

Orthodoxy: Gifts of Grace

New City Catechism Q.35: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from?

Answer: All the gifts we receive from Christ we receive through the Holy Spirit, including faith itself.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. - Titus 3:4-6

The life we live on the earth is gifted. We exist because of our Creator. Every breath we breathe is a gift. And, the life that saves us from death is also a gift from God. We live in the knowledge and enjoyment of God because God sent his Son in love to save us from sin and death. All the life that is in Jesus Christ is shared with the children of the Father by the work of the Holy Spirit. All that we are and have in life and salvation is a gift of the Triune God.

We come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of sinners by the work of the Holy Spirit. He gives faith as a gift so that our boasting is in God, not ourselves (Eph.2:8-9). We were foolish and weak in our natural selves. Therefore, the cross of Christ was foolish. But when the goodness and lovingkindness of God appeared to us, shining brightly in the face of Jesus Christ, by the working power of the Spirit, we came to life and believed. Our faith is exercised by the gracious work of the Spirit on us and in us. Therefore, we continue to live by faith in union with all that God is for us in Jesus Christ. This is the continuing work of renewal by the indwelling Holy Spirit. He unites us to the life of Christ by faith, who is in heaven for us, and shares with us all his gracious, wise, and powerful gifts.

Salvation from our new birth to our abundant and eternal life is a gift from the Triune God. Therefore, our humble response is gratitude. When I find myself not loving others but judging them for their faults, weaknesses, and sins; I also find that I am ungrateful toward God who has done all for me. When I find myself not wanting to draw near to God's presence in personal or corporate worship with thanksgiving and praise; I also find that the desires of my idolatrous heart are not satisfied by broken cisterns that I'm trusting to hold water. When I find myself wanting to secure my identity and significance in the things I do and accomplish; I also find that I do not have a place for the gospel in the thoughts of my heart. The Spirit's work is to give us all the graces our loving Heavenly Father wants to share with us in his crucified, risen, and ascended Son. Our response to his grace is a humble satisfied gratitude that lives generously toward God and man in all those gifts.

Practical Christianity in James: A Community of Justice & Mercy

On Sunday May 3rd we looked at James 2:1-13 in our morning service. James is teaching us that the church is a community of justice and mercy, not a community of favoritism. He helps us to see three reasons why we're to be this kind of community: The Image of God in Man; The Grace of God; and The Pleasure of the King. Finally, he tells us how we can live as a community of justice and mercy - holding faith in the beauty of Jesus Christ. If you didn't get to listen or view this sermon you can do so [here](#).

As we saw two Sunday's ago we not only should receive God's word but we should also participate in it by applying it to our lives. Here are three questions to help you reflect on and apply what God taught us:

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- ❖ Have you ever been subjected to favoritism by someone else? How did that make you feel?
 - ❖ Are you in danger of showing favoritism in some way? How? How will you reflect on and apply the beauty of Jesus Christ in the gospel to change your heart?
 - ❖ Who do you need to extend God's justice (a well ordered relationship) and mercy (getting near someone's suffering and sharing God's gifts) to today?

Praying for Our Missionaries

The Global Missions Team at CCC helps us in praying for our missionaries around the world. This week please be in prayer for the Schweitzers serving with MTW in the United Kingdom. Below is an email shared with the GMT that will help guide your praying.

"It is great to hear from you! We continue to be well as a family. Indeed, we are thankful for the time with one another as well as the opportunities these strange times give us to share the gospel. We do pray that the Lord would use our current circumstances for the building up of His church across the world.

As for us, please do pray for:

- our online broadcasts (Youtube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbeG3rdY0UquqxdZlehcs4g>) that the gospel would be clearly proclaimed, that believers would be built up and sustained and that some of those listening would come to faith in Christ
- the reclamation of one of our early converts Matthew who apostatized years ago; we saw that he has just subscribed to our Youtube channel.
- Mark as he completes his university work (essays and exams) for this academic year and as prepares for Officer Candidate School. It was due to start the end of May but now the start date is 9 June.
- our MTW support account; we had an iteration trip planned this summer to address a significant deficit, but that may not happen now.
- for the ongoing work of our seminary (Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary), for the staff, the current students and perspective students.

It is so kind of you to remember us in prayer at this time. Please give our love, thanks and greetings to the saints at Christ Covenant.

In Christ,
Bill, Pam and all the Schweitzers