

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 6th March 2022 Hymns Psalm 46:1-7 stroudwater 318 195 Read: Philippians 1:1-2
Text Philippians 1:2

Series: Philippians (11) Title: Gospel Greetings

Paul continues in his opening words of this letter to the Church at Philippi, with words of greeting.

This is also called a salutation.

During Pauls' time when letters were written, the person who wrote the letter would normally put their name at the start of the letter.

I say that because if we were to write a letter, we would sign the letter at the end.

Furthermore, the one writing the letter would identify to who the letter was written to. Already noted Paul was writing to ***all the saints which are at Philippi.***

Paul begins by stating the words grace and peace. In fact these greetings grace and peace are used often in Pauls letters.

These words of greeting are Paul's summary of the Gospel.

As He greets the Lord's people he does so, with gospel greetings, grace and peace.

We certainly know of gospel farewells, we say to people God bless, Lord bless.

But what a way to greet brothers and sisters in Christ, by Gospel greetings, speaking of what we have in Christ, grace and peace.

I encourage you to use this word in speaking or writing letters.

Notice three thoughts about gospel greetings.

I FIRST, THE FAVOUR OF THE GOSPEL “**Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

There is no word better to describe the gospel than the word grace.

Though this word grace is used many times in scripture, yet its meaning directs us to one conclusion, **grace is the Favour of God.**

God’s grace is His undeserved, unmerited favour extended to those who deserve divine and eternal wrath.

Therefore, toward such the Lord displays undeserved and unmerited favour; and does so out of His great love.

We must grasp this truth.

Any spiritual blessing received, is by God’s grace. We have received it as His Favour.

If God required works from men and woman for their acceptance with Him, then no one would ever have assurance of salvation and the security of heaven, **for no one would ever know when they had done enough earn God’s favour.**

Rather, God in favour looks upon sinful men and woman, and bestows grace. **Saving grace, serving grace, sufficient grace, dying grace and much more. But to summarise them all, grace is God’s Favour to sinners.**

James Gray the song writer, got it right, when he penned the words of his hymn, **only a sinner saved by grace.**

He wrote ***“Naught have I gotten but what I received; Grace hath bestowed it and I have believed; Boasting excluded, pride I abase; I’m only a sinner saved by grace!”***

Paul writing to the church at **Ephesians 2:8-9** ***“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.”***

2 Timothy 1:9 ***“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.”***

Paul speaks of his own testimony in **Gal 1:15** ***“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace.”***

Putting these verses together, we conclude, that God’s purpose in the salvation of sinners is all of grace.

Since salvation is all of grace, divine favour shown to sinners, then there is no contribution or help that man makes to his own salvation.

Due to the total depravity, darkness and the deadness of the human sinful heart by nature, there is nothing, that any person could contribute by good works or assist God within salvation. We would never do enough to honour God.

Men and woman have no ability whatsoever to change their depraved heart and make themselves acceptable before God.

Men and woman in their sinful state are unable to fix their sin problem, they are unrighteous, ungodly.

God views sin as unrighteousness meaning unpleasing to God, unacceptable to God.

God is holy and Sin is an abomination to him. It will not matter how sincere a person maybe or how hard a person may try to do their best to earn God's favour.

No person will never make themselves good enough for God and heaven.

Men and woman in their natural state, will never be able to give a righteousness that God accepts, they will never be able to obey God's law perfectly in themselves.

In the gospel, God's grace is revealed through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. He alone merits heaven for sinners.

Christ alone is the righteousness and eternal hope of sinners.

He completed His work of redemption, paying for all the sins of all His people when He proclaimed on Mount Calvary, in **John 19:30** "***It is finished.***"

Our salvation and our assurance of being saved, rests fully upon God's grace as seen through Christ's finished work.

We are Saved by grace Alone, and this is all our plea. Here is the amazing grace of God, grace that is greater than all our sin.

Oh! to consider that God should think any sinner at all with Favour, is amazing.

You see the Gospel of Grace leaves no room for pride, in fact when we fully understand and grasp that the Gospel is all of grace, then pride will be extinguished and Christ will be elevated.

God saves sinners by showing His divine favour to them, and granting them eternal life, but not according to their own works, but grace in Christ.

II SECOND, THE FRUIT OF THE GOSPEL “*Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

As Paul continues in his gospel greeting, he is careful to place peace after grace, for this very reason, **grace is the root of peace**, which results in the fact that **peace is the fruit of grace**.

True lasting or spiritual peace is not a cease fire, or an absence of war, but its **reconciliation**.

The NT word for ***reconciliation*** gives the idea of ***an exchange of money***. It pictures the image of the two parties at enmity or war settling their differences by means of a price being paid.

But the vital thing is about this word in spiritual terms, since peace rests upon an everlasting covenant of grace, then only one of the parties pays the price.

Since God has offered the terms of peace, not man, then it is God who pays the price, and He does so **as Rom 5:10** “**we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.**” **Eph 2:13**

“But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

True peace refers to God and man, once enemies are now brought back into fellowship by the life and death of Christ.

The basis of this peace is grace.

without grace there is no peace.

If there is no grace, it follows that there is no peace. Where grace is absent, so too will peace.

There are many today who claim to have peace.

Such a claim is based upon circumstances, national pride, or being religious, however, when their situation changes, their peace quickly evaporates. **Isaiah 57:21** ***“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*** **Romans 3:17** ***“the way of peace have they not known.”***

Therefore, when examined in the light of scripture, it is not true peace, because true peace flows from grace, as peace is the fruit, the out working of grace.

Our Lord made this difference, between His everlasting peace and the world’s temporal peace.

He said to His disciples, **John 14:27** ***“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.”***

The every fact Christ refers to a peace ***“not as the world giveth,” signifies***, the world’s peace is, temporary and based on feelings, circumstances, self and is ever changing.

But Christ's peace, is everlasting peace, secure peace, eternal peace.

Please do not miss the point, because sinners receive grace from God, they have peace with God.

Such peace is due to our Position in Christ.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:9**

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Romans 5:1 – ***“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** Paul speaks of justified believers.

The word ***justified, righteousness***, just means ***to be declared righteousness or right before God.***

Justification is an act or declaration of God. It is very important that we recognise that justification is **a once for all act not a process.** You will never be more justified than you are right now.

Justification is an act a verdict, that has taken place with respect to the position of the justified sinner before God.

Justification describes a change in the legal standing of the sinner. From a state of condemnation to acceptance. We are no longer enemies of God or at war with God.

The conflict is ended. I have eternal peace, "**peace through the blood of His cross.**" **Eph 2:14** confirms "**Christ is our peace**"

This peace leads to practical peace.

In other words because **I have peace with God, then** as I live the Christian life, I can know the **peace of God.**

Trial and burdens are to be expected, as it is not an easy road we are travelling to heaven.

We will face the storms of life, my situation will change, storms in work, at home, in church, but the peace of God, will lead through them.

Phil 4:7 "**And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" The word **keep** means to **guard**. The peace of God **shall keep or guard** believers.

The picture of the word keep would have been familiar to the Philippians, since the Romans stationed troops in the Roman colony of Philippi to protect their interests.

Just as the Roman soldiers watched over the city, guarding it, so God's peace will actively guard and protect those saints who confidently trust in Him and show their trust by obeying the exhortations in the preceding verse.

There will be many temptations, set backs, but the peace of God shall keep, shall guard you

(Isa 26:3 "**Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.**")

Paul said in **Colossians 3:15** "**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...**". The word **rule** is the word for an **umpire**. During the Greek games the umpire decided the

outcome of an athletic contest. Or think of an umpire in Tennis or a referee in football. In every decision they have the last say.

Dearly beloved you will have decisions to make about that which effects your life, marriage, job and family and you don't know what do you, or what path to take.

You struggle within, there is a conflict which causes you to lose sleep, battling, will this be the right decision?

Seek God on the matter, and when you have come to that decision, leave it with the Lord, as the final **rule**, as He is the umpire of all your decisions, let Him settle the matter, keep the door open or shut the door.

The peace of Christ will settle the matter, as to exercise supreme command in all your ways. Solomon said **Prov 16:9** ***"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps."***

Therefore, peace is the fruit, of grace.

III THIRD, THE FOUNT OF THE GOSPEL ***"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Paul concluded with the fount of every blessing who is Christ. Every blessing we receive flows ***from our Lord Jesus Christ.***

(Paul refers to the Lord's full title. As "**Lord**" He is sovereign, giving grace and peace to those whom He pleases to save. As "**Jesus**" He is Saviour, which is the meaning of the name, thereby He saves men by His grace and secure peace with God. Then as "**Christ**" which means ***anointed one*** He is the anointed Mediator of His people and in His three offices of Prophet, Priest and King.)

The Favour and Fruit of the gospel, are drawn from **the Fount of the gospel**.

notice grace and peace are not from the church, a religious minister or human effort, but from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, outside of Christ no sinner will find mercy.

Outside of Christ no believer will grow in the Lord, or know strength to live the Christian life, that is why Paul said in **Philippians 4:13** ***"I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me."***

There is no grace outside of Christ, so all we have received flows from His wounded side. All that God has chosen to do, or has done in order to save sinners, has always and will always be through, His Son, the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

Is He your Lord, your Saviour. Never believe the lie today. You can have Jesus as Saviour but not as Lord. In other words I profess to be saved, but I am my own, I will do what I what to do, live how I want. If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all in your life.

When Christ becomes your Saviour, He becomes Lord of your life, to rule and reign over every area in your life. Have you this grace and peace, come to Him just now.