

Series: Philippians Series 2024

Title: More Than a Greeting

Text: Php 1: 1-2

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Philippians 1: 1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phillipi was a large city in Macedonia. The church was established by the Lord preventing Paul to go another place and sending him there (Acts 16). Through Paul's preaching the Lord converted Lydia and the Philippian jailer and their families. So the Philippian brethren were dear to the apostle Paul and the apostle Paul was dear to them.

At the time Paul wrote this letter he was in prison. The church at Phillipi sent Paul a gift while in prison. Their pastor was Epaphroditus; he delivered the gift to Paul in prison. While visiting Paul, Epaphroditus became sick and almost died. Epaphroditus told Paul that the brethren were standing strong yet they had adversaries. Some in the church were divided. So Paul sent this letter to Phillipi by Epaphroditus.

Consider the situation. Paul is in prison for preaching Christ—at anytime he could be executed. Epaphroditus had fallen sick and almost died. The church at Philippi is under attack by the devil causing divisions among them. Yet the theme of this letter is the joy we have in Christ. Over and over Paul speaks of his joy in Christ. He speaks of his joy for them. And he encourages them to rejoice in the Lord always. No matter what state we are in, due to Christ being our Righteousness, believers always have more to joy in than to be discouraged about.

Subject: More than a Greeting

Proposition: These two verses are far more than a greeting—they hold the gospel by which every believer is saved.

A DESCRIPTION OF BELIEVERS

Philippians 1: 1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul includes every believer in the church in these verses.

He begins with “*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ.*” Paul wrote this letter. But he mentions Timothy because he intended to send Timothy to them. The Lord used Paul much in this way. He would send preachers to the various churches when they needed help. That is especially useful if a local church is without a pastor.

But notice Paul does not call himself an apostle and regard Timothy as only an evangelist. He refers to them both as “*the servants of Jesus Christ.*” God's preachers are one by one Spirit of God. Each one is called of Christ and made his willing bond servant. Believers are to submit to the pastor Christ has given to have the rule over them (Heb 13: 17). But we never are to exalt one preacher over another. When the Corinthians exalted one preacher over another Paul told them they were being carnal. God's preachers are one.

1 Corinthians 3: 3: For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4: For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5: Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6: I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8: Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

So Paul calls himself and Timothy *the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Christ makes his preachers his willing bondservants (Ex 21: 2-6). Preemiently, Christ was the willing bondservant. He took the form of a servant and served God his Father willingly to honor the law and justify his people on the cross (Is 50: 5-9). By the Spirit of God opening our ear to hear the good news of redemption accomplished by Christ, he makes his redeemed his willing bondservants. Each pastor sent by Christ serves one Lord, one Savior, Christ Jesus. We each preach salvation by our triune God in and by Christ alone. We are one in and by Christ as the servants of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then notice Paul addresses the brethren at Phillipi with these words, “*all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi: with the bishops and deacons.*” The office of bishop is the same as elder, pastor. Christ provides one pastor over a local church. Christ is our Shepherd. His minister is Christ's under-shepherd. But the Lord provides men who can help to preach. He may write in the plural because there may have been more than one local assembly at Phillipi since Macedonia was a large colony. But there is one pastor in the local assembly. And Christ often provides at least one or more bishops who are men who help teach and preach the gospel. Deacons are faithful men provided by Christ who serve the Lord's table and take care of secular things like the building and other things so that the pastor can give himself to prayer and study and preaching (Acts 6: 1-4)

But each sinner saved by God's grace are saints. God sanctifies his people. To be sanctified is to be set apart and consecrated to Christ. Like every other aspect of salvation, sanctification is to the praise of the glory of God. God alone sanctifies his people.

God the Father sanctified us in eternity when he elected to save us in Christ before the world was made.

Jude 1: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

God the Son, Christ Jesus, sanctified God's elect by his blood on the cross. He declared that he came to do the will of the Father in laying down his life to honor the law on our behalf. Then he declares,

Hebrews 10:10: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

God the Holy Spirit sanctified us in regeneration when he gave us a new holy spirit separating us and consecrating us to Christ in the heart by faith.

1 Peter 1:2: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

By this sanctifying work entirely of God, God makes his people saints. We are one with each other in Christ. We are willing bondservants of Jesus Christ. Justification is Christ's work for us before the Judge. Sanctification is Christ's work in us as the great Physician. Our understandings was dark, now it is light in the Lord. Our will was contrary to God and set on sin, now our will is to follow Christ and serve him. Our affections were set on this world, now they are set on Christ above. Before we were the servants of sin, now we are the servants of Christ our Righteousness.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR GRACE AND PEACE

Philippians 1: 2: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is more than a greeting. It was Paul's prayer for them.

First, Paul's prayer for them is for *grace*. God's people are saved by grace. God the Father chose his people by grace, not based on anything in us.

Romans 9: 11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13: As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14: What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

We fell in Adam. But God's grace did not change. He did not chose us based on anything in us therefore the fall did not change God's purpose toward his people. His grace was not based on anything in us but in the person and work of Christ. We often describe grace as unmerited favor. If you supplied all the need of a poor, helpless beggar that would be undeserved. But supplying all the need of one who slew everyone in your house and robbed you is a better illustration of the grace of God toward his ungodly, God-hating people. After the fall we were not neutral beggars. After the fall, we became entirely opposed to God in enmity against him.

For us who were God-haters, Christ made himself the least by his grace.

2 Corinthians 8:9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

By grace, Christ took our nature. As a sinless man, God made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor 5: 21). God made him a curse for us and Christ redeemed us from the curse by his grace. By the grace of Christ bearing our stripes we are healed. Christ arose from the grave and all those Christ redeemed arose in him. Then he sent us the good news and gave us faith to believe that he alone is our righteousness. That is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Romans 5:21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

In our carnal hearts, we were crying out, “No, God.” We were not seeking God. But the Spirit of God begot us again by the irresistible grace of God and he has kept us by grace. God’s elect are adopted, accepted and forgiven by grace.

Ephesians 1: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ephesians 2:5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)...8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

This is why Paul did not exalt himself over Timothy. This is why God’s people are one. We know we are sinners saved by the grace of God. Everything we have was given us freely by God’s grace.

Ephesians 4: 1: I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Spirit of God makes us know that we have no reason to be anything but lowly and meek because we are saved by grace. When we know the longsuffering of God toward us for Christ’s sake, it makes us longsuffering toward our brethren. Beholding how God forebears with us in love on a daily basis, the grace of God makes us forbear with our brethren in love.

Then Paul prays that God give them *peace*. Our peace with God is in and by Christ. By Christ’s work of righteousness, we have peace with God and peace in our hearts.

Isaiah 32: 17: And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

When the Spirit of God makes us know Christ has reconciled us to God the effect of Christ’s righteousness is quietness and assurance forever. That is why the gospel of Christ is called the “*gospel of peace*.” (Rom 10: 15) The gospel declares that Christ accomplished peace between God and his people and Christ is our Peace with God.

Psalms 85:10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

God is just and God’s elect were justified by Christ. Our old man died and our new man arose in Christ. The law was honored and God’s righteousness manifest in Christ bearing the curse in the place of his people on the cross. Righteousness and peace have kissed in Christ. Christ reconciled his elect to God. Then he gave us faith so that ourselves stop fighting and are reconciled to God in our hearts. We have peace with God through faith in Christ.

Romans 5:1:...being justified, by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Likewise, Christ is our peace with our fellow brethren. Peace between brethren is entirely in and by Christ because Christ fulfilled the law that we once used to exalt ourselves over one another.

Ephesians 2:14: For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15: Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

Christ came and preached peace to us. The Holy Spirit formed Christ in us, creating a new man in us, making us one with one in Spirit through faith in Christ.

Ephesians 2: 17: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

Now, as Paul told the Corinthians, we know no man after the flesh but after the spirit (2 Cor 5: 16). We once gloried in appearance. Now, by the Spirit of Christ within us, we no longer exalt ourselves over others using external differences such as the law or race or any such thing.

Colossians 3: 10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Brethren this is the great blessing for which Paul prayed for his brethren at Philippi—*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* We must pray to God our Father through our Lord Jesus for this because all grace and all peace are multitude by God alone. Let this be our attitude toward one another: my brothers and sisters are saints, servants of Jesus Christ, one by the grace and peace of God given us freely in Christ Jesus. Let this be our prayer for one another—*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Amen!