

Ephesians 14-05-04b

We pick up our study now in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 7 and 8. To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. As I have mentioned before, there are some Greek rules that just by repetition you have already absorbed. You know about the action of the aorist participle preceding the action of the main verb.

And another thing you know is that there is a genitive that can either be subjective or objective. If you say gift of Christ, is this a gift that Christ gave or is it a gift that belongs to Him because it was given to Him? The gift of Christ, you know, God gave Him a gift, it's Christ's gift, it belongs to Him. If the love of Christ compels us, the love of Christ constrains us, remember that passage? Well, this is the *agape tu Christu*, the love of Christ.

Well, is this our love for Christ or is it the love that Christ expresses? Is He the subject of the love, He's the one exercising and expressing the love or is He its object? Subjective versus objective genitive. And when you come to a passage that's got a genitive that is of that nature, you have to make a decision. What am I going to think about this? Is the love of Christ compels us? Is this Jesus' love that He has for me compels me or is it my love for Him that compels me? And many times the answer is yes, that's right, that's what it is, that's what compels me.

It's His love for me and my love for Him and it's compact, it's effective, it's efficient. And it's typical of God to use sort of these ironic ways of expressing things to us and it just reminds us that He's able to do a lot with a little. He's chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things to put down the strong.

And sometimes it is a turn of phrase. We've got a situation like that here. We get the picture now, right? Unity in Christ.

We are His body. Our calling cannot be fulfilled if we do not understand this truth and if we do not pursue it and strive. Spudazzo, athletic training and pushing and aspiring to achieve.

All of that's wrapped up in Spudazzo. It's our goal and we work toward it. This was my point in bringing up the whole radical grace thing.

The guy actually said this. If you find yourself working at your Christian faith, you're doing something wrong. It's radical grace.

Just wait for it to pick you up and waft you to the realms. Are you kidding? What about Spudazzo? What about the Lord Jesus? Strive to enter by the narrow gate. He didn't say wait for the angels to pick you up and throw you through the narrow gate.

Strive. Work. We work.

We struggle. Our warfare. We don't say, well, put your dark glasses on and look through the thick

glass of the bunker and watch the nuke take place as the enemies of God are incinerated.

Remember that? They used to have the nuclear tests and all the officials and the guys in their tan general suits would put on the heavy glasses and they're in the bunker and, okay, push the button. Max, you know, they push the button and the mushroom cloud goes up and the little houses all blow away and the dummies inside at the breakfast table all get incinerated. And they're all at a safe distance.

They didn't have to do anything. Some guy mashes a button and it's all gone. Our warfare.

We struggle not against flesh and blood. We struggle against principalities. We war and fight against powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.

This radical grace notion is radically wrong. We are called to do something. We are not called to sit.

We are called to stand. Remember the memory verse this morning? Stand is in there three times. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand in the evil day and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore having put on. Having put on. Having put on.

Having taken. Sword of the spirit. Helmet of salvation.

Feet shod. God didn't send a coterie of angels down and do us like Downton Abbey where you just stand there and the butler dresses you or whatever he is, valet. Never mind.

I'm going to have to look that up after. You know there's a difference in a fillet and a fillet, right? There's a difference in a valet and a valet. I don't know what it is, but there's a difference.

Anyway, we don't stand there and angels float down and plant the helmet of salvation and say, excuse me sir, could you lift your foot? I'll put on the preparation of the gospel of peace here. Put your arms out. I'll gird your waist.

We do that. Put on. It's a command.

It's an imperative. You put on. You strive.

You struggle. You fight. You exercise yourself toward a goal.

If you've ever read the diary of the, you remember the Akka Indian incident down there? And Jim Elliott and the others, Nate Saint and those guys that got speared to death. It was very prominent, very famous back in the 60s and early 70s. Elizabeth Elliott wrote numerous books about her husband and about other things in the Christian faith.

It's kind of scrolled off the map now. A lot of people don't remember Jim Elliott. But the journals that he kept, his private diary about his walk with God, I've got a copy of that.

Elizabeth Elliott edited those and published them way back. If you read Jim Elliott and his heart for the Lord and his struggle and his striving with his own private set of challenges, and one of the things that he talks about constantly, he says, I was exercised this morning, meaning I was stretched. I was struggling.

I was striving. I had a challenge I had to overcome. But he uses the verb exercised in one of its alternate senses.

Tested. We went out on exercises. The military uses it in this sense, not jumping jacks.

We went out in the field and practiced to see if we're ready, if we can do this mission. We are exercised in the Christian faith and we push, we endeavor, we have to put forth effort. But to do it, we access divine provision.

It is the Spirit of God and the Word of God by which the power of God comes into the life of the believer and in no other way. When we are exercised, we respond with divine enablement, divine empowerment. Remember the end of chapter 1 in this letter? The five different kinds of power.

You've got dunamis. You've got energieo. You've got three others in there.

All of these different kinds of power. And so, yes, it is not done in human strength. But no, it is not radical grace.

And you don't just lay there and get poured into glory. We stand. We put on.

We struggle. We walk. We run.

What did Paul say? I laid there quietly and they carried me across the finish line of the race. What did he say at the end of his career? I have fought the good fight. I have run a long race.

I have finished the course. Because I have run, because I have fought, there is laid up for me a crown. It's a contest.

It is something that requires something of us other than passivity. The Christian walk, this walk, being beseeched to walk worthy, is not passive. It's active.

So, to each one of us, grace was given. This is where the grace comes in. If you want to talk about radical grace, what's radical is that this calling that we have is energized by, it is accomplished by, it is defined by, and it reflects on the inward side, on the outward side, and all the way through, grace.

That's why he says in verse 6, right above this, There is one God and Father of all, above all,

through all, and in all. And God is a God of grace. There is nothing more difficult to correct, to rebuke, to refute, to get straight, than a twisted truth.

And when you listen to experiencing God, when you listen to the prayer of Jabez, when you listen to the spiritual temperaments and all of the other fads that have come and gone, and blown like the wind through the Christian community, there is a lot of truth in it. There are Bible verses that are quoted. There are sound theological statements that are made.

But they get aimed at something else. There is a guy over in Europe someplace, like the Netherlands or Belgium or somewhere, and he took his car and he welded a big hoop on the left and the right side. A big round hoop deal.

So what happens is, he's driving along and it sits just above the ground. He's got his four tires and this thing is just like a squirrel cage type of thing. It's like a bent ladder that goes all the way from the front bumper to the back bumper.

So what he does is, he gets on a straight track off road, gets up to speed, then he slams on the brakes and his car flips and starts rolling down the road. And it just keeps rolling and rolling and rolling. So he wasn't happy with that.

That made him famous. And so then he thought, well, here's another thing I can do with my car. So he modified this rig and put two things that go forward.

And he moved the seats out from where they are inside the cab up onto this forward platform. And he and a couple of his friends sit up there. He put the brakes up there.

He put the steering. It's all extended. And so he's sitting, you know, 15 feet in front of and above the ground in this car.

And he's driving. And these rails come up. So now what he does, when he slams on the brakes, the car just flips forward.

And he and his friends are right down there just with their feet practically on the ground. And then it rocks backward and they're back up in the air again. And so he just does this.

There is really a point to this illustration. You probably are beginning to wonder, but there is a point, and here's what it is. This is Mike Kelly's hero's point.

You've heard me make that point before. This is the same point. What are cars for? They're not to make squirrel cages and roll down the road.

They're not to put yourself in front of and rock back and forth and bounce and, wow, wasn't that cool? You can do that. But that's not why the manufacturer made the car. That's not why steel pipe guys make steel pipes so that you can make your car into some kind of a piece of

entertainment.

That's really not what it's for. Should we all go out and put loops on our cars? And should we all put the extensions on the front and see if we can, you know, rock to the ground and get somebody to film us and get famous on YouTube? You can do that, but that's not what it's for. The truths of the Word of God can be taken and bent to serve almost any purpose, and you can make yourself notorious by doing it.

You can get your books published. You can get interviewed on talk shows. You can be on the radio.

You can have a ministry and get hits on your website, but that's not what the truth was given to us for. That's not what it's for. What is it for? Ephesians 4. So that you, little old you and little old me, in the obscurity and the quietness of our lives can walk worthy of the calling with which we were called.

And it is defined by, it is measured by, it is expressed in and by the one and others. And that's it. It doesn't have to be famous.

It doesn't have to be a trend. It doesn't have to be put on coffee cups and refrigerator magnets. It is what we do on a day-by-day basis.

To each one of us, grace was given. You have been given grace. You will be accountable.

I will be accountable. We will be accountable for what we do with this grace at the judgment seat of Christ. Remember the parable of the talents? Remember the other parable of the pounds? I gave this to you.

What did you do with it? This is the walk. This is the calling. Nothing else.

Not how much did you give, how many did you talk to, how holy did you look, how many times did you attend church or Bible class. Did you throw in a few Lord willings and bless you, brother, in Christ at the end of your notes. This is it.

This is I gave you grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. The gift of Christ. Now, is that a subjective or an objective genitive? Grace has been given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Well, I don't know if he's talking about God the Father gave us the gift of Christ or gave us the gift to represent Christ. Or is this Christ giving us a gift? Well, helpfully, we wouldn't really know the answer to this except in the next verse Paul quotes scripture. And he says, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.

You look at the little two there in your New King James and it says this is Psalm 68, 18. Keep

your finger here in Ephesians and turn back to Psalm 68. As a general rule, the first 50 Psalms are Psalms of David and then after that they are from a variety of authors.

And the Davidic Psalms will often have a superscription to tell you this is a Psalm of David also. That's what you have in 68. If you look at what is verse 1 in the Hebrew, this is to the chief musician, a Psalm of David, a song.

It's a Psalm of David, a song and it was given to the chief musician. Now, what does this mean? It's in the book of Psalms. Of all the places Paul could have drawn from to make this point, he goes to the hymnal.

This is the hymnal of Israel. Now, who is he writing to? Gentiles? Laodicea? There may be some Jews of the Diaspora in there. Do these people have a copy of the Inspiring Hymns floating around the house somewhere? Do they know that this is a hymn and a song? Not in the Psalm 68 sense, probably not.

Many of these people are new converts, they're proselytes, they've come over from a variety of sources. So Paul, unlike when Jesus is talking to the Pharisees and he knows that they know the Old Testament backward and forward, Paul cannot make that assumption about this audience in Laodicea. We know it because it's in our Bible.

But look at the first few verses here. To the chief musician, a Psalm of David, a song. Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered.

What a great picture. Let God arise, which He's going to manifest Himself. He's seated on His throne, but He's going to arise.

He's going to get busy. He's going to do something and His enemies will be scattered. God is taking action.

He's not passive. He didn't just set it all up in eternity past and fall asleep. Let God arise.

Let His enemies be scattered. Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. This is a concept from which we can derive comfort.

Do we look around today and see enemies of God? Do we see people who hate Him like never before? Richard Dawkins' militant hate atheism. This is not, well, you guys can go be Christians if you want to. This is, Christianity should be exterminated off the face of the earth, atheism.

Militant, reactive, proactive, get busy and get all traces of Christianity purged. That's the enemies of God, those who hate Him. So, when we look at this, do we need to get busy and go counter picket and counter march and go lobby? What does David say? Let God arise.

God is going to deal with these people. He will scatter them. Let those who hate Him, not flee

before us, flee before Him.

Commit these things to God. We are not here. Did Jesus go find the atheists and drive them out of town with a whip made of cords? Did Jesus go find those that hated God and, you know, find a bunch of Romans that were mocking the God of Israel and go, you know, do something to them? He didn't.

Who is Jesus Christ on earth now? Us. We follow His example. What did He do? Did He ever go down to the slave market and say, I can't believe this inhuman treatment of... There were slave markets all over the place.

The Romans had active... Jesus never said word one against the institutionalized slavery of His day, which is somewhat remarkable. What was His focus? Your relationship with God, your walk before God, your trust and confidence in God, your obedience to God, your love for God and love for one another is paramount. That's what He spent His time talking about.

As smoke is driven away, verse 2, Psalm 68, so drive away. As smoke is driven away, drive away. It says drive them away.

Them is not in there. It says drive away. Drive away like smoke.

As wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish at the presence of God. It is the holy presence of God. Melts them like wax before the fire.

But let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God. Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.

Sing to God. Sing praises to His name. Extol Him who rides on the clouds by His name Yah and rejoice before Him.

He is a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families. He brings out those who are bound into prosperity.

But let the rebellious dwell in a dry place like a shrub in the desert. Do not see good when it comes. O God, when You went out before Your people, when You marched through the wilderness, the earth shook.

The heavens also dropped at the presence of God. Sinai itself at the presence of God, the God of Israel. You, O God, sent a plentiful rain whereby You confirmed Your inheritance when it was weary.

Your congregation dwelt in it. You, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor. The Lord gave the word.

Great was the company of those who proclaimed it. Kings of armies flee. She who remains at home divides the spoil.

Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, you will be like the wings of the dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold. When the Almighty scatters kings in it, it was white as snow in Zalmon. A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan.

A mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan. Why do you fume with envy, you mountains of many peaks? This is the mountain which God desires to dwell in. The Lord will dwell in it forever.

The chariots of God are 20,000, even thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place. You have ascended on high.

You have led captivity captive. You have received gifts among men, even from the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell there. Now, what has happened? This psalm has spent the whole first half talking about God and his ascendancy and his dominance and his victory and his removal of his enemies and those who hate him.

And he says, we talked about the mountains of Bashan and how it's a threefold peak. What an appropriate mountain, one of the highest in the area to represent God. It's got three peaks, three snowy peaks.

It's elevated, it's high, it's lifted up and it's threefold. Holy, holy, holy. Bashan would be perfect to be the mountain of God, but God didn't choose it.

God didn't choose the strong mountain. God chose this little obscure hill of Zion to put his name in. And he pictures Bashan as being jealous and envious.

And what do you mean? I'm the mighty threefold peak. Why am I not the mountain of God? And he says, why do you fume with envy, you mountains of peaks, you threefold Bashan height? This, Zion, is the mountain which God desires to dwell in. The Lord will dwell in it forever.

It isn't the mountain that makes God prominent. It is God who makes the mountain prominent. And Mount Zion is now and forevermore dignified and distinguished and set apart because that is where God chose to put his name.

And it's emblematic. You and I are a place where God has chosen to put his name. That's our calling.

And it doesn't matter that we aren't the mighty mountain. It is God's presence that distinguishes and determines who and what we are. The chariots of God.

We've seen this on Friday night. Lord, open my servant's eyes, Elisha prays. And he looks around the mountains and sees that outside the chariots and horsemen of the Syrians are the chariots and horsemen of God.

The fiery chariots. The fiery horses. The fiery horsemen.

All ranged around. And Elisha has seen it all along. His servant did not.

Elisha says, Lord, open his eyes so that he can see. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. The chariots of God.

Twenty thousand. Thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place.

There's a little bit of a Hebrew issue here that I'll straighten out in our Friday night study. Here's our verse. You have ascended on high.

You have led captivity captive. You have received gifts among men, even the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell. This is God's representative king in Zion who has been victorious in God's name.

Who has received tribute and spoil from his victories over these. It's the little army of Israel. It's the little nation of Israel and its king that has dominated.

Historians refuse to believe that there was ever a kingdom of David and Solomon in the Middle East because it's too small. It's too insignificant. Are you seriously saying that this little postage stamp land dominated Egypt? Dominated all of the regions to the north? And was this biblically great? There's just no way.

It's not possible. And David saw it coming. When David was alive, he wrote this and he said, they're all going to refuse this.

The world is going to look at us and say, you know, you're weak. You're easily nudged aside. You're easily set aside.

You're easily dismissed and removed. They're projecting that Christianity will disappear from public view in this country in the next few decades. They're also projecting that in the third world and in China, if current trends of evangelism and the spread of Christianity continue, that those are going to be the nations where half of China will be Christian.

They're projecting by like 2030, if the current rates of evangelism continue, China. You know how many people there are in China? If half of them are Christians, you know what kind of a force that would be in the world? If the current trend continues, not to say that it will, but if it does, that's the rate at which evangelism is taking place in China. South Korea sent out more missionaries last year than we did.

South Korea. You want to talk about a little postage stamp nation? But at the same time, Christians in that country, and I correspond with one regularly, and I mentioned that statistic to

him, and he said, it's true, but pray for us, because our Christianity here is already under attack, and it is being diluted. It is being deflected.

It is being dissolved. It is being redefined. And even as people come to faith, the faith itself is being corrupted.

And he said, pray for us, because it's not enough that people are making decisions for Christ. Who are they as Christians? What do they believe? What do they do? Do they understand the worthy walk? And you look at our country. Why are we scrolling off the map as a nation where the light of the gospel shines? Because people no longer understand the Christian faith.

Where can you find out about the worthy walk? You can find out about a walk that is called worthy. You can find out all kinds of people defining what Christianity is and what Christianity does. Is it scriptural? Does it reflect God's truth? It's disappearing, has disappeared in many places already.

Why do you fume? This is the mountain that God desires to dwell in. The Lord will dwell in it forever. Chariots, multitudinous, the Lord is among them.

You have ascended on high. You have led captivity captive. This is the victor.

This is the one who as the weak, as the foolish, has nevertheless prevailed in God's strength, by God's power, through God's presence. Because God has chosen. God has made a covenant.

You have received gifts among men even from the rebellious. Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits. The God of our salvation.

Look at verse 19. The king who represents the nation of God, the Davidic king, the throne of David itself, receives gifts from men. He leads captivity captive.

They had been small. They had been oppressed. They had been kicked around by the nations.

They have risen up. God has given David victory and peace from his enemies on every side. David hands to Solomon the peaceable kingdom.

How many wars does Solomon fight? Practically none. He has a couple of little minor police actions. But Solomon doesn't have to go lead the armies in battle the way his father did.

David fights the battles. David is the man of blood that establishes peace and hands a peaceful kingdom to his son. He leads captivity captive.

He receives tribute and gifts and the spoils that enrich him to the point that he has the resources to hand to his son to build the temple. Where did all of the resources come from to build that hugely expensive project? David won them in battle, the spoils. Because he has those things, what can he do? What does David do with the spoils of victory? He enriches the nation.

He distributes those benefits to his people, to his subjects and to his successor Solomon. Why is Solomon so rich? Because he was a really shrewd businessman. He inherited his wealth from his father who earned it on the battlefield, who seized it by God's grace in victory.

So in verse 18, you have received gifts among men. These among men, that's talking about the surrounding men, the nations. Even from the rebellious, those who were trying to fight against.

Remember what happened in the 67 and 73 wars with Israel? What happened in 1967? All the Arab nations decided they were going to attack Israel. Little tiny Israel, all of this coalition surrounding them. It looks like it's a done deal.

What happened? The big guys lost and Israel got bigger. What happened in 73? The big guys lost and Israel got bigger. And they hate them for it.

But that's what happened. That's what happens here. So what can David do? And what does God do through David in verse 19? Blessed be the Lord, daily loading us.

And notice with benefits is in italics. It just says, blessed be the Lord. He loads us.

He furbishes us. He dumps bounty upon us. The God of our salvation.

The Davidic king receives these things. Does he receive them because he's a really great general and the enemies that were defeated just are forced to give it? He recognizes, how did these things come? Yes, he obtained them by victory. But the Lord loaded those benefits.

The Lord gave the victory. So he receives it because God gave it, right? Paul, back in Ephesians chapter 4, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. Paul condenses those two verses into one.

There's an article in my BibSac from back in July of 91, looking at this conundrum in Ephesians 4 and 8 and going back to Psalm 68. And he says, Of the many possibilities proposed for resolving the difficulty posed by the change of verbs in these verses, from receive to gave, the following eight are especially worthy of mention. Out of the plethora of available suggested solutions, I'm going to give you the eight most popular.

And he does. I'm not going to give you the eight. I'm going to give you one.

Remember the gift of Christ? It's both. It is Christ given to us and the opportunity to represent Christ on this earth. And it is the gift that Christ gave.

That's your clue. That specific statement in verse 7. Grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. And Paul sets this up.

It's almost tongue-in-cheek. He says, The grace was given to you according to the measure of

Christ's gift. Are you talking about the grace that God the Father gave to Jesus Christ? Or are you talking about the grace that Jesus Christ gives to us? Yes.

Paul set it up in verse 7. So you don't need the eight solutions and all the others that were discarded as not worthy of inclusion in the article. Just read the Scripture. Context will give you the answer.

We are given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. He has been given. All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth.

Right? Has been given to me. What did Christ do with some of that authority? When He said, What you bind on earth has been bound in heaven. What you loose on earth has been loosed in heaven.

He gave from what He had received. The Davidic King in Psalm 68 gives to the nation of Israel and the citizens of it, the bounty that He has received because God has loaded Him with benefits. Has graciously granted the victory.

So He is the conduit through which the grace of God flows. He receives it. He gives it.

This is what every good teacher does with the Word of God, Jesus said. Every teacher brings out of the storehouse things new and old. He goes to the storehouse and receives them and then He takes them and delivers them.

That's what a good teacher does. You take and receive and then you give. You don't direct that it go from the storehouse to the people and not first take it on board.

You don't study to teach. You study to learn. You receive.

And from what you have received you can then impart the treasures that we have in earthen vessels. And it's the same here. So, application.

So what? Interesting little textual issue here. People have spent all kinds of time trying to solve it. Why did Paul change the verb? And Paul changes it.

It's not in the Septuagint. Septuagint for Psalm 68 says the same thing the Masoretic text says. They dig around and they say, well, you know, some versions of the Syriac Peshitta have it changed.

Or, well, the Aramaic Targum here and the Latin there. Most of those have changed the Old Testament rendering because they know Ephesians 4a. And they've either consciously or unconsciously read it back in.

It's not a textual variant. Paul does this on purpose. Because he's condensing this grace that is

given to us through Christ was given to him and now it's given to us.

It's both. When he led captivity captive, he is the ultimate Davidic king. He is the ultimate receiver of the spoils of victory.

And graciously in him, in him, in him, as his body, we receive. And because we are him, we also should be prepared to give. It's both.

We receive. What does Paul say in that same Corinthians passage about the body of the Lord and eating and drinking, damnation to yourself and so on? He says, I deliver to you what I also received from the Lord. I deliver to you what I also received.

And it's, again, it's almost tongue in cheek. It's both. It's both.

And he knows, by the way, they're pretty sure that this little section here had become a song. It was a song in Israel. And the Christians picked this up and made a Christian song out of it.

And the verb may have been changed in the song intentionally, recognizing that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment. And that because he had received at the cross the spoils of victory and was now giving these benefits to people. And Paul may have also been playing with this on the idea that this was in their hymnal, not as a psalter of Israel, but in the Christian hymnal.

He gave gifts to men. When he ascended on high, they could see the beauty of the depiction. It isn't just ascending Mount Zion.

The Lord Jesus ascended to the holy, spiritual, heavenly Mount Zion. But unlike the Davidic king who goes up in the mighty victory train with all the spoils trailing behind, the prisoners in chains and the booty and the riches. When he ascended on high, he gave gifts to men.

He left them behind for his body because he's still here in us. So it's a beautiful picture. Now, so what? What does that mean for you and me? We have received, we have a verse, freely you have received, freely give.

Freely we have received forgiveness. Freely we have benefited from the patience of God with our failures and our shortcomings and our hard-headedness and our slowness to learn. Freely we have received the grace of God, the compassion of God, the patience of God, the long-suffering of God.

He was long-suffering in the days of Noah. It is, you know, people say, where is the promise of his coming? All things gone is the beginning. Do you not know that it is the forbearance, it is the patience of God that is waiting to give everyone a chance.

If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. Freely you have received, freely give. Each one of us has received grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

How big a measure is that? How big is the grace that God the Father gave to the Lord Jesus Christ? How big is the grace that the Lord Jesus Christ has given to us? Freely you have received, freely give. If we think about these things instead of, I can't believe they did this to me. I can't believe you would treat me this way, say this to me, do this to me, fail to say this, fail to do this.

You are so inconsiderate, you are so selfish, you are so this, so that, probably so. Lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love according to the measure of Christ's gift. Think about the measure of the gift of Christ.

Think on these things and the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. That's the worthy walk. When we can do this, we are not going to dread the judgment seat.

I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded that He is able to keep what I've committed to Him. What is it that we commit to Him? The loss that we feel like we're going to suffer when we don't contend for ourselves, when we don't try to even the seesaw, when we don't try to give an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

When instead we think about the measure of the gift of Christ. I know whom I have believed. Not I know who has wronged me.

I know whom I have believed. I'm persuaded He is able and that ought to be enough for us. This is the mechanics.

This is how it gets done. Walk the worthy walk? Well, how do I get that first foot? How do I get the next foot? How do I take those steps? How do I walk that narrow road through the straight gate? How do I stand with my armor on? This is how. This is how to do it.

It doesn't get any simpler or clearer than right here. It is the measure of the gift of the grace of Christ. He received it.

He gives it. We receive it. We should give it.

And we've been given the power to do so. We just have to choose it. It's not our strength.

It's His. It's not our grace. It's His.

It's not our destiny or our mission or our calling. It's His. We don't define it and tell God what our calling is.

He tells us. And we can speak the truth to one another in love. We can pray for one another even when we spitefully use each other.

So, it's a powerful example. The example of Christ. It doesn't get any more clear than that.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How clearly we see Him even though we have not ever laid eyes on Him. We see Him in Your Word. We see not just His appearance.

Not just His actions. But we see His mind. We see His thinking.

We see how He accomplished Your purpose. What He thought about. What He kept before Him in His sights and in His goals and objectives that enabled Him to live a sinless life before You even in our fallen and corrupt world and among us who are fallen and corrupt.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts so that we can do likewise. That we can follow in His steps. And we can reflect His glory in Yours both now and in the ages to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.