

Ephesians 14-05-25a

This is Sunday, May 25th, 2014. Our study is in the book of Ephesians. We resume this morning in chapter 4, verse... I can't even remember where we're starting.

Verse 10, sorry. Chapter 4, verse 10. Let's take a moment and go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, thank you for granting us this time and opportunity. We know that it is by your grace that we can claim a relationship with you through the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of that relationship, we have wonderful blessings.

We have wonderful potentials. We have great opportunities. This section of your word communicates them to us.

And we pray that as we look at them together this morning, that each one of us will see personally and individually that grace that has been given to us as the measure of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who now sits at your right hand and intercedes for us, represents us, and awaits the command from you to return and collect us and gather us to himself. We look forward to that day with great anticipation.

At the same time, we treasure the time that you have left us in this life to prepare ourselves and to be ready for that day and for that future opportunity of service and reflection of your glory. We pray that you will bless us as we study. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. This letter breaks logically into two parts, as you will recall. Chapters 1 through 3, Paul lays this great doctrinal foundation.

He explains things that we would not otherwise know. It's one thing to say, well, you have a problem. You're not in relationship with God.

And when you die, it's going to be a bad experience followed by a worse experience. And we know that the Lord Jesus is our Savior. We accept him as our Savior.

We come to faith and we say, well, that problem is solved. But through the revelation of truth, especially to the Apostle Paul, who is the Apostle to the church, he is the one that specifically reveals the mysteries that were not revealed in former days. And it's actually through Paul that some of the other apostles, including Peter, learned some of their church-age truth.

We're reading a letter from the Apostle Paul at firsthand to an early church. This happens to be the one in Laodicea. And he is explaining that our salvation is a lot more than rescue from damnation.

It's a lot more than the elimination of our condemnation. It's a lot more than going to heaven when we die, as they like to say. There's a lot more to it.

And it's important because what it actually is and what it involves requires us to invest time. It is the time that is ticking by on the clock as we speak. This time and the time this afternoon and the time tomorrow and whatever time remains to us in this life is capital.

It is a gift according to the measure of Christ that has been given to us along with other grace gifts from Christ. And it is what we do with it. You immediately think of the parable of the talents, the parable of the pounds, two separate parables, where Jesus tells the story of a master or an authority who gives assets to his servants and says, I'm going away, do something with this, and there will be an evaluation when I return.

Well, that concept is what you and I are living day by day by day. There will be a return of the master. There will be an accounting for what has been done with what has been given.

So, it is very helpful to know two things. What have I been given and what am I supposed to do with it so that when the Lord returns and the evaluation takes place, we will have had some clue and will hopefully be approved at that evaluation. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. And you see in that parable the connection to the future.

The small investment, the small capital that has been entrusted to the servant creates an opportunity, and based on what the servant does with that opportunity, it determines the future. Everybody remembers that parable and that situation, right? Well, this is us. We have been given certain things, and it is different for different ones of us.

And even in our own lives, it is different in different areas of our life. We might have been given many opportunities in the family realm, maybe not so many in the employment realm. We might have been given many opportunities in our job, in our employment, and not so much in the family realm.

Some people have large families. Some have small. There are different areas, and these are representative.

The parables are representative of one slice. Did you go to that frozen people exhibit they had some years ago? Body World. Body World? Oh, man.

I had a tough time with that. Body World. They take people and freeze them, like convicts and volunteers and people that donate their body, and then they pose them.

There are two little frozen with no skin on, so you can see underneath. They're playing chess or riding a horse, and the horse is also all revealed. It had that visible man.

He had a clear skin and a skeleton, and his guts were inside, and you could take him out and play with him and put him back in. And they had a visible man, a visible woman. I think they had a

couple of animals as well.

Well, this. Here's a horse. I remember one was the horse, and the horse is all frozen.

You can see his muscles and veins and connective tissue and whatnot. And then here's this guy on top. But it's all visible.

It's revealed. And in one portion, you would go in, and they had tables, and it was kind of like looking at a slide. You've seen those slide viewers where it's got illumination from behind.

You just lay the slide on it or a negative or an X-ray, and it's illuminated from behind. Well, they had taken these frozen people and put them in like an Arby's machine, sliced them thin. And so there's just this paper-thin slice that just went top to bottom.

And so here's this slice. And you can see here's the eye sockets and here's the bits of bone and so on. It's just as thin that you could see through it like so.

Well, I haven't lost my train of thought, so just bear with me. It may be there's engineers working on the track, but my train of thought is intact. These parables and many of the statements in Scripture take one view, one slice.

When it talks about the servants receiving these pounds, and it says one received five, another received three, another received one, there are people who think that that is comprehensive of life. Well, I'm just a one-talent servant. God's only entrusted me with one, and I've just got to keep from wrapping it in the handkerchief and do one more.

Other people, prominent people, visible people, they got the five. That's not what the parable is designed in. That's not the way Scriptural teaching works.

As most of you know, I think by now, that's just a slice. And in one area of life, maybe you were given the one talent. But there is some other area of life where you've been given five, and you're expected to take those five and make five more.

Jesus isn't going to take the parable and tell it like nine times to cover every different area of life. He tells it once to communicate the principle. It is up to us to realize that that principle has multiple applications.

So don't think, well, there's other people that are five and some that are three, and I'm just one. You're being lazy and trying to let yourself off the hook. You have five in some area of life.

You have three in another area of life. And you have one maybe in some other area of life. And other people get divided up differently.

But that's what we were told here in Ephesians 4, verse 7. To each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Circle that word, measure. It's measured.

When you're making a recipe, you measure. Unless you're my great-grandmother, then she doesn't have to measure. She just eyeballs it all.

She just a pinch of this and a handful of that and a dollop of this and a blop of that, and it comes out great. But for most of us, we measure. We open up the Better Homes and Gardens plaid-covered cookbook, and it says what to do.

Measure. And the measure is going to be different for different things. When you're making banana bread, you put in a couple of bananas.

When you're making breading for a meat dish, you don't put bananas in it. To my knowledge, I don't think there's any meat-breading recipe that calls for bananas. It's a different recipe, different measure, different ingredients measured in a different way.

Some things take three eggs. Some things take one. Some things you don't want to be putting any eggs in because it's not appropriate.

It's the measure, measure of Christ's gift. But be aware that all of us, it balances out. Some areas are five.

Some areas are three. Some areas are one. But everybody's got areas of five.

Everybody's got areas of three, and everybody has areas of one. They're just not all the same. It's individual.

It's measured. Jesus said that he knows his sheep. He knows them by name, and they hear his voice, and that's us.

So, when he ascended, he gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. Now, these gifts are not your 1 Corinthians type of gifts. There are other places in Scripture where you've got gift lists.

This is not that. In Corinthians, the word is charisma. Charisma, hence the charismatic movement, a focus on gifts, particularly spirit operation within those gifts.

And there are churches who think this morning they've got people standing up out of the congregation and prophesying. They've got people standing up and wanting to be healed or offering healing. Charisma.

These are gifts, and these gifts have existed. In some cases, they may still exist. I think there's a lot of people who think they exist where they don't.

Charisma is not in this passage. This is not charismatic. And take a look at these gifts.

As our first challenge this morning, can you discern a common feature of the four gifts that are listed here? Remember, pastors and teachers is one, Granville Sharp. Four gifts listed. What's a common feature? Anybody see it? It's limited.

Everybody doesn't fulfill these functions. But do you notice that they are all communication gifts? Communication. There's a lot of other gifts that support and encourage and build up the body of Christ.

But Paul's point here is very specific. When the Lord Jesus ascended, what did He do while He was here? What was His primary function? He did heal people. He did encourage.

He did minister to human needs. But what was His primary function? He communicated. He was the fullness of deity in bodily form.

He showed forth the Father. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. Communication.

Look at all the red ink in the Gospels. The Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Plain.

The Discourse in the Upper Room. Communication. Well, if He has ascended, that communication is now only on the pages of our Gospel books.

So, He has ascended on high and given gifts. And He gave, He Himself gave, some to be. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

And these are communication gifts that, verse 12, are for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. Very interesting that it is learning the Word of God. That's why you're here this morning.

That's why you have voluntarily decided to come, to assemble, to concentrate on the Word of God. Why? Because this is how you are equipped for every good work. This is how you are equipped for work of ministry.

And people say, well, you're just going to sit, soak and sour. That's not what Scripture says. The Word of God is alive and powerful.

And this is not like going to a class at college or a class at high school. This is not like listening to a political speech. When we look intently at the face of Jesus Christ in the pages of Scripture, it has transforming and energizing power.

That's why we're here. We know that we need this. We, our little ember will go out.

We sang about this this morning. The fire is not my word like a fire set the Lord and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. There's a time for things to be straightened out in our soul.

And that's what God's Word does. So these communication gifts, all of them, the apostles functioned early. And that's where we got our New Testament books.

The prophets are those who call out a warning. Those who remind people of God's presence and of coming judgment. It's a specific function.

It's a communication function. They are harbingers. They are men on the wall, warning and proclaiming.

People think it's prediction, but that's actually not a primary element of prophecy. Evangelists, these are good news spreaders. And this is not just the good news to the unbelievers.

This is also good news to believers. And we have many ministries today where it is essentially good news proclamation. There's web-based ministries, radio ministries, book publishing and so on, where different ones will call our attention to things.

And they're not the pastor of a church. They are not certainly an apostle, nor are they a prophet. But sometimes new manuscripts are discovered.

Sometimes there is an insight or an illumination from archaeology or from something else. And there are people who inform us and let us know about things body-wide, across churches, across boundaries, across international boundaries even, or who will come back and share the good news of missionary endeavors. And there's missionaries overseas, and there are missionaries at home.

And they encourage us and they remind us that the Lord Jesus is replenishing the body, generation by generation. And then pastors and teachers. And we understand that function.

That's local to churches. There is a responsibility for good order and for accurate coverage of the Word of God, for ensuring that the gifts that God has placed in a local assembly have room to function and to be exercised and to be directed, to be pointed in the right direction. Equipping the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.

Building up of the body of Christ. Now, I will tell you, I will confess, frankly, I've been working on this passage for a couple of weeks, and it just seems like no matter what you do, your eyes start to glaze over at this point. And it's a guilty feeling to say, well, you know, that was real interesting about the ascending and descending in the lower parts of the earth and figuring out where the angels are and what is the nature of hellfire.

But now, this looks like something that would be carved in the front of a pulpit somewhere. You know, equipping of the saints, work of the ministry, edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity, the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure, the stature, the fullness of Christ, no longer children. And it's just like, it just becomes like Charlie Brown's teacher.

You know, it's wah, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. Because we're going to leave here, we're going to pack our stuff up and go home and eat some lunch and do some stuff this afternoon. We've got a long weekend, it's a holiday.

And this, I don't care how you phrase it, how you set it to music or anything else, when you start saying, work of the ministry, edifying of the body, unity of the faith, knowledge of the Son, it's just theology. It doesn't hit me. It doesn't sock me in the head like some things do.

And I like being really motivated. I like having something that grabs my attention and returns to my mind to think about later. And these are just such standard statements.

And yes, I know the body, but what am I going to do this afternoon to build up the body? I'm doing what I can to build up the body right now, but what about all the other eight days of the week? What about the rest of that? And it's the same for you all. We're supposed to do this work of the ministry, and our function is to do our part in building up the body until we come to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man. Well, the perfect man thing, that's like when Jesus comes back and we get glorified, right? Because I'm never going to be a perfect man, and there are plenty of people who can attest to that, and none of us are going to be perfect until later.

So why is this in here if it isn't something that's going to really impel and compel? It's like an infomercial. And he has said these things several times. Well, here's my suggestion.

Remember I had you circle a word earlier? I don't know if you even remember. Do you remember the word I had you circle? Measure. Look in verse 13.

To the measure. The measure. There's measuring going on here.

You remember when we looked at when He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and in the Old Testament it says He received gifts from men, and in the New Testament, quote by Paul, it says He gave gifts to men. And we said, ah, Paul is doing a little ironic twist here. He's kind of sandwiching two truths in one statement.

It's almost tongue-in-cheek. It's like if I say, if I quote a verse and I change one word, and you say, oh, wait a minute, that's not what it says, and then it makes you think. You've got measure in verse 7. You've got measure in verse 13.

What's being measured in verse 7? Christ's gift. Five talents, three talents, one talent, in some particular area of life. Don't globalize and say my entire life is just a one-talent grace gift.

God's just got very minimal expectations for me. Thankfully so, because I'm off the hook. I'm just going to do my thing and go to Bible class.

Once in a while I'll participate in something and it'll all be great. Can't do that. The measure of Christ's gift.

Each one has been given this grace. And this is power. This is opportunity.

This is enablement. It's means, motive, and opportunity, not for criminal behavior, but for eternally significant investment and service in the things of God. It was measured somewhere, on some angelic Samsung tablet up in heaven.

You have a record. It's got your full name. And it has the measure that the Lord Jesus Christ personally decided to give.

You've got certain talents. You've got certain associations and links to other people. And there are some things that only you can do.

If you're a parent, you are uniquely positioned to offer specific benefits to your children. If you are a child, you are uniquely positioned. If your parents are living, to specifically do things that honor and bless them.

And nobody else is in your position. Not even your other siblings. Not even your spouse.

If you're the father, there are things you can do the mother can't do. If you're the mother, there are things you can do the father can't do. It's unique.

And that's just an example. These things pertain in your friendships, in your work environment, in when you go to school, who you know. In the operation of your day, there is a specific measure.

Measure. It's been measured. It's been planned out.

You know how evolution theorists and believers and adherents like to believe that, well, it's just kind of an accident and the environment determined it and mutations and it was all these accidents accumulating that produced life as we know it, which is patently absurd. But they believe it because they have to. Otherwise, they're forced to conclude that there's a God and you can't have that.

Well, in the same way, don't be an evolutionist when it comes to life, when it comes to daily circumstance, when it comes to personalities, character, opportunity. We're not evolutionists. This stuff isn't accident.

It isn't random. It didn't happen by chance. It's not just the confluence of factors.

Look at that word. It is the measure. It has been measured.

This is as carefully planned as DNA. And the way our DNA combines our parents, some genes from this side, some genes from this side, some of these overwhelm the others. There's this

confluence that happens when the things meet.

It was planned. God ordained this. It is not accidental.

It is measured. Measured. It's on record.

It's a carefully calculated recipe. Circumstances in our lives are a recipe. So, how do we know if it worked? How do we know if the outcome... Well, the master returns after he deals out these talents or the pounds.

And there is a reckoning. There is another measurement. He measured out the pounds.

He measured out the talents. And he said, all right, I'm leaving you with these things. I'm going away.

I'm coming back. And there is a second measurement, right? Input measurement, output measurement. This is the way computers work, right? You've got to make sure the data going in is correct.

You've got to make sure the data coming out is what you wanted. That's why in verse 13, till we all come to the unity of the faith... And we know about that. We don't have to cover this.

We've been talking about the unity of faith for the last chapter and a half, right? We know what that is. By the way, there should not be hundreds of denominations. There should not be shades of understanding of Scripture the way that there are.

Why do we not have unity of the faith? Because the measure of Christ's gift that has been distributed to each one is not leveraged. It is not seized and laid hold of. The guy that got the one talent and wrapped it in a sweaty handkerchief and stuffed it in the internal folds of his robe and walked around with it for months and months, the master returns and he says, what have you done with the one talent? He says, well, I knew you to be a hard man and reaping where you haven't sown.

So here's your talent back. And he did nothing with it. That is emblematic of people on this earth, many of us who don't pay attention to why we are here.

Well, if you have those kind of people, their understanding is not going to be sound and they are going to have a different... We begin to interpret life and truth in a self-serving fashion. And I want to show you this. This is a book I've referenced many times.

I've quoted from it. I've told you the gist of it. I don't necessarily recommend this book unless you can chew through some pretty advanced and detailed coverage of philosophical thought.

But if you know the difference between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and you can kind of follow that, this is a really good book. But I can give you the summary of it. In fact, I can read you kind of

a summary right in the front.

I've marked just a couple of places in here. But here's what's going on. Truth Decay.

As I have mentioned in the past, we had the Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, and science really took off. Why? We gather facts. We form hypotheses.

We test those hypotheses. And we say, well, when I, in a laboratory environment with breathing apparatus on and in the right conditions, combine chlorine, which is poisonous gas, and sodium, which is a poisonous material, and I put them together, I get table salt. And we learn to break them down and figure out how the electrons work and all the rest of it.

There is reality in physics, at least as long as you don't look at it past a certain level. There's reality in the way atoms form molecules. There's reality in the way energy flows to make electricity and magnetism and the things that drive our modern technological culture.

We observed reality. We drew conclusions from reality. And based on that reality, we could construct machines.

We can function in the world of reality. We say, this is real. I'm sorry, but there is no banana in table salt.

Right? It's sodium and chlorine, two poisonous and dangerous things that when combined become one of the essentials of life. That's just a fact. Nobody can stand up and argue me out of what table salt is.

I know what it is. I know what it's made of. I know what builds it.

I know what happens when it breaks down. That's just reality, right? Who would argue with that? Your post-modern culture argues with that. And in a nutshell, and what Gruthius does in this book very cogently and in great detail, is trace the history of thought from, to, through, and beyond dealing with reality as reality.

And the problem today is that statements that are made, and you say, well, is that true or is that false, are no longer judged by their convergence with, their relationship to reality. They are judged based on whether I find it palatable, whether I find it convenient, whether I like it or not, basically. And reality is not the deciding factor in judging statements, in judging propositions, propositional truths.

Now, I say this as a broad brush, and of course there are obviously areas where if you drive your car into a bridge abutment you are going to splatter, and most people will acknowledge the truth of that. But in other areas, I'll give you a quick example. For those post-modernist thinkers, the very idea of truth has decayed and disintegrated.

It is no longer something knowable by anyone who engages in the proper forms of investigation and study. Truth is not over and above us, something that can be conveyed across cultures and over time. It is inseparable from our cultural conditioning, our psychology, our race, and our gender.

At the end of the day, truth is simply what we as individuals and communities make it to be, and nothing more. Truth dissolves into a host of disconnected truths, all equal to each other but unrelated to one another. There is no overall rational scheme of things.

Now, why am I talking about this in Ephesians chapter 4? Here's the knock in the head in this section of the chapter. Jesus Christ has given communication gifts to the body that remains here. He has left.

He is the head. He is seated at the right hand of the Father. We are the body.

What's the body supposed to be doing? Well, we are informed, we are told, through these communication gifts. Are these communicators telling the truth, or are they telling something else? The only way this is going to work is if it's the truth, if it is reality. What's the problem in the postmodern church? Believers are not getting the truth.

They are getting a truth. They are getting this disconnected truth, no overall rational scheme of things. One chronicler of postmodernism, Walter Truett Anderson, explains it this way.

Postmodernity, that's what we're talking about, that's where we live today. This is what you hear on the news, what you read in the magazines, what people are taught and conditioned to accept in education. Postmodernity challenges the view that truth is one and undivided, the same for all men everywhere at all times.

The newer view regards any truth as socially constructed, contingent, inseparable from the peculiar needs and preferences of certain people in a certain time and place. This notion has many implications. It leaves no value, custom, belief, or eternal verity untouched.

Well, that's your truth. That's your experience. That's what you think and what you believe, and I respect that.

But my truth is different. My understanding is different. My world operates in a different solar system.

Well, how does this work itself out? Here's an anecdote. Gruthius was in a seminar, and a middle-aged woman in the audience said, I love Jesus, but he never wanted anyone to worship him. As I looked at the group of about 30 people, I saw nods of agreement and heard rumblings of approval.

A woman who was part of the panel discussion in which I was participating said, I find the way of

Jesus helpful, but I can't exclude anyone's spirituality outside of Christianity. That's their truth. They're a Muslim.

They're a Buddhist. They're a Hindu. They're a New Ager.

I find Jesus helpful, but that's for me. Another woman in the audience declared that Jesus was only a prophet and that the Koran was more important than the New Testament because it was inspired by Allah. These comments were offered during an event that brought together local authors to discuss among themselves and with an audience the subject of spirituality.

Two of the other panelists were from a liberal seminary where Jesus is not acknowledged as Lord and the Bible is not respected as God's inspired word. They were quick to distance themselves from my theologically conservative viewpoint. Another panelist was a New Ager who repeatedly said, All religions teach that we are one with God.

She said she accepted Jesus, but only as one way, not the only way. The beliefs of those attending the event were all over the spiritual map. They perceived spirituality as a private concern, not subject to the challenges of evidence and logic.

You have run into this. You have heard this, right? You've bumped up against this. Spirituality is not subject to the challenges of evidence and logic.

It's rather like a hobby. One spirituality is as good as another, as long as you don't think your way is the only way. When I offered reasons why Jesus should be the center of everyone's spirituality, most in the audience bristled.

Well, this is the world in which we live, and it is slippery. It is sneaky, and it insinuates itself into our thinking, and we've got to be on our guard. What this passage tells us is God has declared the truth in Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ has given His body gifts to communicate that truth, and it is a concrete, solid, inalienable truth.

It's not subject to variation and interpretation by different ones. There is one truth. It's either true or it's false.

Ruthias gave another example during the days of President Bill Clinton. Did he or did he not commit an impeachable offense when they brought him up on charges? And, of course, all the Republicans said he did, and all the Democrats said that he didn't. Well, look, there is a truth.

We know exactly what the definition of an impeachable offense is. You have either crossed that line and committed that offense, or you have not. Well, the discussion veered away from that into, well, but would it be good for the country? I mean, if the imprisonment, what does that do to the power of the office? Well, you know, we've got elections coming up.

What about this? What about that? And people dissembled and moved the discussion away from

the very simple point of issue. Did the man commit an offense for which he should be impeached or not? It's either true or false. It's binary.

It's a one or a zero. But today, the art and the pattern is to constantly move things away from a truth claim to relativistic concerns. It doesn't so much matter about its truth as what will its effect be? How will I feel? What will happen to other people? And this is why truth is escaping.

And even in the church, theology is falling apart because the declarations that the Lord Jesus has given to His church through apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers are whisked away in a sea of relativity. What is the purpose? How will we know if truth has made a difference? Look at verse 13. Till we come to unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

There's unity here. There's only one truth. It's either right or it's wrong.

What's the nature of the lake of fire? What's going to happen to people in the future? The Bible teaches one truth about that. It is discernible. It is attainable.

It is understandable. And it's one. There's just one truth.

And we are supposed to come to that unity and come to that knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man. This is complete, telaios. It doesn't mean perfect in the sense of sinless.

It means mature, capable, functional, perfect and complete, lacking nothing for the job at hand. You have everything you need. The grace you have been given that was measured out in verse 7 is absolutely sufficient to your assignment.

If I need to play Amazing Grace on the guitar, I don't have to be Joe Bonamassa. I don't have to be Chet Atkins. I don't have to be the greatest guitarist that ever lived.

For the purposes of playing Amazing Grace, I only need to know about four chords and to play them in sequence, to play them well. And for that song, for that task, I am thoroughly equipped for every good work. If I can play those four chords, play them well, play them on time, operate the guitar the way it's supposed to be operated or the piano, whatever it may be, right? That's a perfect man.

That's a mature man. Perfectly equipped, perfectly skilled, perfectly capable for the task. Look at the last part of verse 13 now before we go to the break.

To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Normally you would read through here and think, oh my goodness, I've got to measure up to the stature of the fullness of Christ? Are you kidding me? The Lord Jesus Christ, how am I going to measure up to His stature and His fullness? Context, context, context. This is for your assignment.

The Lord Jesus had a specific assignment, didn't He? He was not assigned to heal everybody that had a disease, but He did some healing. He was not assigned to take care of every case of leprosy. He wasn't assigned to convert all of the Pharisees and correct and restore all of their doctrinal aberrations back to biblical truth.

That was not His assignment. What was His assignment? To challenge the people of Israel with the promise of the kingdom. To accomplish the work of sacrifice necessary to be both the Messiah to Israel and the Savior of the world.

That was His assignment. And He was fully equipped and fully qualified to do those things, and He did them. The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is limited to and applied to our assignment.

If you're going to share the truth of Christ with somebody that you know, it doesn't mean you're going to be Billy Graham. It doesn't mean you're going to be the Lord Jesus delivering the Sermon on the Mount. You are qualified.

You are able. You have the measure of Christ's gift for your assignment, and when that assignment comes, you fulfill it perfectly. Every one of you, as I look around this room, you have things that you know how to do that you are pretty much the best person I know for doing those things.

You have a particular skill set. You've got experience. You're just really, really good, and if I had this task, if the church needed it done, I would immediately come and ask you because you're the ideal person for that.

You just have the knack. God has given you a particular facility that just makes you the go-to person for that. Well, this is what it's talking about, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Because you have been faithful, because you have voluntarily, regularly exposed yourself to the communication of the truth, not a truth, the truth, the truth that Jesus imparted to us through apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. Because you have done that, because you are doing that as I speak, you are potentially able to match this measure to attain the stature of the fullness of Christ in your area, in your assignment. And that is our area of faithfulness.

That's our area of not shrinking back, not failing the grace of God, as it says. We've been given this grace. We have been equipped for good work.

There was a measure, individual and particular for us going in. And there's going to be a measure, individual and particular for us coming out. So this is where it really meets the road.

You know, you can take the dog out of the room and it just doesn't matter. So this is what we

want to think about here in verse 12 and 13. Coming to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God has as its purpose achieving this stature, the measure of the fullness of Christ.

The Lord Jesus was so ideal at this that God the Father looked down and said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. So if you've been handed one talent, be sure it turns into two. If it's an area where there's three, be sure it goes to six.

If you've been given five, be sure it goes to ten. We've been given the information to do so. That's what this letter is really about.

Building on the foundation of what He has described in Christ, this is what we are to do. This is application time. This is get it done time.

And there's going to be a measure. This is the judgment seat of Christ. It's coming.

Grade cards will be issued. But it's a meetable measure. It's a doable thing.

Jesus was very careful when He measured out the grace to you and to me. And it's doable. It's meetable.

It is not beyond our reach. Because the grace has been given to us. And the measure is not excessive.

Well, we're going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to look at verse 14.