

"Grace and Peace"

Ephesians 1:1,2

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Note: These notes contain more material than the preached sermon.

Ephesians 1:1,2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first thing we should say is that Paul does not write vain words. His writing is inspired by the Holy Spirit and every word has weight. Each word is carefully chosen and filled with meaning.

This is a letter by the Holy Spirit to you as a child of God. It is not only to the saints that were at Ephesus two thousand years ago, but to the faithful in Jesus Christ everywhere. You find this a most up-to-date book, filled with the most precious truth, relevant and practical. It is not only to prepare you for going to heaven at last, but also for how to live while you are going to heaven.

Some of the greatest enemies to your soul and your spiritual growth are self-satisfaction and indifference. You will never cease to profit from the study of the Scriptures, learning things you never knew before and seeing things that you can improve about yourself and getting stronger in the things of Christ. Where there is life, there is growth, suppleness, and strength; when there is no life, the branches become dry and brittle—they are soon broken and are scattered away in bitterness and strife.

In verse three Paul will thank God for the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places” that the church has received from Christ. God is a spirit and His greatest blessings are of the soul and the mind and go to the hearts of His people, not only to their bodies.

Paul calls himself an “apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Ministers must be certain of their call to the ministry, and a call to the ministry is twofold: from God and an inward spiritual assurance that convinces the man that this is the will of God; and secondly, a call from the church, signified by the laying on of the hands of the elders, signifying the call to do the work of the Lord Jesus in the Church. Those who are so called are to be esteemed very highly for these are the gifts of God to the church; without them there can be no church and no preaching of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. There is a great need for a revived and assured ministry in these days, of men who know they have the word of God in their hands and are confident that they know what it says and the confidence to preach it with much assurance and

boldness. Along with this ministry there must be strong and faithful elders and deacons to support and sustain the ministry.

But let us come to the words of Paul. I have two points and two points about each of the two points.

I. How does he describe the church of Jesus Christ.

A. He calls them saints: The word saint and the word faithful go together. If you believe the Gospel, then you know that God is holy and He calls us to holiness. The word saint basically mean “a holy one.”

1. The word takes its meaning from God Himself. Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up. The angels sang, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” in Isaiah 6, and this adjective is applied everywhere to God.
2. In Hebrew the word means the absolute separation of God from all things that He made. It denotes his absolute perfection and purity. He is free from all defilement. In Him is no darkness at all.
3. Because God is absolutely holy, all things associated with Him and called to His service must be a partaker of His holiness, and be free from defilement of any sort.
4. God has secured this holiness for His people. It is the work of the Holy Trinity:
 - (a) The Father has appointed and set us apart from eternity unto holiness as we see in verse 4. Predestination is unto holiness as we see in Romans 8 where we are said to be predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist understood this when he blessed his son, saying that he would go before the way of the Lord who would fulfill the promise made to Abraham That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. There are so many passages that speak of this that we will only touch on it here and develop it as we go along.
 - b) The Son has redeemed us from sin and misery by the shedding of His blood. As we read in Hebrews, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb 10:10) “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Heb 13:12) “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14)
 - c) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Holiness, and He calls us to believe the Gospel and to be holy:
 - (1) “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1Pe 2:5)

(2) “7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” (2Ti 1:7-9)

(3) “29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph 4:29-32)

B. He calls them faithful. They are believers. They are saints because they are believers and they are believers because they are saints. The two go together and cannot exist separately. It is a holy faith that we have, for it is not given by men but by God. The Scriptures are holy; the ministry is holy, the church is holy, because all are the work of God. We are not of the world, but are a heavenly people called out of darkness into the glorious light of the gospel and are set apart for the service of God. To this work faith is absolutely essential:

1. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6)
2. Paul would testify that Jesus sent him to the Gentiles “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Ac 26:18)
3. Once more, there are a great many things that could be said about this, and I will only touch on this here. This is a theme that will come back to us again in this great book.

II. He prays for gifts for them: He does not pray in vain, for God is most willing to give these gifts to his churches. In fact, the church cannot exist without these gifts. Where we see these gifts, there we see the church; and when these disappear, the church is in danger of disappearing.

A. Grace. This is the inward work of the Holy Spirit, Predestined by the Father, based upon the work of Christ on the Cross, communicated by the preaching of Gospel; received by faith.

1. God’s grace is the source of every good thing that is in you by Jesus Christ: “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.” (Eph 2:8-10) : “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Tit 3:7)

2. We can serve God acceptably only by grace: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:” (Heb 12:28)
3. Men fall from the kingdom, when they fall from the grace of God and turn to bitterness and defilement: “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;” (Heb 12:15)
4. Our calling to Christ is by grace: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” (2Ti 1:9) “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Tit 3:7)
5. All our hopes are through grace: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,” (2Th 2:16)
6. We are sanctified by grace: “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” (2Pe 3:18) “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,” (2Pe 1:2) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Col 3:16)

B. Peace. This also cannot be separated from grace. Grace comes by peace, and peace comes by grace. Bitterness and strife is contrary to grace, and grace does not produce bitterness and strife.

1. This rests upon grace. There is no peace where there is no grace. This peace is personal, for where there is no peace in the heart and mind there will be no peace with others (James 4).
 - a) It is by justification by faith that we have this personal peace with God (Romans 5) This peace is the gift of God.
 - b) Peace is also the gift of sanctification: In the church, we are to treat one another with grace in our hearts: forgiving one another, forbearing one another. A troubled, envious, rebellious heart cannot know peace.
2. “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.” (Jude 1:2) These go together.
3. “Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” (2Jo 1:3)
4. “13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing

that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (2Pe 3:13-14)

5. Peace and grace is multiplied through knowledge: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,” (2Pe 1:2)
6. “10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.” (1Pe 3:10-11)
7. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” (Heb 12:14)

Application: this peace and grace are "from God," from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Grace comes from God. There is no peace for the godless, the wicked and rebellious. Peace is the gift of God. Godliness and peace go together. This is the application:

- A. Peace is the work of God: “The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.” (Ps 29:11) “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Isa 26:3)
- B. Good government is the work of God in the church: “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” (1Co 14:33) “12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” (1Th 5:12-13)
- C. Peace is the gift of Christ to His people: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (Joh 16:33)
- D. Peace is specifically the work of the Holy Ghost: “26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (Joh 14:26-27)
- E. The godly cherish peace, because they know its great value: “I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.” (Ps 120:7) “15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” (Pr 3:15-18)
- F. We are commanded to seek this peace: “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” (2Co 13:11) “6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Php 4:6-7)

G. We are not to fret and worry, for this is against the promise of God: Psalm 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

H. REST, WAIT, DON'T FRET: Ps. 37:7

May God bless you.

Amen and Amen.