

# 1Peter 4:10-11

## Gifts of Grace in Action

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As verse 7 says, ***“the end of all things is at hand,”*** therefore the following verses describe how we need to be living in order to thrive and to overcome the enemy’s attempts to defeat us in these last days.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we have an exhortation that Jesus is giving to seven prominent churches that were in the region of Asia at the time this was written.

The challenging circumstances that each church was facing at this time in their history is recorded, along with a prophetic exhortation of how they needed to respond to the challenges.

An interesting characteristic of the order in which these seven churches are addressed in these two chapters, is that the historic circumstances and conditions surrounding each of these churches, when studied in sequence from first to seventh, correspond very closely to seven major stages of church history.

As you read the description of the first church listed in Revelation 2:1, the church of Ephesus, it corresponds with the conditions in general that most of the early church was facing around the time of 90 AD.

That was followed by the persecuted church in Smyrna, whose description corresponds with the conditions of the second century church which went through great persecution.

That is followed by the compromising church of Pergamos, which corresponds with the rise of Roman Catholicism.

That is followed by the corrupt church in Thyatira, which corresponds to the dark ages under Roman Catholicism.

Which is followed by the almost dead church in Sardis, whose description corresponds to the time of the Protestant reformation.

Then the faithful church in Philadelphia corresponds to the great missionary explosion of the British and American empires of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

And the description of the last church listed, the seventh, church, the church of Laodicea, it corresponds with the wealthy, but lukewarm church of the past 75 years.

This is the time in which we are living, and there is no other church following this one.

Look at what the Lord prophesied concerning the church age prior to ours: ***Revelation 3:10, “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”***

Notice the characteristic of the coming trial, *which shall come upon the whole world*, meaning it will be global in nature.

As we have seen, for the first time since the flood of Noah's day, and the Tower of Babel which followed, there has never been a time of global cooperation by men, or of global judgment from God. But what is beginning to happen today with the response to Covid-19, is just the beginning of global cooperation and global judgment.

The last generation was spared from judgment, but no such promise is made to our final church age. Instead, look at the warning given to our day:

***Revelation 3:14-17, "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: <sup>15</sup> "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. [This describes a very compromised church watered down by many nominal, professing members who don't truly believe.] <sup>16</sup> So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.***

[This is believed to be descriptive of the prophesied great apostasy of the last days, in which many abandon the church. This is believed to be caused by the hour of trial, described in verse 10, which comes upon the whole world]

***<sup>17</sup> Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—"***

What about the believers who don't abandon their faith?

***Revelation 3:19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. [This indicates a time of great trial and hardship for the faithful church.] Therefore, be zealous and repent."***

What is next? Jesus is standing at the door, ready to come for His church. ***Revelation 3:20*** is written to the church. ***"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."***

Dining with Jesus, hints of being together in the presence of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And then verse 21, we rule and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.

So, we are on the threshold of the return of Christ, and of a glorious future, but before that happens there is a time of trial in which the remnant church will be chastened.

And the letter of First Peter was written to prepare the church for success in times of great trial.

***1Peter 4:10-11, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."***

As we saw in our last study, this verse indicates that every believer has received a gift from God that is to be used in ministry for the building up and encouraging of the church family.

God has spread the gifts around, so that we don't all have the same gifts. Though I am a pastor I am only one part of the body, and I only have a few of the many gifts.

Each of you have some of the gifts that I lack. Each of you have gifts that the church needs in order to thrive in these last days. I have only a small part of what is needed.

***1Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."***

We are **stewards** of the gifts we have been given, meaning that we are to ensure that the gifts are put to proper use serving others, not wasted on selfish pursuits, not neglected and left unused.

It is impossible for you to be a good steward of your gifts if you are isolating yourself from the rest of the church because of fear of Covid.

You can't recognize and respond to the needs of the body when you are cut off from the body.

When you isolate yourself, the whole body suffers the lack of your gifts which God has given you to use to minister to the needs of the church.

***1Peter 4:11, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."***

There are two types of gifts that are described here: speaking gifts and serving gifts.

***"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God."*** What does it mean to speak as the oracles of God? Oracles of God is an expression meaning the very words of God—words coming straight from the mouth of God. (*Allan Stibbs, p. 156*)

This addresses our attitude in speaking, the content of our speech, and the source of our words.

This is saying that when we exercise our speaking gifts, whatever that is, whether it is evangelism, teaching, giving a word of encouragement, a testimony of praise, or singing, we need to treat what we are saying seriously, and speak as though speaking the very words of God.

Our attitude should be one of humility, speaking with love and with a desire to bless and serve the other person with our words.

Speaking as though speaking the very words of God also means to make sure that what we are saying is true and biblically accurate.

And finally, regarding the source of our words, the NLT has captured this when they translated this opening line of verse 11 to read, *"...speak as though God himself were speaking through you."*

This all sounds good, but how do we increase the chances that what we say will be of God and not influenced by the world, by our own flesh or even by the devil?

There is a biblical principle that what we are taking into our hearts and minds is what will eventually come out of our mouths, and be displayed in our actions.

**Luke 6:45**, *“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”*

The treasure of our heart is the accumulation of all the things we watch, read and listen to.

Garbage in, garbage out, truth in, truth out.

Therefore, in order to be able to speak as though speaking the very word of God, the way God would speak it, and in the power of God, we must be filling our hearts and minds with God honoring truths.

Guard what you are spending your time reading, watching and listening to.

**Galatians 6:7-8**, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows [whatever things you are planting in your mind], that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh [that is to fill your mind with the carnal messages of this world’s way of thinking] will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit [to fill your mind with the truths of God’s Spirit] will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*

Something that has become very clear to me during this past year of crisis, is that those who are filling their minds with a steady diet of Covid warnings, and Covid updates, coming from the mainstream media, are chronically struggling with fear, and struggling to be able to discern truth, and struggling to really trust the word of God—you are reaping corruption.

As one of you put it recently, some of you are spending mere minutes each day in the word of God, but hours a day following the news media and social media. What will have dominance in your mind? The messages of the world.

**2Corinthians 9:6**, *“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”*

What information and news and content is bountifully fed into your mind? And what content is sparingly sprinkled into your mind?

Some of your hearts are filled to overflowing with the messages of this God-rejecting world. And so you think like the world thinks, so you speak like the world speaks, and so you act like the fearful world acts.

For you, to speak as though speaking the very words of God is an absolute impossibility because your hearts are so full of the world, that is what comes out.

For many of you, the healthiest thing you could do for yourself is to shut off the secular media, especially avoiding anything they have to say about Covid, and take a good long sabbatical from the messages of the world, and wash out your heart and your mind with the word of God, and begin refilling your heart with God’s truth, and God-glorifying perspectives on world events.

Meditate on gospel-saturated worship songs, and have conversations with believers who build you up and encourage you in the faith.

Then, once you have begun to fill your heart with good treasure, then you will be able to begin speaking to others as speaking the very word of God.

But until you have swapped out the storage of your heart you will not be able to minister to others with your speech.

**1Peter 4:11, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers [this is non-verbal acts of service], let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Christians often make the mistake of thinking that we need to depend upon the grace of God for the ministry of the speaking gifts, but we can do the other gifts in the power of our own strength.

We know that we need the enabling of the Holy Spirit in order to preach the gospel, or to lead a Bible study or to share your testimony, but feeding the hungry, collecting money for a mission’s project, or shoveling snow for your neighbor, is just a matter of rolling up our sleeves and getting the job done. (Edmund Clowney, p. 186)

But if God is going to be glorified in our acts of service, then they must be acts that are done prayerfully depending upon His strength.

***If anyone ministers [physical acts of service], let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...***

How do we prepare a meal, entertain guests and provide hospitality with the ability which God supplies? How do we serve others in His strength not in our own? What does that look like?

The last part of Romans chapter eleven, and the first part of Romans chapter 12 give us the answer.

**Romans 11:36, “For of Him [God is the source—the idea to serve, the desire to serve and the motivation come from God putting it in our heart] and through Him [God is the means—the strength, knowledge and wisdom come from depending on the Lord to enable us] and to Him are all things, [God is the object of our service—we do it for His praise, to make Him known to others, and to make others rejoice in God’s goodness to them] to whom be glory forever. Amen.”**

First of all it begins with offering your body to God, inviting His Spirit, who lives inside you, to express His life through you.

**Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”**

And secondly, we serve others with the ability God supplies, by praying and asking God to use you and to work through you to be a blessing to others.

The outward appearance of someone serving by the power of God may look very similar to someone serving in the flesh, but the difference will be seen in the fruit that is produced—in the impact that the power of God makes in the lives of those you serve.

**2Corinthians 9:8**, *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”*

***“...that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...”***

Here is an important truth that, when understood, will change your thinking about glorifying the Lord.

God is never glorified by what I do for Him in the energy of my own flesh, but He is only glorified through what Christ does.

Therefore, I can only glorify God by letting Christ have control and work through me.

For example. I have a daughter who is a very gifted artist and she can draw some amazing pictures. And she certainly didn't get her gift from me.

But if I were to decide that I wanted to give some glory to Elizabeth, and so I drew one of my own amazing stick figure pictures and then put her name on the corner of it and hung it on the wall, and then told everyone who saw it to give Elizabeth all the credit for the picture, that would not glorify Elizabeth—it would be an insult to her.

But if I let her take control of my hand, pick up a pencil and then guide my hand to make a drawing—if that were possible, then I could rightly give her the credit.

***“If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”***

All the glory belongs to Jesus, because at the end the only things that remain will be those things that have been done in yielded surrender to the power and control of Jesus Christ.

And dominion belongs to Jesus. Dominion means supreme power and authority to govern and to control. Dominion means to have sovereignty and the right of possession, and to not be under the authority or control of any other.

This is a reminder to us who are living as foreigners here on this earth, that ultimately it all belongs to Jesus Christ, and one day soon He will physically return to this world and He will exercise His supreme power and authority and He will set up His throne on earth, and He will rule over the kingdoms of this world forever and ever.

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