

Grace and Peace

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It's a pleasure for us to go back to the book of Philippians and I invite you to turn to the book of Philippians this morning for a wonderful time that is ahead for us in God's word. Philippians 1:2. We've just sung of the love that our Savior has for us, we sang of how amazing is the love that Christ died for us and this really all comes together as we look at Philippians 1:2 which is our text for this morning. Philippians 1, beginning in verse 2 says this,

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

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." I'll say this at the end of the message but I don't want to wait to say it, I want to say it right now: what we've been singing about, what we are rejoicing in, the reason that we gladly respond to a call for enthusiastic worship, is the fact that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ have come to us with grace and peace extended to us. We are on the receiving end of undeserved kindness. Despite the tumult and the turmoil of the world around us, we as Christians have peace. We have a settled relationship with God despite our sin that has been purchased for us at the cost of the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and, beloved, Paul starts his letter with this and when we see God the Father extending grace and peace to us, when we see the Lord Jesus Christ extending peace to us, we realize that as we've said many times here, that there is a defining reality about being a Christian that God is favorably disposed toward us. It is easy to lose sight of that in the ebb and flow of circumstances in life, it is easy to lose sight of that when your body is racked with pain and your soul is racked with discouragement, and that is why we need to come back to the word of God again and again and again in order to see that in the midst of it all God is extending his grace and his peace to us.

Beloved, you must understand, you must know, you must contemplate, you must think repeatedly on the reality of who you are in Christ and how that reality came to be. You are all children of Adam, in one sense, until you've been born into Christ and come under a different head you might say, but even as Christians, we tend to view God with an attitude of suspicion. It was injected into the human race from the beginning in Genesis 3 when Satan tempted Eve to disbelieve the goodness of God and to question that perhaps God was withholding something from her, and we all bear the consequences of the aftermath of that act but, beloved, we must think rightly about who God is, we must think

rightly about him, that we would respond rightly to him and be able to live life from a position of trust, a position of confidence, a sense of well-being and a sense of peace, and today's passage helps us with that.

Let's look at it again. The Apostle Paul writing to this church in Philippi said, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." God has come to us, as it were, with a message. God has come to us through the Apostle Paul. God now comes to us through his word and he comes to speak to us, he comes to speak to his people and the question is when a great God like that comes to us, we come with a sense of maybe a little bit of sense of proper fear and trembling, "What is the message that is borne to me? What is being carried to me? What is the message of the king to His subject?" The message is grace. The message is peace.

These words are Paul's standard greeting in so many of his letters. He uses these exact words, 12 words in the Greek text, he uses these exact 12 Greek words in Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, here in Philippians and Philemon, and the reality of being a little bit familiar with Scripture is that sometimes familiarity breeds, if it doesn't breed contempt, it breeds something else, it breeds a little bit of too easy of a familiarity and you lose sight of what it is that you're actually reading. Beloved, if in seven of his letters Paul has used these exact words, I want to suggest to you that we shouldn't just gloss over them because they're familiar and easy to come by, I think that we need to view them from a different perspective. This repetition does not render them trite, it does not render them commonplace. Beloved, the common use and the frequency of use in these New Testament letters from Paul show us something completely different; rather than something that's commonplace that we shouldn't give attention to, instead the frequency shows an emphasis to which we would be wise to pay heed, to which we would be wise to give our attention to and consider exactly what is being said to sinners like us.

So what we want to do today is we want to consider grace and peace, the nature of grace and the nature of peace, and so if you're taking notes here, first heading for your notes here today would be the nature of grace. The nature of grace. We throw that word around a lot, don't we? Greek writers in the first century commonly opened their letters with the word that means greetings. The word of grace that Paul uses here is a related word, closely related form, but it has a far more specialized meaning and, beloved, we just need to keep clear in our minds, keep it at the forefront of our thinking here this morning that this is grace that comes from God our Father in the Lord Jesus Christ. God comes in a great and powerful way through his word this morning communicating grace. God speaks through his word, speaks from the Lord Jesus Christ bringing grace, bringing peace to what we have to consider here this morning and we want to know what that is.

Well, the word "grace" has been technically defined in a couple of different ways in resources that you can find. Grace is defined by one lexicon in this way: it is a disposition marked by an inclination to generosity. Grace is an indication that God is disposed to be generous to his people, God is disposed even to be generous to sinners who reject him, and that preaching of the Gospel is an extension of generosity to God, an invitation to

partake of grace and forgiveness to those who are his enemies. We'll look at that more in a moment but what you must see as we open God's word here today is that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ come and declare through his word that the Triune God is disposed toward, is inclined toward showing goodness and generosity to you. Despite your suspicions, despite the remnants of your evil unbelieving heart that is inclined to question him when things don't go your way, inclined through a lack of familiarity with his word and a lack of intimacy with Christ in prayer, you are inclined to think bad thoughts about this God and by contrast, what Scripture does is it declares right from the beginning of this letter that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are inclined toward kindness and generosity toward you. This is transforming, especially for those of you that have been raised in a works based religion, especially those of you that have been conditioned to think that whatever you do is not good enough and you're always trying just a little bit harder to earn a little bit of approval either from loved ones or from God himself, and you're just disposed to think about all of relationships being defined by this unwillingness to extend approval, God's word comes and tells you clearly, plainly and in direct contradiction, that God's favor isn't earned, he's already inclined toward goodness and generosity toward you.

Grace has been defined by another authority in this way, that grace expresses God's acceptance of and goodness toward those who cannot earn his favor, those who do not deserve his favor. Grace is a statement of God accepting those who do not deserve his acceptance. It is a statement of God extending goodness who do not deserve to be in that position of benevolence with him. Grace is God's unmerited favor operating in the lives of sinners just like you. He extends goodness to men who deserve condemnation, we can include the ladies in that as well. He extends goodness to men and women who deserve condemnation.

Now why is this dwelling upon the nature of grace so important? One writer said this, he said and I quote, "If we are ever to understand the grace of God, we must begin with the knowledge that God has acted graciously toward us in Christ entirely apart from human merit." Let me say that again. I see a couple of glazed looks on your faces, maybe I read it too quickly. I want to see looks of understanding in response to a great statement like that. I can say it's a great statement because I'm quoting someone else. It says, "If we are ever to understand the grace of God, we must begin with the knowledge that God has acted graciously toward us in Christ entirely apart from human merit." In other words, grace is something that is given to people who do not deserve it and if I can put it this way and go back to what I was saying earlier, we are inclined to think badly about God, you are inclined to think suspicious thoughts toward God and his intentions towards you when the reality is that God is gracious and good to people apart from their deserving it. On the contrary and on the exact reverse of the way it should be, we're inclined to think too highly of ourselves. We're inclined to think that we deserve good. We think God is unwilling to extend it and we think we deserve it. To the extent that that is kind of defining the way that you think and view the world, you need a complete reversal of your mindset into something different. You do not deserve goodness from God and yet he is inclined to give it to you anyway and only when you start from that premise are you beginning to understand your position in Christ.

We say it many times, we try to say it in different ways, the common man assumes that he is good in God's sight. The man on the street never troubles himself with notions of sin or guilt or judgment or indwelling depravity. To the contrary, he believes that there is an intrinsic quality of goodness about himself, an intrinsic quality of goodness to his deeds, to his religion, to his sorrow over sin, even. He believes there is an intrinsic goodness to his treatment of his fellow man and therefore God accepts him on that basis. "I've been pretty good, God owes me." How else could anybody say that when questioned about whether they think they'll go to heaven when they die, "Well, yeah, I think so, I've been pretty good." That statement is a complete contradiction about everything about the nature of Christianity. It is a complete contradiction of reality. Man assumes that heaven is his rightful due because he deserves it and yet somehow he walks through life with a suspicious eye toward God as if God is somehow withholding what he is entitled to; a sense of entitlement, a sense of expectation that, "Based on who I am, God owes me."

Now beloved, that line of thinking is a fundamental mistake of infinite magnitude. That is not reality. That is not reality for any man who has lived since the fall of Adam. We are born into this world sinners. There's a reason why children do not need to be taught to lie and throw temper tantrums, it's because it comes out of their own heart even at that young age. Their hearts are wrong. They are born that way and they don't grow out of it, and if you're not in Christ, you haven't grown out of it, you may become more sophisticated in covering it up but the core of man is wrong. Man and God are naturally enemies because man's best deeds fall short of a holy God, he does them from pride rather than worship, and so we must understand that God is not gracious because men somehow deserve that, to the contrary Psalm 7:11 says that, "God is a righteous judge who has indignation every day." That is the proper due of man, the indignation, the anger and the wrath of God because of the sin of man, because of the sin of you. That is the nature of things.

So beloved, going back to the quote that I read earlier, God acts graciously toward us in Christ entirely apart from human merit. It's not something that you've ever deserved. You were not born with a claim on God. Your sin actually deserves eternal judgment in hell. That's reality. That's what Scripture tells us. That is the nature of man. That is the nature of everyone who has ever been born since the fall of Adam, born into this world with inherited sin, born with a corrupt nature, and then acting on that nature by choice throughout life in a manner that expresses rebellion and indifference to God. Why else are you not interested in his word, my unbelieving friend? Why else would you not be interested in the things of Christ except that you are cold and indifferent to them with your dead heart? That is the reality of who man is, not his self-flattering image that he looks when he congratulates himself as he looks on himself in the mirror, something completely different, something undeserving; the only deserving we have before God is to deserve condemnation. It's those kinds of people to whom God has shown grace. It is those kinds of people to whom God has shown goodness.

Let's look back for a moment at the text that I read for our Scripture reading providentially in Romans 5 to just see this. Romans 5, we're looking at the nature of grace. The nature of grace and in Romans 5:6, it says,

6 ... while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Beloved, I'll speak now to those of you who are Christians, genuinely born again, genuinely united in Christ by faith, look at the terms that are used to describe your pre-Christian condition. Verse 6, helpless. Verse 6, ungodly. Verse 8, sinner. Verse 10, enemies. Helpless, ungodly, sinners who are enemies of God. Now the point here, my friends, is this: that black backdrop is used to contrast the love of Christ that was expressed when he went to the cross and lay down his life for us. It was while you were a helpless, ungodly, sinful, enemy of God that Christ died for you. It was while you were a helpless, sinful, ungodly, enemy of God that Christ shed his blood and saved us from the wrath of God. It was in that condition that we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son and now being saved by his life. Beloved, don't you see that Scripture utterly excludes any possibility that you deserved the goodness of God; that what you deserved was the exact opposite, instead of love you deserved his wrath? And it is while you were like that that God stepped into the world in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and exercised his saving work.

So beloved, grace is undeserved. Grace is not something that you have earned. You never could. You never did. You never will. We must put that thought out of our mind. Grace is undeserved, therefore, my friend, it is crucial, it is elementary for you to fundamentally repent of sin and pride that is geared toward God, "God, you owe me." It is crucial to repent of that and yet at the same time, there's a sweet opposite side to the same coin. We've said that grace is undeserved and therefore it's crucial to repent of your sin and pride but, my friend, do you see something really crucial in the midst of this? If grace is undeserved, it means that you can go and ask for it despite your sin and failure. You don't have to work yourself into a position of being acceptable to God because you can't do that and that's not the basis on which he deals with us anyway. Because grace is undeserved, it is crucial not to despair in your sin. If you are an unbeliever here today, borne down with a guilty conscience, it is my privilege and joy to declare to you that God extends grace to you in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, he calls you to repent and believe in Christ with the promise that he will forgive all of your sins and give you eternal life without cost.

Look at Isaiah 55:1 with me. To you that are burdened by guilt, you who are conscious that you have nothing to offer to God, you that tremble at the thought of judgment because you realize it is the just desert of your sin, Scripture comes extending grace, extending promise to you. God justifies the ungodly, Romans 4:5 says, and here in Isaiah

55:1, you get a glimpse into this disposition of generosity toward God when he says in chapter 55, verse 1, the Bible says,

1 Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.

Scripture here is saying that you cannot come, you realize that you have nothing to offer to God and the gracious offer to God is, "Yes, in that condition of having nothing to offer me, come, eat and drink from the bounty that I offer to you." It is totally undeserved goodness that is offered to you in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and that is the only basis on which you can come. You cannot come objecting and saying, "No, but I am good enough and God does owe me because of my past hardships that I've been through." No, we have to take that and throw it over our shoulder and cast it behind us and never think that way again. None of that stuff is a basis upon which God owes you anything, rather your mindset is that, "I come as an utterly bankrupt sinner, I come poor in spirit. I have nothing to offer God except my sin and guilt and, God, on the basis of the promise of Your word, the promise of grace, the promise to come even though I have nothing with which to pay, I come believing Your promise, I come trusting Your goodness, and on that basis alone, Your goodness, Your mercy, I ask You to deal kindly with me in Christ."

For us as Christians, what I want you to see, go back to Philippians 1:2. Let's keep the text fresh in our mind before us. Philippians 1:2. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, followed by Colossians. Paul here is writing to the saints in Christ Jesus. He's writing to Christians and what he says to Christians here, Christians who were divided against one another, Christians who were struggling with false teaching, he opens up his letter of blessing and encouragement to them saying, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." My Christian friend, do you come in today mindful of your failure, mindful of your sins of the past week or the past day or even this morning? Do you come in troubled by the argument you had with your spouse as you were driving in together today? Well, let me just give you a word of comfort, a word of assurance that grace is undeserved and therefore it's crucial for you not to despair in this moment in which you find yourself, but rather to come fresh to drink from that ever flowing fountain of grace yet again and realize that, yes, you are here in an unworthy state, so to speak, you're here and having the fresh smell of sin on your life but don't you see that grace is undeserved and therefore it is crucial for you not to despair, it is crucial for you not to give up, it is crucial for you to just come again humbly to God and say, "God, here I am again. Cleanse me again. Please forgive me again. I'm confessing this again, my Father, but I'm trusting in Your grace, trusting that the grace that You gave me when I first came to salvation, when I first came to Christ, has not been exhausted, that Your disposition toward me is still good and generous, and on the basis of who You are, not who I am, I ask You, God, to be gracious to me because I have nowhere else to go." Do you know what that is? That's sweet. That's really precious, isn't it, to come to God on the basis of his goodness, not your own? Sure, it extinguishes pride but it opens up a world of goodness from the infinite character of a good and gracious God.

Beloved, unbelieving friend, Christian friend struggling with sin, put away that ever common mistake that you've probably made 10,000 times, don't make the mistake of waiting until you think you can clean up your life a little bit and then you feel like you can come to God, you've worked off two or three days and you haven't done anything too bad, "Now God, I can come to You." No, no, that is not the way that you relate to God. You go to God immediately in your sin, you go immediately even when the guilty conscience is accusing you. You go then. You go right then and say, "God, be gracious, be merciful to me, the sinner," and Scripture abundantly illustrates for us the mind of God, the attitude and disposition of God toward sinners who approach him that way. When the prodigal returned, the father saw him and ran to him. In utter violation of culture, of decorum of the time, the father runs to the son in order to hug and embrace him. Jesus said, "I didn't come to call those who were healthy, those who are righteous, I came to call sinners." You see, God delights in showing grace to sinners and if you come and you come with an attitude of humility and repentance that says, "God, be merciful to me," you are unlocking this grace of which I speak. Don't try to earn it because you can't, the nature of grace itself is that it is undeserved. And those of you steeped in a legalistic background, those of you that have been conditioned by years of teaching of how, "God's gonna get you for that," what's being offered to you here in Philippians 1:2 is liberty, is confidence, is grace, is peace, and you must understand that it is undeserved. So we put away pride thinking we deserve it, we also put away despair thinking that, "I must be excluded because I don't deserve it." Grace casts out despair of the guilty one and it casts out the pride of the self-righteous one, and then we deal with God on his terms.

Beloved, Jesus Christ came to us by grace, the operation of unmerited love. Think with me, just think through thought life, the ministry, the nature of the essence of Christ with me for just a moment here. It was by grace that Jesus Christ left heaven and came to earth to reveal the Father to us. It was by grace, undeserved favor, that Christ lived a righteous life for us. It was by grace that he died for sinners like you. Beloved, it was by grace that he sent the Spirit to work in your dark heart and to open up the things of Christ and to give you understanding and give light to your mind that you might be able to repent and believe. It was by grace that the Father drew you to repent and trust in Christ. It is by grace that he sustains you now. It is by grace that he gladly answers your prayer for forgiveness now. It is by grace that he will receive you into heaven when you die, my Christian friend. You didn't deserve any of that. You couldn't deserve any of that. You couldn't have been good enough to require Christ to come down for you. You couldn't have been and you weren't. You couldn't have been good enough to compel the Spirit to work in your heart as though the work of the Spirit was given according to human merit rather than the plan and grace of God. You could never have done that. You could never have been good enough for Christ to die on the cross for you. The very fact that he did shows that it was a human impossibility to be good enough because if you were good enough, then Christ died needlessly, Scripture says.

These things and much much more show God's inclination to goodness and whether you have been a flagrant outward sinner in ways observable to men and easily catalogued, or whether your sin has simply been one of sullen rebellion and indifference to God while maintaining an outward semblance of morality, God never accepted you because you

deserved it. Sin does not exclude you from grace, sin is the reason for grace, and Jesus himself said in Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Those are words of grace. Those are words of grace. Those are words of a disposition of a person having his disposition toward himself that acknowledges his guilt, that is humbled before God, and comes on the basis of a promise of grace rather than a demand according to what is due. "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23, "but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now to those of you that have been in evangelical churches for a long time, I understand, you say, "You keep repeating the basics." Yeah, that's right, I do because I think that perhaps we don't grasp these things as deeply in our hearts as we think we do. God never accepted you because you deserved it, he accepted you in Christ by grace and grace is the source of salvation. The nature of grace is undeserved kindness and goodness from God to sinners who deserve condemnation in its place. This is wonderful. This turns our thinking about the world and about God on its head.

Well, let's think for a little bit about the nature of peace. Go back to Philippians 1:2. The nature of peace. Chapter 1, verse 2, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Just as the Greeks in the first century used the word grace to open their letters, Jews like to greet each other with the word for peace, shalom. It was a greeting that wished harmony and wholeness to the one who was greeted. "I wish you well-being as I greet you and as I receive you into my presence." Well, what Paul does here is he elevates that typical salutation and turns it into a benediction from God. Look at it with me again, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." It's God extending this grace and peace. It's the Lord Jesus extending it.

So peace has the idea of spiritual wholeness, of well-being. Before Christ, you were separated from God by sin and under his judgment, now in Christ you are brought to a place of harmony and reconciliation. God in Christ has removed the barrier of sin. God has forgiven your sin. God will no longer hold you accountable for your sin. He will never allow that to be a barrier between you and him again. Objectively speaking, in a matter outside of our inner experience of the truth, objectively speaking, peace means that you are no longer God's enemy. He is no longer opposed to you. You are no longer under his wrath and anger in Christ. That whole realm of existence has been removed from you, put on the shoulders of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross, punished in his person. He bore the full wrath of God and now for those who come to him by faith, the whole penalty has been paid, the whole wrath has been extinguished in a way never to be raised and resurrected against you ever again. Christ was resurrected, the anger of God against his people will never be resurrected again. That's what peace means. It is an objective reality. Your sins are forgiven and God no longer holds them against you in Christ.

Let that sink in and, beloved, what that means is that if God has forgiven your sins, it is well with your soul. If God is for you, who can be against you? Look at Romans 8 with me. Romans 8. Scripture speaks in these exact terms and Scripture speaks to us in a way

that is designed to cultivate the security and well-being of your soul so that you realize that there is a settled disposition of generosity and goodness from God to you in Christ, and to the extent that you doubt that as it's said to you, to the extent that you resist it and say, "But I've got to be good," to the extent that you resist those things, you're showing the remnants of unbiblical thinking and I invite you to follow Scripture and to see it from a different point of view.

Romans 8:31,

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Beloved, think about it this way. These things are undeniable. These things cannot be contradicted. Christian friend, I speak to you, Christian brother, Christian sister, I speak to you here right now. What was Christ when he was on the cross for you in your sin, what was he except acting for you? What was he except that he was on your side? What was it except that he wanted good for you? He was displaying his love, he was showing goodness, and he was good to you, he was good for you on the cross without regret, without reservation, without hesitation, gladly went to you and bore your sin and wrath on the cross of Calvary, took the blame, bore the wrath, we stand forgiven at the cross, right? Well, if Christ was like that for you in the hour of atonement, then what makes us think that it could possibly ever change? The whole reason he came was to be good to his people. His essence, his nature, his purpose hasn't changed since then. When you were reconciled to God in that moment in time when God justified you when you put your faith in Christ, God was delighted to do that. It was the fulfillment of his eternal purpose for you. He appointed you for salvation in love, in grace. He chose you in Christ before the beginning of time. Now Christ comes and 2,000 years ago, he shows that grace and he pays the price that the plan of God might be carried out and now at some point in the past, my Christian friend, God had mercy on you and drew you individually by name to Christ and caused you to be born again and put his Spirit in you and secured for you in time the reality that he appointed for you in eternity past.

I ask you at the moment of your conversion, was not Christ for you? Was he not being good to you? Was he not being abundantly gracious to you when you cried out for forgiveness for sin, to some degree conscious of the fact that you deserved judgment and Christ said, "My friend, I receive you. My friend, I forgive you. I accept you. I bring you into God's family." Was he not being good all the way through? Well beloved, if he has been for you all along like that from eternity past until then, look at it now in Romans 8:31, look at it with me from that perspective,

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ... 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

These things are utterly compelling. These things cannot be denied and so we see that from an objective perspective, God has been good to us, God has brought peace to us, God has removed the enmity, God has removed the alienation, God has removed the separation and replaced it with a full gracious union in Christ, with Christ in the fullness of the person of Christ you have been brought into the entire realm of all of his blessings and God has held nothing back. That's objectively true. God came bringing peace and Paul as he opens this letter is reminding us of the peace that God has purchased for us in Christ.

At some point in your mind, a light should go on and you start to say, "Well, if all of that, if I'm understanding you right, if I'm understanding the word of God right, this is really amazing. This is really wonderful. This is beyond human comprehension. This is not what you would guess. Well, let me grab you and tell you," you say if you're starting to understand this, "if those things are true, this is the most magnificent thing that could ever be described or told by human tongue." Right. Exactly. That's the point. That's why the hymn writers use the word amazing so often. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. Amazing love, how could it be that thou my God should die for me?" Precisely. It's amazing. Rightly does our brother call us to be enthusiastic when we sing in response. Rightly does the word enthusiasm awaken our heart out of its lethargy, out of its indifference to sing and to be joyful about the wonderful grace and peace that has been brought to us by God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And when the reality sinks into your mind, then the preoccupation with guilt dissolves into a preoccupation with worship, a preoccupation with a sense of alienation is brought under the word of God and a recognition that peace exists and that God is no longer your enemy when you're in Christ, he loves you, he accepts you for the sake of his beloved Son, he no longer holds your guilt against you. He accepts you now, he will receive you into heaven in the end, and as I like to say so many times, beloved, when we all get to heaven, yes, what a day of rejoicing that will be when we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory, but beloved, when you get to heaven, if you are a Christian when you get to heaven, you are immediately going to have an infinite sense of being home. You are going to have the sense that, "This is where I belong. This was the goal of it all." Heaven is going to be more like home than anything on earth has ever been and that's when the fullness of objective peace will be known by us subjectively and experientially. This is what lies ahead and it is rooted in the grace of God that meanwhile here on earth, we can even know that's subjectively within our hearts.

Look at Philippians 4:6.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, [here it's talking about peace in a subjective experiential way] And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ... 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Beloved, God, if you are in Christ based on the clear testimony of God's word I can tell you, God is not hostile toward you but he is favorable toward you. Another writer said this and I quote, he said, "This peace is the inner assurance and tranquility that God ministers to the hearts of believers that keeps them spiritually confident and content even in turmoil."

So beloved, do you have that kind of objective peace with God that leads to subjective peace in your heart? If these things are foreign to you, I invite you to a gracious Lord Jesus who died for sinners just like you, made atonement for sinners just like you in order to forgive you and to reconcile you and bring you into the family of this God who is a God of grace and peace. No matter what you've done, he'll receive you gladly and bring you into God's family.

Well, for the sake of finishing my notes here. I've been talking about this all along. Let's go to point 3 here: the source of grace and peace. The source of grace and peace. This was supposed to be the climax of the whole message and I've been giving it away all the way through. What is the source of grace and peace? Look at it with me one more time, Philippians 1:2, "Grace to you," to you, "and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Let me just make a couple of closing observations about this. These spiritual blessings come jointly from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. You should not think about the Father as somehow being distant and remote and Christ is the one who reconciles you. God the Father himself is gracious and extends peace to you as well as Christ. They operate together in this. They operate in perfect harmony together. Christ does what the Father does. Christ gives what the Father gives. There's no separation. There's no diminishment between the two and the fact that these spiritual blessings come equally from the Father and from Christ, is a clear testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ. He is, and I say it with emphasis, he is the second person of the blessed Trinity and passages like this manifest that to us clearly. Grace and peace from the Father, grace and peace from Christ without any diminishment of the gift or of the one who does the giving.

So beloved, when we look at this opening verse that we often read through so quickly, Paul has not simply wished for the general well-being of his readers, here's what he's done, Paul has just prayed that his readers, including us today, he has prayed that we would enter fully into the nature of the grace and the peace that God establishes for everyone that he saves. And let me just close with the climax that I opened with. Can you open with a climax? I suppose you can. Beloved, here's where theology really matters, here's where your view of the word of God really really matters. It's not just Paul. It's not just Paul wishing Grace to you and peace. It's not just Paul because who was Paul? Paul was an apostle of Christ. Paul was appointed by Christ to speak on Christ's behalf. Paul as he was writing these words was writing under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit who was giving him the precise words at that precise moment that God wanted him to speak to be recorded in his word for all time. This is not just an old man from 2,000 years ago saying this to people from 2,000 years ago. Beloved, this is the living word of God. God himself is saying this to his people. God himself sets the atmosphere for this entire

letter of Philippians. Beloved, God himself greets us in these words with grace and peace. God is gracious. God establishes peace with his people and in his people. My Christian friends, this allows you to go out in peace today.

Let's pray together.

Father, the time goes so very quickly. We thank You for the grace and peace that is ours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. How we bless You for being good to us when we did not deserve it. How we bless You to have a relationship of peace where once we were enemies and under judgment. It fills our hearts with joy, it fills our hearts with gratitude. We respond to You, Father, with worship in response to the grace and peace that has come to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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