. For he that loves another has fulfilled the law. And so the fruit of the Spirit, when it operates in our lives, when it builds in our lives, this nature and this character that is growing based off of the truth of God's Word, the reality of the Spirit, the attributes of the life of Christ working through my life, well, there's no law against that.

There's no law needed to keep that. But it is that which fulfills the law through me, remarkably. I think that's why in John, why the Pharisees are so frustrated.

[4:10] One of the reasons they're so frustrated is Jesus. Jesus is doing what they can't do. They had to reshape and rebuild the entire law into this rabbinical system of, like, Phariseism, of all these things to keep to prove themselves righteous.

And honestly, they couldn't even do it, could they? You know, he said if you spit on the ground and you roll it, what if you accidentally sneeze? Oh, no, no, I just broke the law.

I mean, what a burden. And here's Jesus effortlessly living out the reality that they couldn't comprehend. So according to God's grace, we receive God's gift.

The gift of the Spirit, the paraclete, that which is given to us. The gift, the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, as it tells us in Galatians.

The seed fulfilling the promise. What promise? That by faith, the Gentiles could receive the Spirit. That they could be born again. Then beyond that, Jesus ascends to the Father and says to the church, Hey, I'm giving you a gift, which is the operation of the Spirit in your life.

[5:18] The gift of the Spirit so that we might live what? Fruitful lives of love is the point. The gifts are so that we can then operate in the fruit of the Spirit and produce love.

And that's what we're going to look at tonight. A gift of grace. So Ephesians, if you remember, Ephesians was kind of our gateway into the epistles.

Looking at the fruit of the Spirit, the lens in the epistles, looking at the fruit, and then turning that lens now onto the gifts. And that was in Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4, 7 through 8 says, But 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 he gave gifts unto men. In the Greek, the word there for gift is to be bestowed something.

Something is being bestowed on you here. So by the grace of God, we have been gifted the Holy Spirit to operate in our lives in gifted and fruitful ways.

[6:23] He's gifted that. If we continue on in Ephesians, we actually see the fruit and the gifts in two verses. Ephesians 4, 15 we read, But speaking the truth in love may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Fruit does what? It grows. It matures. There's the fruit speaking the truth in love, bearing fruit. And then we see in verse 16, the gifts at work. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies.

The gifts supplying. The gifts moving around, essentially the produce, throughout the life, throughout the body. According to the effectual working in the measure of every part.

It makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. We see the gifts and the fruit working so perfectly together to produce a unified body, an edified body in love.

The gift of the spirit is effective to minister what? The fruit of grace in and through our lives. That is the point of the gift, singular, of the paraclete.

[7:29] So that he can effectively minister the fruit of grace. We've all received, where it said there in Ephesians, Every one of us has been given grace according to the gift of Christ.

We've all received grace if we are in Christ Jesus. How do I minister that to someone else? The fruit of that? Well, it's the gift of the spirit. The fruit of grace is love.

The gifts of grace are the ability to distribute love effectively. That's what it is. The gifts in my life aren't to show someone that I'm more spiritual than the lower tier Christians.

The gifts aren't to, in some way, validate my ministry. Or to validate myself, my standing before God. The gifts of grace are there so that I have the ability to distribute love effectively.

We're going to look at three things tonight regarding grace. We're going to look at the mode of grace, the effectiveness of grace, and the operation of grace. We're going to look at three different areas of scripture to do that.

[8:40] I was watching a pastor's conference, and actually my pastor from when I was a teenager was speaking. And, man, he's 88 years old now.

He was talking about it. He's like, I'm going to string together some pearls. He said, that's what the rabbis used to call it. Where they would take scripture and they'd string together pearls. I was like, oh, that's pretty cool. I don't string them together.

I just kind of go to the pearl shop and the Lord's like, here you go. So, I find it fascinating how the Lord strings things together. So, we're going to start in Romans.

If you want to turn to Romans 12, you can. We're going to begin in verse 3, and we're going to go down through verse 9. So, the mode of grace is our first thing.

This gift of grace. What is the mode? What is the way that it comes about interacting in our life? By what mode do we partake of this?

[9:38] Paul says here in Romans 12, verse 3, Paul here is pointing out a specific grace that has been given to him.

Grace in the Greek is charis, divine favor. But to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Some of us have bigger measures. Some of us have less measures. What is this talking about? He's saying that the grace that has been gifted to you will also have with it a measure of faith to operate in it.

Don't think of yourself like, man, I mean, I don't know if you just saw the way I witnessed to that guy. I saw the way you tried to witness to him. Well, maybe that's not my gift, and maybe I don't have the measure of faith to operate in that, right?

I love getting up and teaching. I love it. The more the merrier. It used to terrify me, like the thought of getting up and running, man. And the reason I'm not so terrified is when you just get more comfortable the more you do things.

[10:48] But also, I've seen the faithfulness of God. According to the gift that he's giving me to operate in the calling he's giving me to distribute love, that if I, by faith, walk in it, he supplies.

It's like every Sunday there's something. I haven't got to a Sunday yet where I'm like, oh, I'm just going to copy some guy's. Shoot, I don't have anything. Because God's the one who gives it. I have to faithfully operate in that by faith.

Okay, I'm going to sit down. I'm going to study. I'm going to trust the Lord. And there's hours where it's like, it feels like a slog sometimes. Like nothing's really coming. Okay. But you know what?

All right. We got a little start. The next day I'll sit down or I'll just be thinking. And all of a sudden it's like, and it's like, well, there you go, Lord. That connected it. Thank you. But to think more highly than we ought to think when God is the one who gives.

For as we have many members in one body and all members have not the same office. So we being many are one body in Christ. And everyone members one of another.

[11:56] Individuality. Having then gifts, plural, differing according to the grace, singular, that is given to us. Gifts. Gifts here is a different word than was used in Ephesians.

Ephesians was something to be bestowed upon you. So if I'm going to give you a gift, I'm bestowing something upon you that I had you didn't have. This is actually a derivative of the same word for grace. Grace is charis, meaning divine favor.

Gifts in the Greek is charisma, which is a specific aspect or gift of divine favor. So it's all an aspect of grace. The grace of God by the spirit of God is working in a particular grace through Paul.

A very particular aspect of grace is being worked through Paul by the spirit of God. That grace was given to Paul to operate in his life by faith.

So to each of us, God says, hey, according to the grace of God, he gives the spirit of God to give you a charisma, a certain divine aspect of divine favor, to operate in your life by faith.

[13:04] The gifts of grace, they operate in our lives according to what? Grace by faith. Should we expect anything differently? How are we saved? We're saved, Ephesians 2.8, by grace through faith.

That not of ourselves, it's a gift of God. Should I expect anything different when it comes to living out this Christian walk? No. Galatians 3, the beginning there, Paul says, this only what I learned of you.

Received you the spirit by the works of the law or the hearing of faith. How did you receive the spirit? Well, you're going to operate it in the same way. If we jump down in Romans 12, we're going to skip the individual gifts.

We're going to look at verse 9. Let love be without, and the King James says, dissimulation. Just means let it be unfeigned, undisguised, not hypocritical.

Let it be sincere. All of these, this grace, this gift that's given to us leads to what? Love, the fruit. It's all for love. Let love be unfeigned and undisguised.

[14:09] Abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. You see, we never need to fake, to mimic, or work up God's gift of grace. Because it's a gift.

It's either given, it's either been received, or it's not. You either have it or you don't. The issue is what? Well, I want that gift.

I want that grace. You know, Lord, I was window shopping in your word, and I really wish I had the gift of whatever. Can I have that one? I'll take that one.

Well, if God doesn't give it to us, do we have it? No. No, he's given up his spirit, but he will divide to every man severally as he will. So then if I try to operate in a gift that God hasn't given me, or in a way that he hasn't called me to, what power do I have?

God, I'm going to have faith. I'm going to have the biggest faith. I believe you've given me the, I want healing. That would be a good one, Lord. There's so many sick people. There's so many hurting people. There's people week after week that are in pain, and they're hurting.
[15:19] Lord, I want healing. Give me that one. And I'm going to believe. But if God hasn't given it to us, if God hasn't given me the gift of evangelism, and he's called me to something else, and I'm going to, but I'm going to have a big outreach ministry.

And I've got all the, I got all the backing behind it, and I got all the whatever. And then this one little lady over here just goes out and witnesses, and all these people get saved. We don't need to fake or mimic or work up God's gift of grace.

His gifts of grace. They're either freely given, or they're not at all. God's mode of grace. If grace is real, if it's unfeigned, then it will operate by faith, love, holiness, and edification, according here to Romans 12, 9.

Let love be unfeigned, undisguised. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. If it's real, then it will operate by faith, love, holiness, and edification.

It's going to be a wonderful, beautiful thing. And there's nothing more exciting than walking in the calling God has given you, the gifting he's given you, by faith. Now, yes, what does that mean sometimes?

[16:36] It means taking steps of faith in a direction that you might think God's leading you. You might think, is this the gifting? God, I really, I really think I might be called a children's ministry.

And you try it, and you're like, nope, I'm not called a children's ministry. What do you know? I didn't think I was ever called a children's ministry. I never wanted to do kids' ministry. God called me to kill kids' ministry, very clearly.

Thinking like, well, I need teachers, and I could do that. And just, you know, when the Lord's saying, yeah, take that step. I'm like, oh, boy. I loved it. It was great. It was wonderful.

Am I glad it's over? It was wonderful. The mode of grace, it operates by faith, love, holiness, and edification. It's genuine. It's real.

It's not something we have to work up or rev ourselves up for it. It'll be the most natural thing. Turn to 1 Corinthians 12, if you would. The effectiveness of grace.

[17:37] The mode of grace by faith and by love. The effectiveness of grace in my life. How effective is this? 1 Corinthians 12, we know, is where Paul, as well as Romans 9, but especially here in 1 Corinthians 12, he goes through all the different gifts and operations here.

And he says in verse 1, now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren. So the Corinthians were very much interested in spiritual gifts.

They were operating in them. He said, I would not have you ignorant. The spirit of God is not unknowable or undiscernible. You know that you were Gentiles carried away under these dumb idols, even as you were led.

It doesn't mean that they're dumb like stupid. It means dumb like they couldn't speak, but they're also dumb. Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man speaking by the spirit of God calls Jesus accursed.

And no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. Psalm 115 says that their idols are silver and gold. The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not.

[18:52] Eyes they have, but they see not. Ears they have, but they hear not. Noses they have, but they smell not. What do they have? They have the image of a what? Body.

And what does Paul say? Every man is not the eye or the ear or the hand, but we're all part of a body, a living body. The idols are the imitation. So the spirit of God, it's not unknowable or undiscernible concerning spiritual gifts.

I would not have you ignorant, but it is uncorruptible. The Holy Spirit is uncorruptible. He will not be joined with idols, but you cannot call Jesus accursed by the spirit.

The Holy Spirit will never operate outside the name and nature of Jesus. It just won't. And he will not be associated with that, which is a copy of the real thing.

What are the idols? They're a copy of the real thing, right? Oh, well, this is, this is a God. This is something that will lead us. And he says, no, it's, it's just emptiness. It can't speak to you.

[19:52] It can't lead you. It might look like a body, but it's not. We can do the same thing. We can look like a body. We can act like we have all the parts.

But is it the Holy Spirit operating in our lives? Is it God's grace? Is it according to faith and love? 2 Corinthians 6, 16. And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will walk in them and dwell in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. God is not silent nor is he stationary like these idols. How? This effectiveness of grace in my life. How does God dwell in and walk in his people? By his gift of grace, the Holy Spirit, right?

How is it that he dwells in me? How is it that he's walking in a sense in me and walking out through me as well? It's by the Holy Spirit, his gift of grace. Verse 4 of 1 Corinthians 12.

[20 : 57] Now there are diversities of gifts, different charismas, but the same spirit. There are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it's the same God which works all in all.

What's he trying to tell us here? It's all the same. But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit with all. So the gifts differ.

The particular person differs, but it's the same body that benefits. That's what he's saying here. It's going to be, there's different gifts. There's different parts of the body, but it's for the whole body. It's the same body that benefits and it's the same God that distributes those gifts. And here we see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, don't we? Gifts by the spirit, administrations by the Lord, operations by God, by the Father.

All working together. The same God, the same Lord, the same spirit to benefit the same body. It should be across the whole. Well, this area of the spirit, you see, this particular denomination, we believe this regarding the spirit.

[22 : 09] Well, and we believe this. What we should all believe is what the Bible says. It should be the same across the board. For to one, verse 8, is given by the spirit the word of wisdom.

To another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit. To another, faith by the same spirit. It doesn't mean some don't have faith and some do. It just means there's some who have been given the trust in God to step out into some things that other people wouldn't.

To another, the gifts of healing by the same spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, discerning of spirits. To another, diverse kinds of tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues.

But all these works that one and the self same spirit. Dividing to every man severally as he will. It's up to him.

For what purpose? That that one same body has benefited. Benefits the whole body. Well, Lord, I really wanted that discerning of spirits.

[23 : 12] You just gave me interpretation of tongues. Listen, when we operate in faith according to God's will, there's nothing better. Nothing better.

It's not about how big it seems or how visible it is. It's about the gift God has given us and operating by faith in it.

There's nothing more fulfilling than operating in what God has called us to. So, obtaining a particular gift of grace. That's why we're not going to go through each of particular ones.

What about, what is that? What about, you know, word of knowledge? Word of wisdom? What's the difference? Well, one's knowledge and one's wisdom.

Not sure. It was the spirit that gives it. There's times where it's, Lord, what's going on in this situation? I just don't understand it.

[24 : 10] And he gives understanding. Oh, okay, Lord. Thank you. There's times where it's, what do I do, Lord? How do I apply this principle, this truth? How do I do it?

And he gives wisdom. Oh, thank you, Lord. Obtaining a particular gift of grace is not nearly as important as obtaining the overall grace of the spirit that is needed to operate in that particular grace.

Most important is what? Obtaining the grace of the spirit. Letting the spirit rest upon your life. Operating in the reality of the life of the spirit.

That's what's most important. The gifts will just follow. The gifts, along with their administration and operation, as we see here, the gifts are the spirit, administrations, the Lord, operations, God.

So the gifts, with all their administration and operation, they're all at the spirit's disposal. They're all at his disposal. Which gift do you have? All of them. I got all of them at my disposal.

[25:14] Whenever he needs, he'll do it. As he sees fit to what he calls me to do. He says, go share with that person. Lord, I'm not an evangelist. You are right now. Go. Yes, Lord.

Gift of janitorial skills. Lord, I don't really clean toilets. You do right now. Go clean the toilet. Lord, I don't know how to counsel people. What am I going to tell them? Tell them what I tell you to tell them.

Give them the word. You're going to listen. And I'll give you things to say. Thank you, Lord. Am I at the spirit's disposal?

That's the question. Am I at his disposal? Not, are his gifts at my disposal? Is he at my disposal? But am I at his disposal? Romans 12, 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

I think sometimes we think it's the spirit's reasonable service to work on my behalf, to do things for me and in me and through me. It is my reasonable service to present myself to God and be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may what? [26:28] That you may prove that the word of God and the work of God and the spirit of God will prove out in your life what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. What do I need to do? Present myself to the Lord.

Lord, I don't know what you want me to do with my life. I want you to give it to me. Oh, okay, Lord. Here it is. Now, Lord, I thought you were calling me to this. Well, I was for those two, four, five years, six months, three weeks, whatever.

Now I'm calling you to this. Are you willing to follow? Are you willing to go there? Proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect, perfect for you is God's will for you.

Jumping down to verse 18, we're not going to look at all these. We're going to just kind of follow the thread through here. Verse 18, 25, and 27 of 1 Corinthians 12.

But now has God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him, that there should be no schism, verse 25, no division in the body, that the members should have the same care for another, one for another.

[27:35] Verse 27. Now you are the body of Christ and members in particular. It has pleased him. Now it means, as he's decided to divide up the members, but I like that too, that it also, the idea that God has set members, every one of them in the body, because it pleases him.

Like, oh, I've got a spot for you right here in this body. Yes, Lord, I'm ready. Let's do it. Let's go. Lord, thousands of people are ready for me. Here's three.

Go talk, go minister to them. Lord, really? Go hang out in the nursery. Go plant a church. See what happens. Well, Lord, it's been three weeks. Why don't we have 300 people yet?

The body is made up of the spirit working a particular work of grace unto salvation in each member's life. Would you agree with that?

The body of Christ is when the spirit of Christ, the spirit of God, works a particular work of grace unto salvation in each of our lives. Have you experienced a particular work of salvation?

[28:45] Yes. Then why shouldn't the particular work of the spirit continue to work particular works of grace after salvation? I mean, isn't that easy?

If he could do a work of salvation, a transforming work of grace in my life, then is it really that hard for the Holy Spirit then to continue works of grace in my life? No, I don't think so. As it has pleased him, what pleases God?

What is it that pleases God? What is this work that he's doing in the body? I think he gives us an idea there in verse 25 that there should be no divisions in the body.

We see back in Psalm 133, David writes, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments.

When we were in Exodus, what does the anointing oil represent? The Holy Spirit, it's a particular oil. And look whose head it's on. It's on the priests. And in Christ, we become kings and priests unto God.

[29:56] And we see this idea in Ephesians 4. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. What is your vocation? What has God called you to?

To present yourself to him and then let him gift and equip you for everything he puts in front of you that he wants you to walk in by faith. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, man, there's the fruit, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

God is pleased by a unified body, anointed by the Spirit, bound together by peace. That's what's pleasing to God.

God is pleased by a unified body, anointed by the Spirit, bound together by peace. Grace. It's grace.

What pleases God? Grace. When grace is operating in and through my life in an effective way so that the fruit of the Spirit can be ministered to people by the gifts of the Spirit.

[31:05] I'm not just a big clog. just sitting there with potential but unwilling to step by faith in the calling God puts in front of me because I don't trust that His grace is sufficient.

What did Paul say? Right? Lord, take this from me. He said, no, Paul. My strength is sufficient for you. My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness. verse 28 through 30 of 1 Corinthians 12.

And God has set some in the church. First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

But desire earnestly the best gifts. And yet I show you unto you a more excellent way. He goes through and lists out all of these things that are operating in the church and he puts an order to them.

[32:20] First apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, government, diversity of tongues, and on and on and on and on. Do all do these things? No. Jared, are you saying there's apostles today?

Scripture says that the church was built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles and prophets. That's true. There were particular apostles that will never be replicated. There's nobody alive today that can say, I walked with Jesus during his earthly ministry.

They can't. But clearly, Paul, to the Corinthian church, is saying, within your church, there are gifts operating in a particular way that he's calling apostles, prophets, teachers.

What does that mean? Who are apostles? Well, apostles would be those set apart and sent. The word apostle means to set apart or to send.

Sent ones, set apart ones. They're set apart and sent to minister to the body in a broader sense according to grace and truth in the spirit. I would think of them, what I see them today is when you see the pastor who has ministered for decades or years or whatever, he turns his church over to another guy, he realizes God is calling to other things and he's going to the different churches and ministering to them and encouraging them and he's there in a sense, apostolically, saying, hey, this is what God has done in my life in ministry, I want to encourage you to continue steadfast in these things.

[33:46] It could be a missionary, it could be someone like Derek's ministry, it's very apostolic. He goes to Asia and goes from church to church to church encouraging the brethren, right? It's very apostolic but it's always according to grace and truth in the spirit.

Prophets, what's a prophet? Those who speak forth particular revelation and vision for the equipping and edification of the body according to grace and truth in the spirit.

So that would be the difference there, let's go to teachers real quick. Teachers, those who instruct in doctrine so the body can be unified, edified, and equipped according to grace and truth in the spirit.

Now teacher, you can take the word and I can take and I can teach it here, I can go and teach at another church, I can go and teach at another church. The prophet would be the equipping for the particular body. So we're going through John chapter, will be 10 this week, I can't wait.

John 10 is one of my favorite chapters in the whole Bible, the good shepherd. Ha! I can't wait. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.

[34:48] We're going to be a little while in John 10. But when I approach the text, it's like, okay Lord, what do you want to speak to your church at Calvary Chapel Charlotte? You know Lord, this message would go over really well on the west coast.

Maybe I should, no, what does God want to speak here? God, what do you want to speak in Washington DC to the churches in there? No, what do you want to speak to Calvary Chapel Charlotte here?

And so God has particular revelation and vision, never new revelation and vision apart from God's word. I got a new scripture for you guys. No, but particular for the equipping edification of this specific body.

So there's apostles, prophets, and teachers. T-shirts. We also got T-shirts. Not so much a spiritual gift, but God could use it. oh dear.

And what does he say? Where he says, but desire earnestly the best gifts. What is the best gift? The word best in the Greek means most useful, most serviceable, most advantageous.

[35 : 54] Desire earnestly the most useful, serviceable, and advantageous. Now he will go through and talk about how, yes, prophecy is better. Speaking forth the revelation of God is better than tongues because tongues is for my benefit and praise to God and my edification where prophecy encourages everybody.

but the best, most useful, most serviceable, most advantageous gift for what purpose? Equipping the body for the work of grace. The one that's most useful, most serviceable, most advantageous is the one that I need in what God has called me to do to equip the body according to his work of grace, whatever that is in whatever moment that is.

And I have to walk by faith, not in the gift. I don't walk by faith in the gift. Oh, Lord, I hope this works this time. No, I walk by faith according to his calling, trusting the giver.

Okay, Lord, Sunday's coming again. I mean, we need another message, Lord. Speak through your word, Lord. Speak to your people. Faithfully, Lord, minister to us. And lastly, the effectiveness of grace.

If you want to turn to Acts chapter four. I'm sorry, the operation of grace. That was the effectiveness of grace. The mode of grace, the effectiveness of grace.

[37 : 14] What is the most effective gift? Whatever one the administrator deems necessary for carrying out the operation of grace in a gifted and fruitful way.

The best one, the most effective one is the one that he deems necessary to carry out the operation of his grace that he's called me to in a gifted and fruitful way.

And what are we gifted and fruitful in grace to do? To operate by grace. Acts four. I think we can get through this.

I'm going to read a lot of Acts four and into Acts five just to get the flow of it and point out a few things, not everything. So in Acts four, Peter and John have just been brought before the Sanhedrin and said, do not preach anymore in this man's name.

And, you know, Peter says, hey, whether to obey God or man, you decide, but we must obey God. And so they send them out, they threaten them and they go back and they go back to the upper room to all their peoples.

[38 : 20] And it says in verse 31 of Acts four, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were, where they all were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spake the word of God with boldness.

This was a scripture that the Lord used to minister to me to be in fellowship. I thought, what if I was the dude who wasn't there and the place shook and they're filled with the Holy Spirit. You come in and you're like Thomas because we saw Jesus.

I was at the store. Oh, I knew I shouldn't have slept in today. I was like, I don't, I don't want to miss out. And then also, if I'm part of the body that is there that supplies God's grace, well, I don't want to miss out on that.

Not just, you know, well, God needs to use me for people. No, I don't want to miss out on getting to be part of the flow of the Spirit, ministering grace to people. I don't want to miss out on that.

But which is most important here? You know, that they all went back home and like, wow, remember that shaking they get together last week? Remember the shaking? Yeah, we were shaking. No, it's the continual filling of the Spirit, the life of the Spirit.

[39 : 33] Yes, how wonderful when God gives us those visible moments. And they spake the word of God with boldness and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul, keeping the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

And neither said any of them that all of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. Not because they were trying to do some commune, but it was at that time the grace that was given, the manifestation of it, was that every joint supplied what was needed physically through the gifts of what?

This would be hospitality, administration, discernment. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And great, what does it say? Grace was upon them all. Philippians 1, 27 says, Only let your lives be as it becomes the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And that's exactly what they're doing here in this scene in the upper room. Remember when the apostles were about to say goodbye to Jesus, they didn't quite realize it at the moment as he leads them out outside of Jerusalem.

[40:55] In Acts 1, verse 6, it says, When they therefore were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? He said unto them, It's not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put into his own power.

He didn't say, Guys, don't you know there is no more Israel? Don't you know the church is now what God is doing? Don't you know that there's fulfillment now and we won't talk about it?

No, he just said what? Your timing's off. Your timing's off, boys. It's not for you to know the times or seasons the Father's put into his own power, but you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me, striving together with one heart, one spirit for the faith of the gospel.

You shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and into the uttermost parts of the earth. Israel has a promised future.

The church has a present mission. Israel's restoration is not a matter of if, but when. The church's mission is not a matter of when, but now.

[42:05] That's what Jesus said to his apostles. There is a promised future for Israel. There will be a restoration. But guys, right now, there's a present mission. Right now is when it's time for this mission of what?

Gifted and fruitful in the grace of God to be witnesses to the love of God. That's what we want to be. We want to be gifted and fruitful so that we can go out and witness to the love of God.

What do we see here from Acts chapter 4? This gifted and fruitful body, what do they have? They have boldness. They have unity. They have common care for one another.

They have an effective ability filled with the Holy Spirit and with great power gave the apostles witness. They have an effective ability and they have effective grace.

This is a gifted and fruitful body. May we be a gifted and fruitful body. Verse 34 of Acts 4. Neither was there any among them that lacked.

[43:05] For as many as were possessors of lands or houses, they sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Doesn't that sound like Ephesians 4? Every joint supplies, distributing throughout the body as the gifts are given as every joint supplies. And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

And Joses, I want to say Jose, could be who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of consolation.

Great meaning. Probably not a very trendy name. Probably better names, guys. Great meaning, though. Little Barney. He was a Levite.

And of the country of Cyprus, having land, he sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Remember we said you don't have to work it up. You don't have to fake it. You don't have to try and mimic it.

[44:09] Romans 12, 9. Let love be without dissimulation. Let love be unfeigned and undisguised. Romans 12, 13. Distributing to the necessity of the saints given to hospitality.

One of the gifts. The gifting of the Spirit is very real and very practical. God's gifts of grace in our lives are not for show, but to know and to grow.

2 Peter 3, 18. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. It's not for show. Barnabas wasn't like man this is going to get me in the book of Acts.

This is going to start my whole career. No. He said you know what? I want to grow in grace. I want to know the love of Christ. And the result is it's bearing fruit in my life and here's a way I can gift. The Holy Spirit's leading me to gift this according to the gift of hospitality. Barnabas had faith to give that. Like here's all of it. The question is not then am I gifted?

[45 : 14] But what am I doing with the gift I've been given? What am I doing with the gift of love? The gift of grace? What am I doing with the unity of God in the body that he's placed me?

And real quickly we're going to see the Spirit continues to work as we move into Acts 5. But a certain man named Ananias that's what happens when we try and go quick with Sapphira his wife sold a possession and they kept back part of the price his wife also being privy to it and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles feet.

They were not what? Called to this. They're trying to mimic it and they didn't have faith for it. They said well we'll keep back part of it. Maybe we should tell them it's part and we're going to tell them it's the whole thing.

We want to get our names in the book of Acts. And they did. And they brought and laid it at the apostles feet.

But Peter said I'm going to whip up the gift of discernment. This is when I need to use it. They looked the part. I mean the other dude's name was Barnabas.

[46 : 23] This guy's Ananias and Sapphira. I mean that sounds real cool. They looked the part. They brought the stuff. How was he going to know? Thank you so much. What a blessing that you wanted to give to the ministry.

Thank you so much. But Peter said Ananias why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land? You better know it's the spirit when you say something like that.

You know Satan filled your heart. If you'd like come up for prayer afterwards and you know Satan's filling your heart. They had the wrong motive.

They had the wrong spirit. They had the wrong gift. And they had the wrong fruit. While it remained yours was it not your own?

And after it was sold was it not in your own power? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied against men but unto God. Meaning what? The Holy Spirit's God and the Holy Spirit's a person.

[47 : 27] Nobody was twisting your arm. How much better if they had operated according to the faith they had been given. You know what? We can give part of it. Let's give part of it.

And keep the rest. It's okay. Corinthians tells us that that we are that God sees what a man has not according to what he doesn't have.

I love that verse. Even though they looked the part the fruit was rotten. Peter was gifted with the equipping that was required for the calling at that moment.

He was equipped with the gifting that was required for his calling. He needed to know. What was he equipped with? Discernment in the Spirit. Knowledge in the Spirit.

Speaking in the Spirit. And judgment in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave witness to Peter's witness. Didn't he? It was a bold witness the Holy Spirit gives.

[48 : 25] And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost. He died. And great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose wound him up and carried him out and buried him.

And it was about the space of three hours afterwards when his wife not knowing what was done came in. Peter answered and said you're a little late for church. Three hours late. My word.

And Peter answered unto her and my guess is he did it with a broken heart. As the Lord is pressing upon him ask her Peter Sapphira tell me whether you sold the land for this much.

Oh yes this much. Peter said unto her how is it that you have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord. It's not me. It's not the apostles.

It's not the ministry. You are it's the Holy Spirit. Do we recognize the body of Christ for what it is? The spirit filled blood bought body the individual members.

[49:33] Behold the feet of them which have buried your husband are at the door and they shall carry you out. Then fell down she fell down straight way at his feet and yielded up the ghost. The young men came in and found her dead and carried her forth and buried her by her husband.

The gifts differ. The particular person differs but it's the same body that benefits. The same God that distributes. God's grace is effective to save to sanctify and to separate.

The body needed to be benefited! It needed to be protected and the Holy Spirit is able to do it. What you and I can't see we would never see that. How beautiful!

Look at this! People are just coming and giving. Tons of people are coming. They all had everything in common and out of all of them the Holy Spirit singles out and says no. No. Not because he was upset at them.

Lord willing they weren't they're believers. You know? A little chagrined they showed up to the Lord. And we will meet Ananias and Sapphira someday. Let love be unfeigned and undisguised.

[50:41] It is by God's grace and God's spirit the church is alive today. Because a body without a spirit is what? Dead. They gave up the ghost.

And great fear came upon all the church and upon as many as heard these things and by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were they were all what?

With one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest no man dared join himself to them but the people magnified them and believers were more added to the Lord multitudes both of men and women.

A healthy body operating effectively it fights off disease it stays active and it grows. That's what you see here staving off disease it's staying active it's continuing signs and wonders and there's those that were growing being added insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

And there came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem bringing sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits and they were healed every one of them.

[51:56] Is that happening the same way today? No. It's not. Why not? Was the spirit more effective in the days of the apostles than now?

Was the church more gifted in the days of Acts than it is now? No. Not at all. The spirit is just as effective and the church is just as gifted now as it was in the apostles day.

The difference is not the spirit of the church and it's not that we lack faith it's the times and seasons we are in. having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us he determines he gives to every man severally as he will.

You know what was the greatest witness at the time of the apostles in the book of Acts? The greatest witness of Jesus' reality was the healing of people the diseases being cast out.

The Holy Spirit in our day in this nation is working in an effective way to minister grace by faith in the fruit of love. I think we see it every week.

[53:03] I think we're seeing it Sunday after Sunday people's lives being changed. I think we see it in little ways. One of the ways that God's fingerprints have been on this ministry this work from the beginning is the way he lines up the text and the worship songs.

We don't collaborate. Kitty and I were talking about that. She's like you think we would since we're in the same house but we don't. And I almost told her man Kitty you should find a song about grace because tonight's going to be all about grace. And then she did run to the Father.

I didn't even have it in my database. We haven't done it in so long. You know let us fall into grace. It's like the Lord so many times. How many times does he the message winds down.

I know what the end song is. I'll see it ahead of time because I'm putting it and I'm like well I don't know how that's going to tie together. And it's like so perfectly tied together. You see the gifts differ. The particular person differs.

But it's the same body that benefits and the same God that distributes. It's not that the spirit or the church are lacking. It's that the times and seasons are different.

[54:01] And for such a time as this God is working through us according to his grace. So what is the best gifts in our day? Whatever ones the administrator deems necessary for carrying out the operation of grace in a gifted and fruitful way.

I don't know what that is. But I'll walk by faith as I present my body to him to be used. So the question is not are we gifted but what are we doing with the gifts we have been given?

The gifts of love the gifts of grace and the gifts of unity in the body he's placed us. There's one body one spirit even as you are called in one hope of your calling one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all and there we see Father, Son, and Spirit again.

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The gifts administration and the operation.

May we all accept the gift of grace and the responsibility of grace so that we might be an effective witness to the grace that brings sinful man into fellowship with the Holy God.

[55 : 09] And the only way we're going to do that is by the Holy Spirit. There's no other way to bear fruit there's no other way to be equipped for this season. How do you know what's needed for this season?

I don't. I don't know what point of the harvest we're at but he does. I know the fields are white. And as we end our series on the Holy Spirit the verse we started with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all and I hope your fellowship with the Spirit will grow and has grown and we've gone long so I'm just going to close this in prayer. Lord what a blessing. What a blessing to be called equipped. What a blessing Lord to be joined to the vine to be a branch. Lord what a blessing to be joined to the body.

Every joint supplies. Lord to be used by you to supply something for someone else as we at the same time receive supply from someone else by faith through the life of the Spirit by the grace of God such a beautiful thing.

I don't think it's about trying to pigeonhole ourselves into I'm a discerner of spirits I'm a teacher of the word. There may be things we are specifically called to that will define very much our roles in your operation of grace in this world.

[56 : 47] And there will be certain gifts that are needed and equipping but Lord you know exactly how to administer those. You're the administrator. Lord I pray that for our part by faith we would present our bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto you.

Lord that we may see proved out in our life those good works that you have prepared for us Lord. And Lord in these times the mission today for the church is the season of the Spirit to take the life of the Spirit and the calling of God and to go and make disciples.

Lord would you equip us would you fill us would you fellowship with us and Lord when we get discouraged would you remind us that you've already got it figured out all we need to do is just come to you and get the directions Lord.

Help us not to be seeking to oh put on a show or pretend we're something we're not. Lord your grace is sufficient your strength is made perfect in weakness equip us enable us to administer your grace we love you we thank you thank you for this time as we just spend time with you and dove into what your word says regarding your spirit.

May it bear fruit in our lives in a gifted way and in Jesus name Amen.