

Continuing in the Word, "Serving Grace" Ephesians 4:7

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God manifests His grace to us in many ways. The very fact that we are alive is evidence of His grace. Creation itself declares God's graciousness toward us. The pinnacle of His display of grace is Jesus Christ on the cross. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)"* (Ephesians 4:2). What great grace that Jesus Christ would die on the cross as the substitutionary atonement for our sins!

We experience or come under this great grace in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and what a wonder it is to be saved by so great a grace. And then we are blessed with God calling us to service. Not only does He choose to save us, He also chooses to use us. But in order to be used we must be properly equipped, so through Christ the Spirit is given to believers and by means of the Spirit we are gifted for ministry - for the service God desires of us. This too is a result of God's great grace.

A constant companion of mine is the pager issued to me by the Wishkah Valley Fire Department. I have it with me almost all the time. During the day it's clipped on my belt, and at night it is next to me on the nightstand. A few nights ago at about 11:30 it started beeping letting me know that there was someone in need. As I listened to the dispatcher's brief message I was informed of the situation which was that a person needed some medical attention. What came next is what always comes next - the decision. Will I respond or not?

The fire department has made sure that each of the responders that are called out are prepared to help and equipped with the knowledge and tools that will be of use in the situations we respond to. But there is always the choice: will I go and use the skills and tools I've been given? At 11:30 at night there is the pull to ignore the alarm and stay in the nice warm comfortable bed and let others handle it this time.

The same is true for us as Christians. By God's saving grace we have the Spirit of God with us at all times leading and guiding us in what we should do. By God's serving grace we've been equipped for the things He calls us to do. The question is what will we do? Will we respond and act or not? Will we use the gifts He's given or not? And there is the pull to ignore any given opportunity and "let others handle it this time". But what a privilege to serve, to help, to be used of God for the benefit of others. And what a responsibility we've been entrusted with. We're equipped to serve, so even though it might be tempting to turn a deaf ear or a blind eye sometimes, we must respond. We must answer the call to do the work of the ministry that God has called and gifted us to.

God's blessing on you as you faithfully serve!

Pastor Jim