

SPEAKING AND SERVING

1 Peter 4:8-11 (p. 1891)

July 22, 2018

*The end of all things is near
Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
1 Peter 4:7-10*

Stewards of grace

. . . faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10 (see ESV translation)

Three themes: 1) EVERYONE is a steward = administrator or "economist" [contra two kinds of gifts]
2) the best stewards practice design AND management
3) God's GRACE is our "currency" → always to be spent on the other!

When I speak

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. 1 Peter 4:11

- God could have chosen to use Balaam's donkey, but he chose us to speak (Numbers 22)
- take seriously the blessings (Proverbs 22:11-12) and warnings of speaking God's words

When I serve

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides . . . 1 Peter 4:11b

- Genesis 4:17-22, even "sons of Cain" can use their gifts!
- 1 Corinthians 14, gifts are for the OTHER, so the greatest of the gifts/fruit/furnishings is love

So that God in all things God may be praised

*Each one should use whatever gifts he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace
in its various forms . . . so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10-11

- 1) We speak and serve in the context of suffering → 1 Peter 4:12, "do not be surprised at the painful trial"
- 2) Stewardship is high WORSHIP → Matthew 25:14-30, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

For further study of 1 Peter 4

Bob Deffenbaugh's sermons on 1 Peter at <https://bible.org/series/glory-suffering-studies-1-peter>. His sermon on this text is titled "Living on the Edge of Eternity" and is at <https://bible.org/seriespage/living-edge-eternity-1-peter-47-11>

Immanuel Christian's "How Shall We Live" at <https://bible.org/seriespage/52-1-peter-how-shall-we-then-live-pagan-culture>

Gordon Smith's lecture at <https://www.regentaudio.com/products/catechesis-for-a-secular-age-the-wisdom-of-1-peter>

Alexander Maclaren's introduction to 1 Peter at <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mac/1-peter-1.html> and notes at <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mac/1-peter-1.html>

Bob Utely's commentary at <http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/pdf/VOL02.pdf>

Kistemaker and Hendriksen's *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*. Baker's New Testament Commentary.

John Piper's sermons on First Peter 4 at <https://www.desiringgod.org/scripture/1-peter/4/messages>

The End of All Things: An Interpretation

John Piper

My suggestion, then, is that Peter means something like this when he says, "The end of all things is at hand":

All around us there is intensifying persecution, as the Lord said there would be. There are rumors of wars. The horizon is dark for Israel, and the judgment on Jerusalem is near.

Not only that, the gospel is spreading like wildfire as the Spirit is poured out. Paul was able to plant churches in all the major cities of Galatia in a matter of months. Now he has completed the frontier mission work from Jerusalem all the way around to northern Italy (Romans 15:19), and he plans to go to Spain. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other bands of missionaries are forming and going to the unreached.

I don't know how big the world is. But if Pentecost is any indication, and if the success of Paul is any evidence, the world could be evangelized in not many years by God's great power. Brothers, the end is near—I'm not predicting when it will happen. I mean, the things that the Lord said must happen before he comes are taking place around us, and could be accomplished quickly—even in your lifetime.

So be sober for prayer, because the great danger facing us is that we fall in love with this world and become spiritually dull and the day come upon us like a thief and we be destroyed. O pray, brothers, pray for the coming of the kingdom and for your strength to endure and escape the trap of spiritual apathy. Pray that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

1 Peter 4:7-11 (ESV)

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



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Eph 1:19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great **might**

Eph 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his **might**.

2 Th 1:9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his **might**,

2 Pe 2:11 whereas angels, though greater in **might** and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.

Re 5:12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and **might** and honor and glory and blessing!”

Re 7:12 saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and **might** be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Inductive Bible Study

*For you have been born again . . .
through the living and enduring word of God.
1 Peter 1:23*

After practicing *Lectio Divina* in June, during July we'll be encouraged to practice the inductive Bible study method:

Observation, Interpretation, and Application.

This week, we are going to observe the classic story of hospitality in the Old Testament: Genesis 18:1-5, the story of Abraham and his three visitors. It will be helpful to have a notebook at hand for your observations. I'm praying that interpretation and application sneak into your week!

Monday: Read Genesis 18:1-15. Pray for God's leading this week.

Remember to approach this text as God's inspired word to his church.

Tuesday: Read Genesis 18:1-15 in two differing translations.

What are the key differences between the translations?

Wednesday: Read Genesis 18:1-15 and ask the six observation questions. For this text, all six are important!

Thursday: Read Genesis 18:1-15 and identify five grammatical-historical questions for this text. Where does this story fit in God's creation-fall-redemption-recreation story?

Friday: Read Genesis 18:1-15 and develop five interpretive questions of this text. What resources will help you answer these questions?

Saturday: Read Genesis 18:1-15 and Hebrews 13:1-2.

How can you apply the author of Hebrews' interpretation of this text?

d. Gifts

In Romans, Paul discusses the gifts which the members of the church receive. Says Paul, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (12:6). These gifts include prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, governing, and showing mercy (vv. 6–8; see 1 Cor. 12:7–11; and compare in context Eph. 4:7–8).

Peter also speaks about these gifts. He informs his readers that each member of the Christian community has received gifts (capabilities) from God. A believer cannot create them or claim them, because he receives them from God, who grants them freely to his people. In short, these gifts belong to God and must be used in the interest of his kingdom. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.” Gifts, then, must be used for each other’s benefit within the community and in harmony with God’s purpose and design.

In the second part of the verse, Peter tells the readers that they must be engaged in “faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” Here is a literal translation of verse 10b: “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (NKJV). The word *good* actually means “excellent” (compare 2:12). And the term *steward* refers to a manager who is in charge of his master’s possessions (e.g., Luke 12:42; 16:1; Gal. 4:2).

In this verse Peter reminds each person who belongs to the body of believers that the gift he has received is “God’s grace in its various forms.” The gift itself is primarily the gospel of Jesus Christ that is entrusted to the stewards of God. The gift, however, is not restricted to the gospel as such; it also appears in the form of various capabilities and skills. During the first century, the apostles were “entrusted with the secret things of God” (1 Cor. 4:1). A contemporary example is the person who serves God as a pastor. He has received a number of talents either in preaching, teaching, counseling, evangelizing, or administering. However, God grants these gifts not only to leaders in the church but also to all members. Each person in the church has received gifts to equip him for building up of the body of Christ (see Eph. 4:12).

Within the church “no one is to be content with one thing and with his own gifts, but every one has need of the help and aid of his brother.” Everyone ought to strive to be a good steward of the talents God has given him. In brief, the church is a veritable storehouse of gifts and talents—never locked but always open for service.

11a. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

e. Speaking

How are God’s gifts to the believer put to use? Peter singles out an example to which everyone who has witnessed for the Lord can relate. The pastor, teacher, evangelist, instructor, and anyone who has communicated the gospel can testify to the words Jesus spoke to disciples who would even risk arrest: “But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matt. 10:19–20; also see Luke 12:11–12).

The power of the Holy Spirit is at work in anyone who speaks the very words of God to edify others. Any preacher or teacher of God’s Word can testify to this indwelling power of the Spirit that is at work when he speaks. That is, a spokesman for God cannot substitute his own thoughts and opinions for the “very words of God.” He must faithfully deliver the “living words” he has received from God (see Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11). When he faithfully administers God’s grace in preaching or teaching the Word, he experiences a miracle taking place: God is speaking through him.

11b. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

f. Serving

Here is the second example. Peter encourages the believer to put his God-given talents to work. The clause *if anyone serves* denotes the activities of the deacons (see the requisites listed in 1 Tim. 3:8–13). But it includes any Christian who works in the context of the church and who willingly and cheerfully serves the Lord.

The worker is completely dependent, however, on “the strength God provides.” In the Greek, the verb *provide* points to someone who defrays the expenses of something, for example, the training of a choir. The verb has the meaning *to supply lavishly*. God, then, abundantly supplies the Christian worker with the necessary strength to accomplish the task.

Because God supplies every need, his name receives the praise in all things. Yet all this is done through Jesus Christ. Paul teaches this doctrine when he concludes his doxology in praise of God with these words:

For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen. [Rom. 11:36]¹

¹ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953-2001). *Vol. 16: Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*. New Testament Commentary (169–170). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.