

EPHESIANS 1:2b
Introduction Of The Letter: Cont'd
Message 5, Nov. 8, 1998

Intro: This summer there was going to be an auction sale of an elderly uncle of mine, here in Buffalo Head Prairie. I intended to go so I called those of my family who I thought might be interested and offered to buy a few things if they wished to have them. One of the interesting things about auction sales is that if they have antiques, people will stand around all day and wait for the selling of those antiques. Now when I am talking antiques, I mean what we call antiques. You know, like milk cans or jars, old harnesses and tools like that. Some of these things that are maybe 20, 30 years old. And if we are talking about real antiques, we're talking about something my Grandfather might have had, or made. Maybe something one hundred years old.

Now there was no such thing, but let us say there had been a book my Grandfather's dad had, or my Grandfather's grandfather. I can assure you of one thing, it would have started off at a price I would simply not even be able to put one bid in. But what if there had been a book my great, great, great grandfather had written? And what if it were a book of instruction on how to live? What do you suppose the price of such a book would bring?

Now look at the treasure you hold in your hands. You hold in your hands an antique collection of, not one book, but 66 books. Some are as old as 3500 years. Now I know you do not have the original copies, but you have a copy of the copies of the original copy. Who here can estimate the value of the book you hold in your hand?

And now I want you to open your antique collection, to a book that is almost 2000 years old, the book of Ephesians. This is a book written by my God and your God. He divinely inspired that great apostle Paul and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he penned these words. And this great apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, after informing us who the writer is and who the recipients are, says these profound words, "Grace to you and peace..."

I had a call from one of my brothers who is undergoing a tremendous time of upheaval in his life. I woke up to the call and he wanted to talk to me but it was tears not words

that came. And when the words came he said, "Phil, I don't know how much more I can take." And I could tell him with full assurance because of the words penned here, that he could go on and if he would avail himself of God, God has grace sufficient for anything this world or the devil can hand out to anyone.

This morning we want to consider the second word in this great wish Paul expressed for the Ephesian believers, and with that I remind you this morning that these words are penned for believers. If you are here this morning as an unsaved person I cannot assure you of the grace and peace of God. I can assure you of one thing, if you will come to Him He will give you the grace to go through with salvation and then you too will qualify for grace and peace. If you will not come to Him, your days of fun and frolick, if there are any, are numbered.

And so, let us turn our attention to Paul's next word, "grace to you and peace..." This word occurs 429 times in the Bible. 111 of those are in the NT and 7 of those in Ephesians.

2) Peace

We are nearing the time when we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. Turn to the book of Luke and look at some words of hope. You see, the shepherds had gone to see what the angel of the Lord had informed them about when he said, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people." And as they neared the place, in Luke 2:13 we're told that suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.!" God brought peace to man in Christ Jesus. Only, yes only the committed Christian truly knows peace.

-Definition of peace

While grace is the presence of something good, namely the unmerited favor of God

which gives me the strength to do what He wills me to do and wells up in my soul as joy and causes me to rejoice and be thankfull; peace is the absence of something bad, namely friction.

Martyn Lloyd Jones says, "It is interesting to find that the actual root meaning of the Greek word that is translated 'peace ', is 'union', 'union after separation', a bringing together, a reconciliation after a contest and quarrel" (Vol.I, pg.37).

ISBE says, of the word peace in the NT that it, "...has taken on the broader connotations of well-being, completeness, inner satisfaction, the contentment and serenity that derive from having lived a full life, etc (III.733). Jesus came that we might have life, that is eternal life, but He also came that we might have life more abundantly. To experience the grace and peace of God is to live life abundantly.

Another writer says, "Peace of heart is the product of grace" (Zodiates, 49). "At this time, genuine peace exists only in the hearts and lives of those who have voluntarily accepted the grace of God. But their environment, both in man and nature, is full of war, disease, and death" (Zodiates,50).

I have told you the story of an art contest where the artists would seek to display the meaning of peace in picture. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Well, the pictures came in. There were pictures of sheep grazing on a sunny slope with just a few lazy, white, puffy clouds in a blue sky. No wolves and no wind. Just a beautiful calm sunny day with everything you could wish for if you wanted to relax and enjoy life. That is

peace. There is no friction, there is nothing to fear.

Then there was another picture. The sky was dark, the lightning was flashing and the wind was blowing. Down below was the raging river and on the upwind side a tree was bent over the raging waters. And in the tree was a nest, a robin nest. And in the nest were either eggs or the young robins. I don't know which for sitting on the nest with seemingly not a care in the world was Momma robin. It was peace in the midst of the storm. Well, that was the picture that won the prize.

If peace is achieved it is felt most forcefully in the midst of the storm. But let us say we have a relationship with a person and it is fragmented by something. Peace is most sweet at the moment of reconciliation.

One of the words heard most often in Israel is the word peace. Not only are they longing for peace in the country, but when they meet each other on the street the greeting is shalom. In that land you will find the word shalom on many tourist items.

-The need for peace

What are man's greatest needs in order for him to live a the life for God that God desires? I think that in the words of Paul we could give two great things and these are grace and peace. Without the grace of God we cannot even become Christians nevermind live as Christians. Maxwell verifies that one of man's greatest needs is peace. As a matter of fact he says, "Man's supreme need is for peace." (LEM 248.4M2p.45). That is true because of sin which separates and causes friction.

I want us to consider three areas in which we need peace. The very first area in which we need peace is peace with God. What is peace with God? It is the absence of friction in my relationship with God. How is it attained? It is taken care of through salvation (Rom.5:1). If you are saved you have peace with God.

There is another area we need peace. We need peace with man. What is peace with man? This is the absence of friction in my relationship with other people. The Scripture exhorts us, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live at peace with all men." How is peace with man attained? Well, peace with God is taken care of through justification, while peace with man is attained in the process of sanctification. Peter, in 2 Peter 1:2 says, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ." Once we are justified we need to begin the continual process of sanctification. We do this by growing in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. Peter talks about the grace and peace of God being multiplied to us in this knowledge.

Now there is a topic which is strangely missing in the book of Ephesians. It is the topic of the Lord's return. Now it is hinted at in several places as we will see but it is not directly spoken of. Our topic is peace on a horizontal level, that is peace between one another. You well know that there is a cry for peace today as never before. The Scriptures exhort us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. That is the crucial place with regard to peace. Jesus said in Matthew 24:6, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." There is a cry for peace so that today we see Jews trading land to the

demonic Yasser Arafat for hissing promises of peace.

Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians are letters loaded with prophecy of the end times and the Lord's return. In chapter 4 he speaks of the rapture. (Read 5:1-3). I have the inclination to believe that man will work at peace in various ways until it seems that trading land for lies of peace seems to work and man comes to the point where it seems we have achieved peace. If we are around at such a time or if you are then be warned. It is the calm before the storm for when man achieves what he calls peace and safety then all hell will break loose. Peace in mankind, worldwide, will not be achieved until the Prince of Peace rules, literally, physically and visibally. Now that was extra.

The third dimension in which we need peace is peace within. This has to do with worry. This is the peace OF God. You can have peace WITH God and yet not have the peace of God.

What is peace within? This is the absence of friction in my own soul, and maybe, to be more specific; it is the absence of worry. To not have anxieties or cares or worries is peace within. To learn to cast all our cares on Him is the heavenly remedy for worry. How is it attained? It is taken care of by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6-7), and by casting all my care upon Him because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Summary: How sad would it not be to read Ephesians 2:2, even preach on it and go on to verse three if we did not understand the concepts of grace and peace. Could there be more practical messages than these two messages on grace and peace? If you are experiencing the grace of God and the peace of God, you are living the joyous, abundant,

Christian life. You may honestly say with the Psalmist, "My cup runneth over".

Now I want to encourage you to something. We are moving on in the passages but you stay with verse two until you master finding the grace and peace of God. In all my learning, I have the difficulty of moving on before I master where I am. I encourage you, master tapping into the grace and peace of God. I trust you took notes and if you did not, I encourage you to get the taped messages and master these two great themes of Christianity. I know there are scores of Christians in sound evangelical churches who are not experiencing the grace and peace of God.

There is a word in the OT closely related to the word *shalom*. It is the word *shalam*. There was an offering in the OT that is called the peace offering. There were three occasions when this offering might be given: It might be given when God had done something in answer to a request, or when a person had made a vow and God blessed and took care of the matter or last, when one simply wanted to show gratitude to God for the peace one was enjoying. This was a free will offering called the *zeba nadaba*. This offering would be eaten by the one who brought it together with the priest who offered it. It was a time to sit down and enjoy a meal with the priest out of gratitude of heart for the peace of God.

Let me quote from my notes on this offering, "We need to go to Ezekiel to find the answer to the reason for this offering. The answer is not new to us by now. It is to make atonement. The root idea is satisfaction. The sin offerings satisfy God's wrath whereas the gift offerings satisfy God's desire, that which He wants from us. There is nothing God wants more than for us to tell Him that we love Him and that we are pleased with Him and want Him more than anything else in the world." Christ died for us that we might enjoy communion with Him.