

Ministry by the Grace of God

By R.T. Nusbaum

Every Gift By Grace

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)? Note that God desires to "freely give us all things." Everything that God gives, He freely makes available by His grace. The scriptures repeatedly speak in such comprehensive terms. "I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me" (Ephesians 3:7).

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But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

Paul's ministry was by the grace of God. "I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me" (Ephesians 3:7). To put it another way, he received his ministry from the Lord: "the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus." Paul's ministry was carried out by the grace of God. "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Because of this abundant grace he couldn't help but declare God's grace: "to testify to the gospel of the grace of God". "But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings" (2 Corinthians 6:4-5).

Paul's selflessness: "nor do I count my life dear to myself." "Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus'" (Acts 21:13). Such renouncing of self allowed Paul to "finish [his] race with joy." Thus his final testimony would become, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

"If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you" (Ephesians 3:2). "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation" (1 Corinthians 3:10). Here, Paul views his service unto the Lord as a spiritual builder, who is being used to lay a spiritual foundation for the construction of godly lives.

How comforting to know that our ministry will develop by God's grace given to us. If you are such a great man in and of yourself then why would you need the grace of God. "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given." Apparently Paul recognized his great lack but also recognized the great grace of God.

I have written more boldly to you on some points . . . because of the grace given to me by God . . . Great is my boldness of speech toward you (Romans 15:15 and 2 Corinthians 7:4).

When the grace of God is at work in the lives of His people, spiritual boldness is a common result. This was clearly the testimony of the early church. "They spoke the word of God with boldness . . . And great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:31, 33).