

Strengths Theology - 06

God is Our Gift

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OUR TEXT:

Ephesians 4:7 (NASB)

[7] But to each one of us grace (G5485 *charis*) was given according to the measure of Christ's gift (G1431 *dorea*).

Our mission statement is "Investing In Eternity". We use the acronym **A-C-T-S** which stands for the words:

- **Acquire**
- **Continue**
- **Take**
- **Share**

The fourth word we use to explain our mission statement is **Share**. We are to **Share** the investment with others. By that we mean that we are to show Christ to our world through love, relationships, community service, giving, sacrifice, and evangelism. The gift we have received from God in Christ Jesus we are to share with our world. Before we can share a gift we must understand and accept that gift ourselves. Once we understand and accept the gift we have received in Christ then we learn how to **Share** that gift with our world. We need to answer two questions this morning. First, what is the Gift we have in Christ Jesus? Second, how do we **Share** the Gift we have in Christ Jesus with the world?

WHAT IS THE GIFT WE HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS?

Context: In **Eph 4:1-6** Paul talks about the unity of the church which we will talk about in a few weeks. After talking about the unity of the church he brings his focus to the individual. Let's read it...

Ephesians 4:1-7 (NASB)

[1] Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, [3] being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [4] *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;* [5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

[7] But to each one of us **grace** (G5485 *charis*) was given according to the measure

of Christ's gift (G1431 *dorea*).

There are three questions we need to answer concerning verse 7.

What does the word grace mean?

What does the word gift mean?

What is **the gift** Christ gives us?

Grace - G5485 *charis*. Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude. A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor.

Gift - G1431 *dorea*, to give. A free gift with emphasis on its gratuitous character. Used in the NT of a spiritual or supernatural gift.

NOTES:

Gratuitous = **1a**: given unearned or without recompense **b**: not involving a return benefit, compensation, or consideration **c**: costing nothing: FREE

2: not called for by the circumstances: UNWARRANTED.

Let me see if I can illustrate this. When I graduated from high school I enrolled in Cochise Jr. College in Douglas AZ, I wanted to be an architect. Most of my grades were poor all that year and I even failed some classes. At the end of that first year all I had to show for my effort was a poor GPA and a mounting school debt. I thought I would do better if I were closer to home with more accountability so I enrolled in the University of Arizona, School of Architecture. My debt was mounting, the Vietnam War was intensifying and I decided to drop out of school and join the USAF. I knew that when I finished my tour of duty I would have the GI bill and would be able to finish my education without any further debt. The debt I had accumulated would not be due for payment until I finished my military service and then graduated from college. For now I could forget that debt.

I completed four years of military service. By the time I was out of the USAF I had a wife and a beautiful little girl. I used my GI bill to go to SNU, graduated, and entered into my first pastorate in Western Oklahoma. Now I had to figure out how to pay that original college debt. It was Christmas time and my mother had come to stay with us for a week. On Christmas morning we were opening gifts and my mother handed me a beautifully wrapped box. I eagerly opened it and inside was a Trouble Game. I said thank you and at the same time thought, "why on earth would my mother give my wife and I a Trouble Game?". She encouraged me to open the game box and inside was an envelope that contained a receipt. She had paid my college debt off completely. Now I did nothing in those first two years of attempted college education to deserve to have this debt paid by someone else. But my mother gave me this gratuitous gift even though I had done nothing to earn or deserve it.

That is the kind of gift Paul is talking about here in **Eph 4:7**. That is what the Greek word *dorea* means. This was a gift given to me by the grace, *charis*, of my mother. As you look at the use of these words in other places you discover more detail on what this gift of Christ is. This gift Paul speaks of comes to us in many forms as we will discover this morning. From the way God created us with specific talents to the wonderful gift of salvation and deliverance from the guilt and power of sin.

This word gift *dorea* is use by Peter in his first sermon on the day of Pentecost. Listen to his words.

Acts 2:36-42 (NASB)

[36] "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

[37] Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" [38] Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift (G1431 *dorea*) of the Holy Spirit. [39] "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." [40] And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" [41] So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. [42] They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

What is the gift? It is the filling of the Holy Spirit in an individuals life when they repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. It is the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who accept the grace of God, His provision for their sin problem. That provision is deliverance from the penalty, guilt, and power of sin in their lives.

Peter is giving a report to the early church leaders in Jerusalem. The early church was struggling with the prospect that Gentiles were being converted and the church was trying to figure out how these Gentiles fit into the Kingdom of God. Were they also God's chosen people? Were they now to become Jews and obey the law? What were they to do with these people that had always been unclean to them? Listen to the words in Peter's report to the church leaders who were trying to sort all of this out.

Acts 11:15-18 (NASB)

[15] "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning. (*Here Paul is talking about the conversion of Cornelius and his household.*) [16] "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how *He used* to say, '*John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*' [17] "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift (G1431 *dorea*) as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" [18] When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well

then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads to life.*"

The gift of God, which in this passage refers to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in those who have believed in Jesus Christ, was for anyone. Later in the New Testament, as Paul hammers out the theology of salvation so that both the Jews and Gentiles can understand it, he talks about how redemption and being justified is this gift we receive from God in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21-26 (NASB)

[21] But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, [22] even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] **being justified** as a gift (G1431 *dorea*) by His grace (G5485 *charis*) through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; [25] whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; [26] for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Remember what the words grace and gift mean?

Grace - G5485 *charis*. Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude. A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor.

Gift - G1431 *dorea*, to give. A free gift with emphasis on its gratuitous character. Used in the NT of a spiritual or supernatural gift.

This is the gift we have from God that changes our lives forevermore. This is the gift that we are to **Share** with our world.

There is another word for gift used in some passages with the word *dorea*, it is **charisma**. It comes from the word grace, **charis**.

Gift - G5486. *charisma*, to show favor. A gift of grace, an undeserved benefit. The suffix *-ma*, indicates the result of grace. Equivalent to *dóron* (1435), gift. In the NT used only of gifts and graces imparted from God, deliverance from peril (2Co 1:11); the gift of self-control (1Co 7:7); gifts of Christian knowledge, consolation, confidence (Ro 1:11; 1Co 1:7); redemption, salvation through Christ (Ro 5:15,16; 6:23; 11:29). Specifically of the gifts imparted to the early Christians and particularly to Christian teachers by the Holy Spirit (Ro 12:6; 1Co 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1Pe 4:10). As communicated with the laying on of hands (1Ti 4:14; 2Ti 1:6).

Romans 5:15-17 (NASB)

[15] But the free (G5486 *charisma*) gift (G5486 *charisma*) is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did

the grace of God and the gift (G1431 *dorea*) by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. [16] The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification. [17] For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift (G1431 *dorea*) of **righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Here the gift is described as righteousness that will reign in the life of a believer through Jesus Christ. Now Paul gives the word gift the ultimate meaning.

Romans 6:20-23 (NASB)

[20] For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. [21] Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. [22] But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. [23] For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift (G5486 *charisma*) of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The gift of eternal life, that is what is meant by the gift we receive from God in Jesus Christ. This is the gift of Jesus Christ. This is the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the gift of redemption, being justified. This is the gift of righteousness that reigns in the lives of those surrendered to Jesus Christ. This is the gift of eternal life. This is the gift we have received and it is the gift we are to **Share** with our world.

HOW DO WE SHARE THIS GIFT WITH THE WORLD?

First, there is a strong connection between grace, the gift of God, and love. We have these gifts because of God's love for us. We believe, have faith, surrender, and serve God because we love Him for loving us. The connection is seen in...

Romans 5:1-5 (NASB)

[5:1] Therefore, having been justified by **faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2] through whom also we have obtained our introduction by **faith** into this **grace** in which we **stand**; and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God. [3] And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; [4] and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; [5] and hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God** has been poured out within our hearts **through the Holy Spirit** who was **given** (here is the gift, here is the connection between love and the gift.) to us.

The motivator for us to **Share** the gift we have received is Love. The gift we have received from God draws a response of love from us. Love toward God and love toward mankind. After experiencing this love from God we begin to respond by trying to find out how we can love God back. As we grow and mature in our relationship with

God we learn that the only way we can show our love for Him is to love our world. So how do you love the world?

Now this may seem like a radical statement to you but it is the essence of the teachings of Christ and the early church being led by the Holy Spirit. Faith in God is expressed in the actions of exhausting all of our resources for the Kingdom of God. There are two scriptures that show this very clearly.

Matthew 25:31-46 (NASB)

The Judgment

[31] "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. [32] "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; [33] and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

[34] "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

[35] 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; [36] naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' [37] "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You *something* to drink? [38] 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? [39] 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' [40] "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.'

[41] "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; [42] for I was hungry, and you gave Me *nothing* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; [43] I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' [44] "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' [45] "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' [46] "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

These are not my words, they are the words of Jesus.

Acts 4:32-35 (NASB)

Sharing among Believers

[32] And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. [33] And with great power the apostles were giving

testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. [34] For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales [35] and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

This is how the early church put the words of Jesus into practice. Faith in God was expressed in the actions of exhausting all of their resources for the Kingdom of God. How will you and I put His words into practice? How will Mountain View Church of the Nazarene put these words of Jesus into practice? My prayer is...

- That we will **Acquire** the investment made for each of us in the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only Son.
- That we will **Continue** to grow and mature in our personal relationship with God in Christ Jesus.
- That we will **Take** the love of God home to family and close friends.
- That we will **Share** the love of God with our world.

In light of Jesus' words, where are you and I this morning? Are we expressing our Faith in God by the actions of exhausting all of our resources for the Kingdom of God?

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(**dgb** Comments in parenthesis are personal comments that I make concerning quotes or information from other sources.)