

The Grace to Evangelize

“To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”—Paul (**Ephesians 3:8**, ESV).

Very often, we only think of grace in terms of receiving salvation. But Paul calls something else grace in this text. The grace he received was the opportunity and ability to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. I don't know how many times I've read right through this passage without seeing this. Last week in the home study on Ephesians at our house, as some of the brothers and sisters and I were delving into this passage, this verse jumped out at me. Paul said the opportunity to teach others was grace, that is, a gift from God.

I'm not sure I've ever viewed it that way. A lot of the time I've viewed the opportunity to teach as an obligation demanded by God. (“Guess I better teach someone or I'm not a good Christian and definitely a bad preacher.”) I've seen it as a fearful stress. (“Oh man, I'm supposed to have a study with someone. I don't have any idea what to say. What if they hate it and reject me?”) Sadly, I've seen it as a trophy on my shelf to win the competition with other Christians. (“I've got a study today. When's the last time you studied with someone?”) I've even sometimes seen it as a means of impressing God. (“Hey God, did you see what I did for you today? I had a study with someone.”)

But none of that is true. The opportunity to teach is a gift from God. I don't have to do it; I get to do it. I don't have to be afraid of it. After all, who is afraid of receiving a gift? It doesn't make me better than anyone else; it makes me dependent like everyone else. It isn't me doing something great for God; it is God doing something great for me.

This also drives home a huge point for me. I have spent a lot of time thinking I'm not such a great Christian those times when I haven't been teaching as many people. If getting to teach others is a gift from God, then perhaps those times when I haven't been able to talk about Jesus to many people is because I haven't been asking God for the opportunity. According to **Matthew 7:11**, God will give good things to those who ask Him. He wants to bless me. He wants His gospel shared. It stands to reason if I want to teach others, I need to pray for the opportunity.

Can we pray for each other to have this opportunity? I'll pray for you. Will you please pray for me? Thanks.

—Edwin L. Crozier