



A Gift and a Call | Shawn Johnson | 11.4.17

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and respond to the following:

Share a time when you were so excited something that you couldn't stop talking about it and you wanted everyone else to experience it. (Think about a new restaurant, product, TV show, book, workout, board game, etc...)

SHARE

There are seasons in the rhythm of Red Rocks Church when it seems timely and appropriate to break from a teaching series in order to allow our teachers the freedom to talk about messages that have been weighing on their hearts for our church family. Over the next few weeks our pastors will be speaking on some really important topics from both the old and new testaments.

In this week's message, Shawn reminded us of our "gift and call" as believers. The gift, is God's free gift of grace that grants the opportunity for eternal life, and the call, is the urgent task of sharing the gift with others. In Paul's letter to the Romans, the two exist together. The gift and the call are like salt and pepper, PB&J, or Chad and Shawn. One basically does not exist independently of the other.

We receive the gift, and because we have received the gift we now have a responsibility to respond to the call. The gift is not meant to be kept to ourselves, it's meant to be shared and bring about life change and redemption to the entire world. When really understood, the gift alters our way of life—not just because it brings about obedience, but because we're tasked, for the rest of our lives, with the urgent task of sharing the gift with others.

It's when we forget or overlook our call that it's possible we haven't allowed the gift to influence our lives. The gift is meant to radically change life after life offering redeeming, saving grace to people who are broken, hurting and lost in sin. And it's when we respond to our call that these people hear of the gift, receive it and experience grace for themselves.

Often our lives tend to reflect a leaning towards either the gift or the call. Which is easier for you to focus on and why?

What keeps you from urgently speaking up about the gift you have received in God?

If you've been following Christ for a while, can you point to a time where you responded to the call to share the gift of God? Or if you're a new believer or just considering faith in Jesus, do you remember a time when someone spoke up about their faith in God to you?

G R O W

Read Romans 1:1-7

Depending on which translation you read, the translators may have used different words to communicate gift and call. Eugene Peterson, who brilliantly and beautifully paraphrased the Message, uses the words "gift" and "urgent task" to communicate the "grace" and "apostleship to call" that Paul refers to in verse 5. In the NIV, it reads,

"Through him (Jesus Christ) we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake."

This verse captures the Apostle Paul's motivation for his urgent ministry. When Paul first encountered the gift of grace it completely changed the trajectory of his life. Before receiving the gift, Paul (then known by a different name Saul), was a prideful Pharisee. He spent his days looking for Christians to put to death and overseeing their murders. But God had other plans for Saul. Saul suddenly met Jesus on the Road to the Damascus and experienced one of the most miraculous conversions of all time (Acts 9).

From then on, Saul's life was never the same. Not only did the Lord give him a new name, Paul, he commissioned him as apostle to the Gentiles. And apostleship is a big deal. For Paul

it was an identity to be embraced, a responsibility he couldn't shake. Few people were given the title as it was most often reserved for those who were taught by Jesus himself, and as such, apostles were revered authorities. In his letters, Paul is often seen defending his apostleship (2 Cor. 10) against those who criticized his ministry and the urgency in which he lived it out. It is Paul's confidence in his gift and call that propels his missionary journeys. He travels all across Asia and southern Europe tirelessly inviting all Gentiles (the non-Jews who were unfamiliar with the saving work of the Son of God) to believe in Jesus Christ. He is imprisoned, beaten within seconds of death, persecuted, taunted, and abandoned—but he continues his call, urgently.

Paul experienced the gift, and the gift so radically transformed him that he was 100% consumed with the task he received from Jesus! It's a call that Paul embraces with everything he has. The gift of grace deserves nothing less.

After receiving the gift and call, Paul's life was changed so much it was unrecognizable, how has receiving the gift and call changed your life?

If it hasn't changed, what can you do this week to better respond to the call and share the gift you've experienced with others?

M O V E

Looking to Paul's radical example of how to respond to the task of sharing Jesus, Shawn gave us three points to help us in the task. The first is to share what God has done in your life. Often, we find ourselves more outwardly excited about a new movie or restaurant than we do about the life change we've found in Jesus. Why is it easier to recommend a neighbor try out a new restaurant or see a new movie than he join you and your family at church for a service?

What has God done in your life that you could tell others about? Practice sharing these moments with your group!

The second of Shawn's points was to share what God's brought you through. These are testimonies to his power and provision that become a weapon against evil when we proclaim the faithfulness of God through pain and brokenness.

What has God brought you through that has become part of your testimony?

How is God calling you to use that experience and heartache to share Jesus with others?

At Red Rocks, our mission is to “Make Heaven more Crowded.” It’s who we are--through and through. Yet, part of the challenge in being in a church that is so centered on this aspect of the call, is that we’re tempted to think we’re doing our job sharing our faith because our church is so passionate about evangelism. We believe we’re fulfilling our individual call because of our association with a church that is seeing people come to faith! But Paul’s example encourages us to feel the weight of the perishing souls around us and have that burden alter our lives.

Our experience of the gift of grace ought to urgently propel us forward to sharing Jesus with our friends, family, neighbors, and city--that they may have their eyes opened by the gift of grace. You cannot rest on the church’s energy and passion to fulfill your own call. You and your testimony are needed. You, yourself are called. Each one of us has a part to play in the army of God.

Who is the one person who you can share your story with this week? How will you do it?

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women’s groups to share more freely.

T O G O

Revelation 12:11

“They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.”

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