

Real Love According To The Word Of God

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For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us. Lord of all to this our hymn of great praise for the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night. Hill and tree and sun and moon and stars of light. Lord of all to thee we praise is our hymn of grateful praise for the joy of human love. Brother, sister, parent, child, friends on earth and friends of all for all gentle thoughts and mind. Lord of all to be praised. Is our great praise.

For thyself divine to our grace so freely give for that great great love of mine. Peace on earth and joy in heaven. Lord of all to thee we wish this our great praise. Amen.

I'll be continuing my series from First Peter. If you been following along here at Calvary Road, I've been doing it in the evenings. I'll be doing it now in the mornings. I'm going to continue with verse 7 and finish with verse 11. This section is sandwiched in between passages on suffering and then we're going to go to suffering from verbal to physical in next week's sermon. Sandwiched in this is importance of love. How important is love when we're suffering? Is the most important thing that we need when we're suffering. It is the one thing that is going to keep us going in the suffering.

And so Peter draws our attention. Brothers and sisters, understand your suffering has reasons. It has purposes. And it's a purpose is to have Christ attitude because he is the one that has the love that gives is given to us. Amen. Is having his heart attitude in suffering through all the hardships. God's cause and purpose is to shed his love abroad.

These commands that we're going to see here is rich. It's rich in this topic of love and it's looking forward not backwards. Love looks forwards. We're going to see that love looks forwards and not just for right now but beyond our lifetime possibly to the end of end times when Christ returns. This is the kind of love that sustains us, brothers and sisters. Passages that are just that we're going to see here is primarily, yes, to the dispersed, those that were persecuted and had to flee, but that has instructions within the context of the local church. We're going to see that it's for the scattered and the local church. And we're going to see, brothers and sisters, how relatively easy we have it here. How relatively easy we have it here in the United States. Peter will show us the importance of what and how to pray as well in this text. And then what real love looks like according to God's word. And then finally, how to steward what God has given to you. So let's begin. Let's begin with verse 7.

Look down with me. First Peter chapter 4, beginning at verse 7. But the end of all things is at hand. Be sober, therefore. Be therefore sober and watch unto prayer. Peter states that the end of all things is imminent. Or the way it's phrased here is things at hand. All necessary events for the conclusion of God's plan has already occurred. What do I mean by that? First Peter 3:18, the Messiah has arrived, lived, and died. 1 Peter 3:21, he was resurrected and ascended back to the father where he currently reigns over the universe. 1 Peter 3:22, he has prepared at this very moment to judge all who are living and who have ever lived. 1 Peter 4:5.

So along with the other New Testament writers, Peter affirms that we are now living in the last days or end times. True by God's grace. It has been over 2,000 years since Peter wrote these words. But we're going to see later on that in this day that we are living in, it's at hand. We are to be ready as another way of putting it. And what are we to do while we are waiting as it were? Do we would you say this would be the right response to panic or to isolate yourselves lose oneself and pleasure seeking? No. Peter's answer is while you're waiting that the most reasonable thing first primarily is to respond in prayer. It says watch and watch unto prayer. You see that? And it's in the lines of watching unto prayer with a clear sense of mind. That's where sober minded comes in. Therefore, sober, clearminded, having your mind set that this end has already is at hand. God's plan through the Lord Jesus Christ has been fulfilled in the first coming. Now, we are clearly waiting for his second coming. And so we're not to in this text is conclude ourselves with, oh, let's just jump into mindless pleasure seeking because all we have to do is wait. No, because we see in prior verses that is not how we are to live anymore with our time. Amen. That is in the past.

Wherever you have may been as an unbeliever, those are all things that are in the past. And then we see everything that our time is short. That's what I said last week. Our time is short, relatively speaking. And so Peter writes, we must be self-control. That's another way of playing being sober. Another way of saying sober is to be alert. Another way of saying exercising sound judgment about your choices in your life. In this context, sober means also serious. In other words, we should be careful about how we live, not according to the way we used to, but into a new way, which we're going to see that affects our everyday choices. Every day. Every single day. Not just Sunday, but all the way through day onto day. Daily choices. That's how much God cares for you, brothers and sisters. He cares about your daily choices, but he wants your mind to be serious, soberminded, so that you can make clear choices and that you do it out of an ability where you are understanding what you're praying for and you are clear about what you're praying for and you're maintaining self-control through it all. You're not panicking. You're not you're not going to the left or to the right hearing different opinions, but you're going to the word of God. This is how effective prayer is according to Peter's instruction.

So the nearness of the end can be a source of encouragement. Do you see it as an encouragement, brothers and sisters? Do you see that despite of what's coming ahead and we know what the end is going to look like? Are you encouraged? Because you ought to be. Peter's going to show us encouragements in your prayers because you know why? Here are some of the things that are going to stop. All human boasting and all things in which people have placed their so-called hope will cease. All of those senseless false hope will cease. Also everything in which a man may put his hope will come to an end whether lost or saved the end is either heaven or hell. So hereby you may think again the seriousness of this of this end then you will be encouraged because God

has already set the plan for you brothers and sisters what your end is that should draw your encouragement every single day. Amen. Because you see, unfortunately, those who are not saved are filled with materialism and spiritualism that is not of God. And all that will be judged at the second coming of the Lord Jesus. Then all slandering, all mocking, all persecution will come to an end for all those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus.

Focusing on the coming of the Lord Jesus, his judgment of all unrighteousness, and the beginning of the millennial kingdom of peace is another way to strengthen you. I don't have time to go into what that looks like, but that is one other reason. Amen. To endure and bear challenges that would otherwise be unbearable. Don't allow yourself to be fired up every day as well. You got you got choices. Remember, every day you got a choice not to look at the news, the news, the bad news every day and then be filled with all sorts of negative thinking and then will lead to wrong actions because that's what the news like to do. It wants to set you up for destruction most of the news. But you know what? The good news of the word of God always sets your trajectory in the right direction. Amen. Always be encouraged. Again, be of sound judgment, reacting with a calm and thoughtful consideration, allowing yourself to be guided by God's word. By keeping your attention fixed on the Lord's return, you will gain the true perspective necessary to view everything around you right. Don't you want that? Don't you want everything in your perspective to be right? I'm not just talking about just spiritual matters. It's talking about material things too.

Stewarding everything your time. Well, most of that time should be spent in the word of God. Most of that time should be spent in the word of God because it has spiritual implications. That sober word is talking about your spirit and means that to not allow the influences of the current age to blur your view but that you remain pure. He wants you to be stay pure, unfiltered pureness in the word to see everything that comes toward you in the light of God's word. So that you may see the things as they really are and not as they seem to present themselves to you because we still have sin, don't we? And so we need to be filled with his word and meditate upon his word.

See, the watchfulness does not make you overconfident. You might be thinking, "Oh, I know everything now." No, that's we're not talking about big-headedness here. We're talking about coming under the authority of God. Submission, submission to his word. I preached about that a while back, but that's what it is. You're submitting yourself to his authority and not anyone else's. And you're prompting yourself to pray in that way. Lord, help me to submit to you according to your ways and according to your plan. However see you you fit for that purpose because the real awareness that you live in the end of times will lead you to deep dependence on God. That's what it does. Because you're depending on his word. Amen. You're depending upon him to answer your prayers in like fashion.

So prayer undeniably is vital for Christians. However, a more challenging question is how diligent we work to keep our minds focused and prepared for this kind of effective prayer life. What are the obstacles that you find in your prayer life? Count them. Think about them. Pray about them so that you will be preventing so you will prevent yourself from not thinking clearly about these things, these instructions. That's all in soberminded and faithfulness in prayer. So think about prayer along with the other disciples. I want to just draw and kind of go back to Peter's life. Okay, back to Peter's life when he was taught a lesson on how to pray. That's Luke

11:1-4. And right there it says, "Your kingdom come." Your kingdom come. And then he learned from the Lord Jesus on how to pray. He saw how the Lord Jesus prayed. He learned the consequences of not praying in the garden of Gethsemane. We see that in Matthew 26:36-45 and then again in Mark 14:32-52. And where and right there Jesus says these words, watch and pray. You see the similarity? Watch unto prayer. Watch unto prayer that what ye enter not into temptation which is that struggle of not praying. That struggle of falling into despair. Right? That's what happens when we don't pray. Despair just eats up eats up at your soul.

Jesus knew what was ahead because he knew that Peter would deny the Lord Jesus by sleeping. He knew it because we see at the Lord's table in Luke 22:31-32, the Lord Jesus prayed for Peter that Satan would not sift him as wheat. Sift as wheat is a metaphor that could also be expressed as shake someone apart or break a person down. If I would say raise a hand, how much have you felt of that? I think all of us could raise our hand. I think all of us could raise our hand because that is Satan's goal is to crush you and wreck your faith. In truth, the adversary wants to destroy the faith of every believer. John 10:10 to kill, steal, and destroy. That is his ultimatum. That's not who we're supposed to listen to. But Jesus assured Peter in Luke 22:32, I love this. He says, "But I have prayed for you." You didn't pray, Peter. I prayed for you that thy faith fail not. And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And do you know when that time happened? Right here. He is strengthening us in this letter. Watch unto prayer. He remembered Jesus saying, "Watch and pray." That prayer was answered. You see, we can only pray because Jesus prays for us. We in our house don't have anything in us to pray for. Jesus is praying for us already and his prayers will be answered. Amen. His prayers will be answered just like we see in this text. So Peter's leadership's role in the early church proved that the Lord's prayer for Peter was answered as we see here again. And all that to say he can pray because ultimately the Lord Jesus is praying for us.

Let's look at verses 8 and 9. And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Verse 9, use hospitality one to another without grudging. Peter stresses the importance of Christian love in these verses repeating an earlier command in first Peter 1:22. Again, repetition is important. So we see it here again the importance of fervent love. He instructs believers to love each other what above all faith, hope, charity, which is the most important love. It's an intense effort. The Greek term is this deep earnest kind of love which is vividly suggested of straining a muscle for the last lap of victory in a race. You know that you're just you're going on momentum and you see the goal in front of you like we see the goal in front of us and we pull every muscle to reach the end. That's the idea of fervent love. We stretch out. That's another way of putting it for the whole duration of our Christian life. Not in our own strength by the way, but the by the strength of Christ. But he wants our hearts to have that attitude. He will provide the strength. He will provide the strength. We will see that.

So our relationship to God was explained in verse seven. The importance of our relationship with God is above all most important. But then above all in our Christian relationship is love. We get the love of God and we're able to use that love towards others. That's another way of thinking about this. Our importance in praying to the Lord is utmost important before we can do that. Well, this word charity is found primarily in the King James version and it nearly always means love and we see that in the great love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 translates his agape as charity which the modern translation says this as love and the only use of charity indicates giving. And

we see that in acts 9:36 where dorcus a woman full of good works and charity. This Greek word means compassion exercised towards the poor. Or another way translating it in King James is almsgiving. So we see the word charity. But here we see it is not used like in 9:26 as almsgiving but true agape love.

Listen to what John says. Says this. But who so hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:17 to 18. Similarly, James puts it this way. What do it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled." Notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needed to the body, what it profit, even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. James 2:14-17.

The way in which we care for the needy is a reflection of our love for Christ and a position as his children. So in other words, these two passages help us to see the evidence that of our salvation that there's this presence of the Holy Spirit within us that is just not believing but there is action behind it. There is action behind it. When considering a specific act of love according to scripture is with used with wisdom and discernment. But God does not call us to blind blindly to give to every need but to seek his will on the matter. Notice again verse 7. You're praying about it. You're praying Lord where is the need? Where can I give? I know that it's not just believing everyone has a need but who is specifically in need. Lord, show me if I am that person to give to that person. So, we are to be good stewards and do our best to ensure that the time, the resources, the talents we are given by God is being used properly. Paul gave Timothy detailed instructions for caring for widows in the church, complete with what type of woman should be included on that list and warnings about what could happen if charity was given improperly. First Timothy 5 3-16 not reading the whole thing but that the essence in that passage is true widows are to be given charity because they were what devoted to prayer and good works and not to those who lean towards idleness and wandering about from house to house but being busy bodies and speaking things they ought not to gossiping said don't give to those widows So there's discernment in how we are charitable. We don't just give to anybody at any time, but specifically to specific needs for right reasons.

The primary thing to remember in charity is that all we have belongs to God and all we give is response to his love for us. God loved us first that we can love others. Do you see the thorning theme? Jesus prays for us that we can pray. So when we see our resources not only as God's provision for us but as tools he desires us to use to care for others and we begin to understand the vastness of his love and sovereignty that he has ultimate control and ultimate love that we get to be participants of. Luke 6:38 puts it this way. Jesus is saying this, "Give and it shall be be given unto you. Good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall men give into their bosom. For what the same measure that ye meet with all, it shall be measured to you again." So what you give, God will give back and extra actually. Do you think that way in your prayers?

Remember that passage I shared 2 Corinthians 9:7, cheerful giver. Do you do you cheerfully give knowing that God is going to return that in some way or fashion? It may not be through money, but it may be through another resources that is better than what you gave. I've seen that time and

time again in my life. And I'm sure your brothers and sisters, you have as well. Hold on to that promise because the genuine strength of Christian fellowship is evident in the care and interest of believers one to another. This mutual focus allows us to truly understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. We all have them. And at the end times draw near, it is increasingly vital for believers to gather and encourage one another unto love and to good works. Hebrews 10:24, true love always seeks the benefit of the other person. Another way of putting Hebrews 10:24 and instead of exposing weaknesses and sins instructs us in Proverbs 16:27, an ungodly man does this digth up evil. All he sees is evil in people. He just wants to dig it up and just and then his lips there's as burning fire. It's like receiving fire. Does fire feel good? I don't think anybody can say, "Oh, fire feels good. I just love it on my skin." Be pretty ridiculous, wouldn't it? So then there's another instruction in Proverbs 10:12 that says this, "Hatred stirred up strife, but love coverth all sins." Do you see the similarity here? Dwelling on and magnifying the mistakes of others is contrary to the Lord's love. The Lord in his love no longer sees the sin of those who belong to him. That's one of the great assurances. God's not going to judge us for our sins anymore. Amen.

But that does not mean, okay, discernment here does not mean that you should not call evil by its name. Not saying that love cannot live with sin. In fact, they're incompatible. Love and sin cannot work together. It's like oil and water. So when a person commits a sin, a lo the loving thing we'll do is to what? Convince that brother or that sister that has sinned in him or her and to confess it and be put away by it. Put away that sin. It's a loving thing. Instead, have love and put away the sin. That's the idea. And it's found in Matthew 18:15-17. You come in with love. You say, "Why do you want that sin?" cuz it doesn't mix. I'm coming to you, brother and sister, privately, and I want you to experience the love that's lacking because I know it's because of your sin, and you need to get that thing put away because the only thing that's going to satisfy you and keep you going is love. Sin's going to always destroy you one way or another. So, the devil will always try to cause disharmony and among believers and he'll often do things in small matters. I'm talking about not primary issues such as this gospel. Okay, that's it's clear. He cannot refute that. But he will try to get something small and make it a big thing. Not essential doctrines, little things, primary issues. He can't deal with that. But he can deal with other stuff. Watch and pray. He will absolutely not succeed when we have fervent love for another. Love and sin cannot mix together. Always remember that.

So a follower of Christ must make demonstrating the love of Jesus to others his first priority. This is always a requirement, but especially crucial during seasons of suffering that we see here sandwiched between suffering and we see covering sin, forgiving it and for and and allowing that forgiveness to at the back end experience love because forgiveness equals love. It allows for healing. You know what sin does? Creates wounds. It creates severe wounds, doesn't it? I want you to think about that. Forgiveness is the healing bomb. It's the thing that frees us from sin. Frees us from the wound of sin and allows that that wound to become a scar. It might still be there, but you won't feel the pain anymore. Sin always keeps that pain still there. Are you feeling that right now? Do you still feel the repercussions of sin? Because Jesus came to heal us. By his wounds, we are healed. By his stripes, we are healed. That's what love does. It covers sin. Like a scab covering a wound and then it leads to a scar. That's what God wants to do in your life. He wants to do that in your life because because we still live in a sinful body. We are imperfect. This goes without saying. We are imperfect. Christians are not sinless yet. We are not perfect. We have the set course of our lives. Yes, we have set our lives away from sin but still fail to obey

sometimes. And that's why Matthew 18:15 is there. We are to lovingly guide each other away from sin because we know what it does.

Let's look at verse nine. Building on the theme of Christ's imminent return as judge and nearing end of all things, Peter instructs Christians on practical living. His first directive is a section in to maintain a clear and alert mind which enables us to pray effectively. Following this, he commands us to pursue fervent love for one another, likening the effort required out of an athlete striving to win a race. Now, Peter exhorts us in verse 9 as Christians in this verse express love through hospitality, specifically by doing so without grumbling or complaining. While contemporary believers often see hospitality as hosting, being a host to people for a meal and accommodating visiting missionaries, which is true and good, but Christian hospitality in Peter's era was significantly more pressing need and could also represent a considerably greater burden as well. Let me let me just share with you this. For one thing, many Christians were forced to flee persecution. Often this meant traveling with limited means. They have to just flee. They didn't have time to look around and go, I'm going to get this and this. No, they just have to flee. And often this means what? Being a soldier earner. Soldier earner related relied on brothers and sisters in Christ to share their homes and food. They didn't have internet. They didn't have phones. They're like, "Who's a brother and sister in Christ? I better remember where he lived or she lived or reach this person to reach that person." and they pass through one town or region to another this way.

And so such hospitality could be risky. For one thing, those that are sharing may not have that much themselves. They're not prepared. Sometimes we feel like we're not hosting well when we don't have everything prepared well. Well, in this situation, it was happening quite often. It's not like they had time to wait for them and go to the market and get everything all prepared and ready. No, they were just coming left and right possibly. And so they had to deal with without complaining. Oh, that was my last bit of meal. Not to share it, without complaining. That's the real sense of this word hospitality. Another another thing was there was strangers that that would be coming into home and robbing homes, fake Christians, and that could pose danger and another reason to complain. But every legitimate believer knows these disadvantages. Instead of focus on the disadvantages, the complaining, you are to focus on hospitality, the advantage that you get to provide to fellow Christians, the generosity beyond what was reasonable. It doesn't make sense. Still, Peter reminds his readers and us that in in in this family of God, love looks differently in the means of hospitality. It's part of our purpose that God has set apart as people of God. Holiness, we're separate. We're different than everyone else in all sorts of ways, including in this area, hospitality. So we should embrace the opportunity to give that kind of sacrificial love instead of offering such hospitality reluctantly. That love will also be expressed by being hospitable. That in regards means love for strangers. That's what hospitality originally means in the Greek. Love for strangers.

How hard does it get now, right? It gets harder and harder, doesn't it? less trust in the media, less trust in your friends and amongst your family that are lost. So, we have to always be circumspect, always sober minded, always according to the word of God. I need to be hospitable. I need to be hospitable. I don't care how I feel like because God's going to provide. Amen. God's going to provide. Always trust him. He'll provide a meal. He'll provide a meal on your table. He'll provide plaid of of food and clothing. Seek you first the kingdom of God and his

righteousness and what all these things your food and your clothing provided. That fits in hospitality by the way. It's not like he put this as exclusion. No, this is part of Christianity, everyday Christianity. And you give an opportunity to welcome people like that in your home and see what God does. There's a passage in scripture where it says that it's like you're experiencing angels around you in Hebrews. There's like angels around you administering to you. Don't you want to experience that kind of level of spirituality, that kind of God's presence? I think we need more of that. I think we need more of that.

So it's the attitude of the heart because complaining is the bad attitude, right? Good attitude is being hospitable. So it's also a reason for that Peter adds to it that we must do it without grumbling as I mentioned and it's not easy. By no means am I saying it's not easy. This is going to require a good fight of faith. And it's and it's to be always thinking, yeah, it's going to disturb my schedule. Yeah, it might disturb my home. I might have just cleaned the home just, you know, a few minutes ago and now I have someone here and I got to clean it up again. Yeah, I might do that. Yeah, those things will happen. Absolutely. But we're not supposed to have a pristine home. I hope you know that. A hospital home doesn't look pristine. It looks messy because people are coming in in and out. That's a good thing. Amen. I hope you can say amen to that. It's a good thing to do what God wants us to do. Don't make the situation awkward because you may just have again done all these things in real life.

Verse 10 to 11. We'll be wrapping up here. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another. As good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen. God's grace is rich and diverse, perfectly captured by the phrase manifold grace of God. Peter emphasized that this incredible grace equips every believer all that word all with unique gifts and talents enabling them to fulfill various roles within the body of Christ. See the manifold grace of God is evident in the variety of spiritual gifts given to all believers. Paul writing to the Corinthians explains the diversity of these gifts. says this. Now there is a diversities of gifts but the same spirit and there are differences of administrations but the same Lord and there are diversities of operations but it is the same God which workketh all in all. First Corinthians 12 4-6. You see the same repeated in all that. So this diversity reflects the manifold grace of God as his grace manifests in many forms each suited to the specific needs within the local church community. This dynamic expression of grace allows the church to function as a unified body. Nothing lacking in the body with each member contributing uniquely to the mission of Christ. that ultimate purpose, the grace here is a free gift of God's blessing. Free gift. Grace, free gift. And these blessings take many forms and are distributed among the body's members, each stewarding a particular aspect.

You see in Romans 12:6 put it this way. Paul having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us whether prophecy let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith. So God gives us the proportion of faith to use this grace in prophecy. God's grace is manifold. This word manifold is another way of putting it. Many forms many forms of gifts. That's what the word manifold is. many forms and it's varied and expansive. I can't go into all the list of gifts but it's expansive but all of it uniquely to take care of this local body. Every believer has that unique gift given by God and it's diverse. James 1:17 reminds us of this. Every good gift and every perfect

gift is from above and cometh down from the father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. The manifold grace of God is evident in how he meets us in different circumstances providing exactly what we need at the right time. God's timing perfect always perfect right timing whether it is strength in suffering wisdom in decision making or comfort in grief God's grace is sufficient and perfectly tailored to our very situation in this church the Lord in that furthermore the manifold grace of God underscores the inclusivity of his gifts no believer is excluded from the grace of God no Each has received a portion of it. His grace breaks down cultural barriers, uniting believers in a shared communion. Galatians 3:28 declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither bond nor free. There is neither male nor female. For we are all one in Christ Jesus." He is a unifier. That's it. The manifold grace of God fosters unity among believers in the Lord as we recognize that each person's gift is vital to the whole body.

And so the manifold grace of God points us okay to the source of all grace which is God himself and his grace is abundant and never exhausted. Never exhausted. Hospitality, loving each other, never exhausted. It is in many forms. As we serve and minister to one another, we draw from this endless supply of grace, the throne of grace to obtain mercy, to find grace to help in time of need. It's in Hebrews. And we see other passages like this in 2 Corinthians 9:8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always have all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work. You see hints of many forms. You see hints of all sufficient, all supplying.

So Peter continues describing how Christians should live in response to the knowledge that the end of all things is near. Verse seven, knowing that Christ could return at any time should affect our thinking. And as Christians, we should not excessively invest ourselves in a world that is passing away. Are you investing in something that's just not going to be here in eternity? Who's going to be here? Our souls. Amen. Soul-winning wins. Souls are the only ones that are going to be in heaven, not our things. There might be things but we don't know of but we know for sure our souls are there. So believers should not divert ourselves with whatever pleasures we can find to indulge in. Instead we should manage our minds to effective praying and love each other deeply including sharing our homes and food with Christians in need.

So now in this verse, Peter says we should take a different view from others in the world about anything we might call ours. Anything that we might call ours. And so first he implies that we must see whatever we have as a gift is from God. After all, we have nothing which God has not given to us. James 1:17. Second, we should see whatever we have been given as an opportunity to serve other Christians. In other words, we should not view anything which is ours as offlimits for use in other believers lives. A steward is one entrusted to manage the property of of another, namely God. Every good thing we have is ours only because of God's grace and intend to be used for his purposes. To fail to use God's gift is to serve other serve each other is to fail to be a good steward. We talked about that last week about time as steward. Now we're talking about the resources like money and things like our homes. And so wisely we are using everything we have to serve each other is is part of fulfilling our purpose as God's set apart people. This is the rest of the believer's time. This is what we're supposed to do. This is what we're supposed to do.

The Lord has given something to each one to serve to the other. With your gift, you can serve those who are the most important people on the earth to God. His chosen people and us Christians. Oh, namely the same. We are the most important people to God. He wants to spend

the rest of our lives with us. And that should be a little picture of it here in the local body. This companionship of believers should be the most amazing thing that's so different from the world. Nothing compares to the local church community. Nothing. Amen. So what was given to you in order for you to be able to do that is called gifts as grace of God. Grace plays a major role in this letter. It's mentioned 10 times in the book of first Peter. The Lord wants to use his own grace to pass his grace to his own. He's using you. He uses us. Amen. and you're able to pass on the grace that you have received to other believers. That is his goal. Whenever he's giving you something, the Lord has distributed the gifts in such a way that you are able to serve all believers and that you can be served by all believers. That is why time together is important. We've got to spend time to share gifts. Amen. We've got to do that. Not just once a year in Christmas. Do you see there already a difference? Amen. It's not only during Thanksgiving, which yes, we're approaching those seasons, so we're going to do that. But what about the rest of the year? What about the rest of the year? We're exercising that gift. If you're not exercising it, then is God going to really give more? Think about that.

How important it is to gather. Again, Hebrews 10:25, to encourage one another in love and good works. That's part of the gifts used in the local body setting. And that way there's interaction between believers. Each of the believers gifting of others to each other. And unto all of this, Ephesians 4:7 puts it this way. Every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. It's a measure. And he wants you to use that measure. When you use the gift that you have received from the Lord in such a way that the Lord has intended to you, you are called a good steward. Like in the parable of the talents, faithful in the few things. Faithful in the few things. We got a few here. Fervent love, hospitality, and then using speaking gifts and serving gifts. Those are some of the few that you can be faithful in. 1 Corinthians 4:1. And let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. What God has given of his grace is manifold. Hereby you should consider diversity of his grace. And haven't you already experienced some of this in your life? How much grace you have received up to this point? Brothers and sisters, has the Lord often used brothers and sisters? And I'm reminded of times when people are injured and can't make a meal and a lot of our people work together and send a meal. I love that. I love that. It's a beautiful picture of good stewardship.

So just try to think about everything you owe to brothers and sisters and thank God for the ways he made that all happen. Have you not been richly blessed at the gatherings that he has placed us in in these meetings and in homes? And often how many times have you been encouraged? This should be a place of great encouragement in the local body in this church as well as in our homes. Are you are you setting your clear mind on that? I want to be an encourager when I step in this room. I want to be an encourager when I'm in my home and I pray about it. God, help me to do that cuz I can't do this myself. I know you're praying for me right now about that. It's your will. Help me to fulfill it. Give me the strength. Give me the grace. I know there's plenty of it. Because there's no such thing as a one-man ministry. There is no such thing as a one-man ministry. It's a plural word gifts. There's many, many gifts. It's not according to my will. It's going to God's will. God not did not concentrate all the gifts. Think of like just a arm look weird, right? Just an arm just standing there. It has to be complete and it's all under the headship of Christ just like it is the headship in the home. It's important to be biblical to follow his will. And when we do so, he will provide every again all the resources. We just need to obey. We just need to believe his word and we and we need to actually do it and do more of it. 1 Corinthians 12:8

says this, "For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit." Sometimes it's just people just giving general knowledge. I just I just want to read the word of God to you. Or someone might say this verse, I think it's for you. Do you see the difference? Wisdom is defined as this. That you see everything through God's perspective. That you see everything through God's perspective. That's wisdom.

Verse 11. This verse encapsulates a basic tenant of Christian living and service. That in all things God and not man is to be exalted. Isaiah 42:8. I am the Lord. That is my name. and my glory will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Peter writing to persecuted believers stressed that every action and word should glorify God. Here in verse 11, Isaiah 43:7, even everyone that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory. I have formed him. Yay, I have made him. 1 Corinthians 10:31, whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. So the goal is that in all things that God may be glorified. That is the primary call in Christian living. We know who God is. He's our creator. And we know that he has formed us. He has made us. And he wants everything about us to exalt him through our lips and through our actions. All things encompasses this entire spectrum of living. There is nothing that should distract us from God's glory. As Paul puts in Colossians, "And whatsoever you do in word or deed," you see the similarity here, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the father by him." Colossians 3:17.

And we know Peter clearly states that God is glorified through Jesus Christ. Christ is the fountain of divine glory. We know that from Hebrews 1:3. Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins sat down the right hand of the majesty on high. And it's only through him that our actions are accepted by God. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine. Ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me he can do nothing." So Peter mentions two forms of services here in this case speaking and in words. We see that phrase in the oracles of God implies teaching and preaching and it's to be harmonized with the word of God. But we also see that it's not just personal insights or human wisdom. That's where the oracles of God comes into play. It's not just my insights. It's not my what I want to say my opinions is from the word of God dispensed to you. That's 1 Corinthians 2:4-5. So the glory goes to God, not to the speaker, not to me. It should undoubtedly be in accordance with God's word, but it should also be according to God's will that it is said at the right time. I pray all the time, Lord, help me to have the right heart to say in the right way according to your will.

So when it happens like this in a meeting like such as here or in a home, it's a great blessing, isn't it? I know I've been on the receiving end many times as an attendant and how the messages spoke to me, gripped me. God was using men, fallible men as it is to speak forth the oracles of God. His word does not return void. Whoever the speaker is, that's what I'm encouraged about. 1 Corinthians 14:3 says, "But he that prophesies speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort." I can say personally I've received that all three. Can you say that about yourself? Edification, exhortation, and comfort is just what you need. God's speaking to you. He guides you from the speaker, from the using the spirit to speak forth the oracles of God. He knows your heart. He knows where your mind is. And however it might work out in your life right now, God is speaking to you through his word ultimately through a fallible person such as me. And therefore, everything that has been said must be tested. That's why I quote scripture a lot. I want

you to go and look at it for yourself. That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 14:29. Let the prophet speak two or three and let the other judge.

You're all my witnesses. The serving is distinguished from the speaking in this text. Serving regards to the sharing with others of material goods. We call we can call the serving others with the means we have that must happen with sincere motives and not for attaining a good reputation. No, it should not be for one's own honor. No, but to God's honor. And therefore, God has to give the power to do it and he has to work in your heart to fulfill it. When we're open to the will of God and both in speaking and in serving, he will make it clear to what you should say or do, he will. And he will give the gift and he will also give you the power to use those gifts. When he first gives you an order, okay, when he first kiss you an order, I'm not thinking about military in a sense. I'm talking about like a a chef preparing a meal and then putting it on the table. He gives you an order and then he tells you to give it to someone in need. It's a wonderful picture of an elder and a deacon working together executing the order from God.

All creation should honor God as the glory belongs to him alone and not to any other person. The term power conveys here in the text concept of divine authority and indicates that man's service is to participate in God's eternal kingdom and not to our own fame or to ourselves. In all things, God may be glorified.

I'm going wrap up here and conclude with this to end this section, this wonderful section to remind us that God is the one who deserves glory and dominion or or another way of putting it, power forever and ever. That's how this ends with the duxology, giving praise to him because he deserves it. Amen. He deserves to receive our praise. He deserves a glory and dominion and the choice to live in this way brings him the most glory. All these things that I have preached from brings him all the glory. And you can end with that satisfying doxology that when you're doing all these things for God that he is receiving all the glory forever and ever. This is going to continue on as meaning in heaven and into the kingdom of God. Think again about the end. That's a way of duxology. Think about the end. Just like we started with the end. Amen. The Lord Jesus is the one through whom you are capable to do everything to God's glory. He will give the power for that forever and ever. And this I say amen. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for the time in your word. God, thank just thank thank you for using me, allowing me this time to preach from your text. I just pray, Lord, that it will truly fall on good ground, that you would do whatever you want to do with this, Lord, whatever I've preached this far. I just pray that it would do its effect just like we read that we're not just hearing, but being doers of your word. Father, bless to this end. And we'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.