

Ephesians
2013-009 and 010
“Grace”
and
“Peace”

Psalms 66:18 If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.

I Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

"Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" Acts 16:31

Ephesians 1:1, 2

1 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:

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

Grace, Peace, Glory- Lloyd-Jones, David
Martyn

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

Ephesians 1:2

In this second verse, which is still a part of the salutation of the Apostle to the Church at Ephesus and elsewhere, he proceeds to tell us about the benefits we should be enjoying as the result of being Christians.

He does so in words which in some one form or another are to be found at the commencement of most New Testament Epistles—‘Grace be to you, and peace.’

It was the custom among ancient peoples to greet one another in this way when they met, and the favourite salutation which one Jew addressed to another was 'Peace, peace be with you.' 'Peace' was their favourite term.

The Apostle, however, does not merely say that, he goes well beyond it. He takes the familiar term and lifts it up into the new Christian realm.

So the Christian greeting and salutation is much greater, much wider, much more profound than the more or less formal salutation with which men used to greet one another.

I emphasize this matter because I think it is of great importance.

The Apostle does not use words such as this lightly and loosely and thoughtlessly; it is not a mere formula which he uses automatically at the beginning of a letter; the words are charged with profound meaning.

As he uses these words and expresses this desire for the Ephesians, he is desiring for them that they may experience fully all the endless riches that are to be found in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other words, we shall see as we analyse this verse that it contains some of the profoundest truths of our faith, and that its terms are of the most vital importance.

I digress for a moment to point out that when we read our Bibles nothing is more important than that we should look at every word, and question it as to its meaning.

How easy it is to do a certain amount of Bible reading every day, followed perhaps by a brief prayer!

If your main concern is simply to read a certain amount each day you may well skip over words such as these, these profundities of our faith.

Here at the very beginning, in this preliminary salutation, the Apostle plunges at once into the very depths of the profoundest truth and doctrine that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures. Or, to state it in a different way, this verse is a kind of overture to the entire Epistle.

It is the characteristic of great pieces of music, certain types of music in particular, to have an overture.

The musician starts by composing the main body of the work, which may have various movements or acts, each having its theme.

Then, having finished the work, he goes back to the beginning and writes an overture in which he collects together the main motifs or themes that have emerged in the body of the work.

He does so by throwing out a suggestion, perhaps in a few bars, to whet your appetite and in order that you may have some idea of what he is going to develop in the main body of the work.

This second verse, I suggest, is the overture to this entire Epistle; its major themes are all hinted at here.

We shall go into them in greater detail later, but let us note them at the very beginning—‘grace’ and ‘peace.’

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

No two words are more important in the whole of our faith than ‘grace’ and ‘peace.’

Yet how lightly we tend to drop them off our tongues without stopping to consider what they mean.

Grace is the beginning of our faith; peace is the end of our faith.

Grace is the fountain, the spring, the source.

It is that particular place in the mountain from which the mighty river you see rolling into the sea starts its race; without it there would be nothing.

Grace is the origin and source and fount of everything in the Christian life. But what does the Christian life mean, what is it meant to produce?

The answer is 'peace.' So there we have the source and there the estuary leading to the sea, the beginning and the end, the initiation, and the purpose for which it is all meant and designed.

It is essential for us, therefore, to carry these two words in our minds because within the ellipse formed by grace and peace everything is included.

What is grace?

It is a term notoriously difficult to define. Grace essentially means 'unmerited favour', favour you do not deserve, favour you receive but to which you have no right or title in any shape or form, and of which you are entirely unworthy and undeserving.

We may call it condescending love—love coming down, or stopping down. Or we may call it beneficent kindness.

All these terms are descriptive of what is meant by this extraordinary term which is constantly put before us in the New Testament, by this amazing and wonderful word 'grace.'

It is one of the most beautiful words in every language.

With regard to 'peace', the danger always present with this word is to give it a connotation, or attach a meaning to it, which falls short of its complete meaning. 'Peace' does not merely mean cessation of war, rest and quiet.

Certainly it means rest and quiet but it means much more.

The ever-present danger with regard to 'peace' is to think of it as merely an absence of such things as boisterousness or discord or fighting.

It may well be that because the nations of the world think of peace in those terms we have never had a true peace.

The peace dealt with in history books is merely a cessation of war; but 'peace' in the Bible does not merely mean that you stop fighting; it goes far beyond that.

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.

The word finds a place in the expression 'a peace offering', as presented by a man making a proposal for peace.

He is proposing a union, a bringing together, a reconciliation.

In other words two persons who have quarrelled and have been fighting put down their weapons, and look at one another and shake hands.

They are joined, there is a reconciliation; where there was contest and separation they have been brought together.

This idea is brought out in the second chapter of our Epistle, where we read, 'He hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us' (v. 14).

Two parties have been brought together, the middle wall of partition has gone, and by one Spirit they come together to the one Lord.

That is the meaning of 'peace.'

‘Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.’

There we have grace at the beginning and peace at the end; but we have not finished.

The moment you confront such a statement you are driven to ask a question.

Why does the Apostle wish this for these Ephesians?

The answer to that question, as I have already been saying, is the whole of Christian doctrine.

We must learn how to read the Scriptures; and there is no one thing that is more important when we do so than just this, to ask questions of it.

Why do we need grace and peace?

Why does the Apostle wish us to know them?

Why does he use these terms rather than some other terms?

The answer leads us immediately into fundamental Christian truths.

By desiring grace and peace for us he is telling us the truth about ourselves, he is telling us what we need.

We need the grace which will lead to peace because man is what he is as the result of the Fall and of sin.

What that means in detail is expounded fully by the Apostle in his second chapter.

Man in sin is at enmity with God.

Man by nature, as he is born into this world, is a hater of God.

He is not only separated from God, but he fights God, he is an enemy, and alienated in his mind from God; everything in him by nature is utterly opposed to God.

Such is the truth about man, and the result is that man in this condition is fighting God, striving against Him, hating Him.

Man in his natural state is ready to believe any claim in a newspaper that someone has proved that there is no God.

Man jumps at such statements and delights in them because he is a God-hater.

He is in a state of enmity against God.

Furthermore, because man is in this relationship to God he is also in a state of enmity against himself.

He is not only engaged in this warfare against a God who is outside of him; but he is also fighting a war within himself. Therein lies the real tragedy of fallen man; he does not believe what I am saying but it is certainly true of him.

Man is in a state of internal conflict and he does not know why it is so. He wants to do certain things, but something inside him tells him that it is wrong to do so.

He has something in him which we call conscience.

Though he thinks he can be perfectly happy whatever he does, and though he may silence other people, he cannot silence this inward monitor.

Man is in a state of internal warfare; he does not know the reason for it, yet he knows that it is so.

But in the Scriptures we are told exactly why this is the case.

Man was made by God in such a way that he can only be at peace within himself when he is at peace with God. Man was never meant to be a god, but he is for ever trying to deify himself.

He sets up his own desires as the rules and laws of his life, yet he is ever characterized by confusion, and worse. Something in himself denies his claims; and so he is always quarrelling and fighting with himself.

He knows nothing of real peace; he has no peace with God, he has no peace within himself.

And still worse, because of all this, he is in a state of warfare with everyone else.

Unfortunately for him everyone else wants to be a god as well.

Because of sin we have all become self-centred, ego-centric, turning in upon this self which we put on a pedestal, and which we think is so wonderful and superior to all others.

But everyone else is doing the same, and so there is war among the gods.

We claim that we are right, and that everyone else is wrong.

Inevitably the result is confusion and discord and unhappiness between man and man.

Thus we begin to see why the Apostle prays that we may have peace.

It is because of man's sad condition, man's life as the result of sin, and as the result of his falling away from God.

He is in a state of dis-unity within and without, in a state of unhappiness, in a state of wretchedness.

But it does not even stop at that; man has brought all this upon himself by his disobedience to God.

He cannot get away from this. He has tried to put forward every other conceivable explanation of his condition, but none is adequate.

He has tried the theory of Evolution and on the basis of that outlook and teaching man should by now have been emancipated and there should be peace; but peace has not come.

So man tries to explain his lot in other ways; but he cannot do so.

Man has brought all this evil upon himself because of his desire to be a god.

This is proved by the fact that he dislikes correction, and indeed the whole idea of law.

He ridicules it, and regards law as an insult; he does not recognize the need to be kept right by law, and he resents its interference.

But the great message of the Bible is that though man has fallen into sin and has got himself into this wretched state, God has still been concerned about him, and God has both intervened and interfered.

He has given laws and directions, but man has invariably rejected them.

It is God who has appointed governments and magistrates in order to keep sin within bounds; but man is always fighting against order imposed from without.

He dislikes it, and thereby shows his terrible hatred of God and his enmity against God.

Man has always rejected what God has provided for him, and so there is only one inevitable conclusion to come to with respect to man.

Man richly deserves the fate he has brought upon himself. Indeed we can go further and say that man deserves something much worse; he deserves to be punished.

But man is not only a law breaker who deserves to be punished, he is also a fool.

He rejects and will not listen to God's law, and therefore he deserves punishment, he deserves damnation. There is no excuse for man, he deliberately sinned and fell at the beginning, and he deliberately rejects God's guidance still.

There is no plea that can be offered for such a person.

Give him the Bible and he laughs at it. Though we find in the Bible that the men who have conformed to it have found happiness and peace, men reject it; though it is clear that if all people in the world were truly Christian most of the problems would disappear, man still rejects Christianity.

Such creatures deserve nothing but punishment and hell.

Such is man's condition as a result of his own fall into sin.

But it is just at this point that the marvellous message of the gospel comes in.

The whole message of the gospel is introduced by this word 'grace.'

Grace means that in spite of everything I have been saying about man, God still looks upon him with favour.

You will not understand the meaning of this word 'grace' unless you accept fully what I have been saying about man in sin.

It is failure to do the latter that explains why the modern conception of grace is so superficial and inadequate.

It is because man has an inadequate conception of sin that he has an inadequate conception of the grace of God.

If you want to measure grace you must measure the depths of sin.

Grace is that which tells man that in spite of all that is so true of him God looks upon him with favour.

It is utterly unmerited, it is entirely undeserved; but this is the message of 'Grace be unto you.'

It is an unmerited and undeserved action by God, a condescending love.

When man in sin deserved nothing but to be blotted out of existence God looked on him in grace and mercy and dealt with him accordingly.

So this one word 'grace' at the beginning of the Epistle introduces the entire gospel.

This is the great theme of the Scripture in all its parts.

For instance Paul write in Romans 5, 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

He says that we were not only sinners but enemies; not only had we fallen from God and disobeyed Him, and found ourselves in this wretchedness, but beyond that there is this enmity, this hatred, this antagonism in the spirit.

The gospel asserts that, in spite of our enmity towards God, He has given His Son for us and our salvation.

What He has done is to make peace.

In the second chapter of this Epistle we read that He has reconciled us unto Himself and has brought us into a state of union with Himself.

His looking upon us in grace has resulted in peace, and it is a perfect peace.

God's grace in action undoes completely everything we have described as resulting from sin.

First and foremost it gives a man peace with God: 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God' (Romans 5:1).

We have been reconciled to God; the enmity between us and God has gone because of what God has done in His grace.

But the result of grace is not only peace with God, it gives a man peace within.

It enables a man for the first time in his life to answer an accusing conscience; it enables a man for the first time in his life to have rest in mind and heart.

For the first time a man is able truly to live with himself, and to know that all is well.

The conflict has ended in this fundamental sense, and he understands for the first time the cause of all his troubles.

He sees a way of overcoming all his difficulties, and glimpses the final victory that is awaiting him in Christ.

That, in turn, leads him to a state of peace with other people.

We shall deal with this in detail later, but here it is in a nutshell at the very beginning.

The moment a man becomes a Christian nothing remains the same, and nobody else remains the same to him. The person he formerly hated he now sees as a victim of sin and of Satan, and he begins to feel sorry for him.

Knowing the grace of God, and experiencing this new peace which has been given to him, his former enemy has become someone for whom he prays. He begins to carry out his Lord's injunction to 'love your enemies, and pray for those who despitefully use you.'

The enmity is abolished by the new view. He now desires to be reconciled, and to be at peace.

But to this peace *with* God, peace within, and peace with others, the Scripture goes on to tell us that something further is added which is called 'the peace *of* God.'

This means that whatever may be happening round and about you, you have within you 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding' and it 'keeps your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4:7).

God has not only given you peace, He has provided for the preservation of peace.

You are garrisoned by a power and a Person which will keep you at peace.

Many things may happen to you, you will be the victim of temptation to sin and you may not know what to do, but this peace of God which passeth all understanding will garrison your hearts and minds.

Insert 'Peace Garrisoning the Heart and Mind' diagrams here.

Those are some of the elements in the peace to which the grace of God leads, but what I am anxious to emphasize above everything else is that all this comes to us as the result of the grace of God.

‘Grace be to you, and peace from God.’ We deserve nothing, we do not even desire it, we cannot achieve it; but God gives it.

It is all by grace, it is entirely a free gift of God.

But we must ask a second question: How does all this happen to us? on what basis can all this happen to us?

The answer is given immediately in the two words ‘our Father.’

‘Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father.’

Grace at once changes our whole attitude towards God because it has changed our whole conception of God. To the Christian God is 'our Father.'

To the Christian God is not just some philosophical X in the distance, whom he talks and argues about cleverly in his philosophical books; God is not some great force, some mighty power away in some distant heaven; He is the Father, my Father, our Father.

The whole relationship between man and God has been entirely renewed and changed.

God is no longer some terrible far-distant law-giver waiting to punish us; He is still the law-giver, but He is also 'my Father.'

But we must be careful for there are pitfalls all around us.

In what sense is God my Father?

‘God’, says someone, ‘is the Father of all men.’

It is true that there is a sense in which God is the Father of all men.

Paul in preaching to the Athenians says God is our Father in this sense, that we are all ‘his offspring’ (Acts 17:28).

That refers to God in His relationship to us as Creator.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews writes similarly when he describes God as ‘the Father of spirits’ (Hebrews 12:9).

God is the Father of all spirits as He is their Maker and Creator, and in that sense He is the progenitor of the spirits of all men.

But when the Apostle says ‘our Father’ here, he is not speaking in that sense. God is not Father in the general sense only, but ‘our Father.’

Every man, having sinned, has fallen from that initial relationship, and therefore our Lord was able to say to certain Jews, 'Ye are of your father the devil' (John 8:44).

Clearly, they were not the children of God.

So the Apostle, here, is not simply describing God in general terms of Fatherhood, in terms of creation.

There is a new element and that is introduced in the next word, 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.' This is the differentia of Christianity, this is the element that changes everything.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lest there be any uncertainty or confusion let us note what Paul says in this very salutation:

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

The grace and peace come equally from the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father.

This is vital doctrine.

There is no such thing as Christianity apart from the Lord Jesus Christ; there is no blessing from God to man in a Christian sense except in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Anything which claims to be Christianity without having Christ at the beginning and the centre and the end is a denial of Christianity, call it what you will.

There is no Christianity apart from Him; He is everything.

Who is this Person whom the Apostle links with God the Father?

Look at the terms employed.

He is the Lord, that is to say, Jehovah. The word here translated by 'Lord' was the word used by the Jews in the old dispensation for 'God.'

It was the greatest name of all, the Name that was so sacred that they did not even dare to use it.

'Jehovah' is the Name of God, the Covenant God.

The Name Jehovah is used of God the Father; and it is also the Christian's claim for Jesus Christ.

He is the One who is described in the Gospels as Jesus of Nazareth, but Paul does not hesitate to say that He is God. He puts Him by the side of God, He is co-equal with God, He is co-eternal.

He can be put there without any irreverence, He can be put there without blasphemy.

He can be put there by the side of our true and living God, the Father.

He is the Eternal Son of God, one with God from eternity.

But He is also Jesus.

That means that He is also truly a man. A babe was born in Bethlehem and the Name given to Him was 'Jesus.'

He was later a boy in the temple—Jesus of Nazareth.

He was a carpenter, the Son of Joseph and Mary, and we read of His brothers. He is the Man who started preaching at the age of thirty, Jesus, the miracle-worker.

But in the next verse we are told still more about Him, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

He is the Lord, He is Jehovah, He is God, but God is also His God, and God is His Father. This is a great mystery.

He Himself said just before the end of His earthly life, ‘I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God’ (John 20:17).

He had already said, ‘The Father is greater than I’; yet He Himself is the Lord Jehovah.

He is also ‘the firstborn among many brethren.’

He is Jehovah, but He is also Jesus—the God-man.

The amazing doctrine of the Incarnation is here in the second verse. Christ is the second Person in the blessed Holy Trinity who has come down in condescending love to reconcile us to God.

He is the Lord Jehovah become 'Jesus', taking upon Himself our nature, taking upon Himself our problems, and even our frailties, and eventually our sins.

He went to the darkest depths, even to the extent of feeling deserted by God while He bore our punishment.

That is 'grace', the condescending love of God.

'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.'

The next word is 'Christ'—the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the Saviour, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the One who is sent to redeem mankind.

He has come down from the glory into this world, but He went even lower than that.

He was not ashamed to put on ‘the likeness of sinful flesh.’

He bore our punishment on the Cross, His blood was shed for us, and we are reconciled to God and have ‘peace with God.’

But, yet more wonderful, having taken our nature upon Himself He then gives us His nature.

For Christ does not merely give us forgiveness, He gives us a new birth, and we become ‘children of God.’

‘The Son of God became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the sons of God’, as John Calvin once said.

It means that not only have we this peace with God and with others, but we enjoy the favour of God, because we are the children of God in Christ.

God who is His God and His Father has become our God and our Father.

So the Apostle could say, including us, who are Christians, with himself, ‘Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.’ The highest honour of all, the greatest gift of God’s grace to us is that we become ‘children of God’ and that as such we shall spend our eternity in the presence of our Father.

‘Grace’, all undeserved, leads to peace, sonship, and ultimately to eternal glory.¹

¹ @book{Llo-2503,
author = {Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn},
title = {God's Ultimate Purpose: an Exposition of Ephesians 1},
publisher = {Banner of Truth Trust},
address = {Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA},
year = {1978},
pages = {35–45},
}

GRACE – L.S. CHAFER

Grace—a much misunderstood feature of God’s ways with lost men—is itself a revelation and all human hearts not having this truth of Scripture revealed will be unable to comprehend it or to adjust themselves to its provisions.

Grace is not mercy or love. In Ephesians 2:4–5 these three doctrinal words appear severally and in their individual, specific manner: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).” Speaking first of mercy, it is defined as that compassion in God which moved Him to provide a Savior for the lost.

If He had been able to save even one soul on the basis of His sovereign mercy alone, He could have saved every person on that basis and the death of Christ would have been rendered unnecessary.

As for divine love, it is an emotion of infinite character, the motivating purpose back of all that God does in saving a soul.

But since God is holy and righteous too and the sinner's sins are an offense to Him, He might perfectly desire to save a soul and still be utterly helpless to do so in the light of the claims which divine righteousness make against the sinner. Not until those claims are met can God's infinite love realize its desire.

Therefore, to come now to the third definition, grace is what God may be free to do and indeed what He does accordingly for the lost after Christ has died on behalf of them.

“By grace are ye saved” (Eph. 2:8). When thus released from His holy demands against the sinner by the sacrificial death of Christ, and that sacrifice is accepted intelligently, the love of God will never be satisfied until He has done all He can do for such a one.

The greatest thing God can do, reverently speaking, is to make someone like His Son.

Such, then, will be the destiny of everyone who believes (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

Since grace only represents what God can and will do for those who trust the Savior, it must needs function apart from all human works or cooperation. It calls for no more than confidence in the only One who can save.

The Scriptures assign to the operating of grace the only salvation now offered to sinful men.

God's grace also provides security for the saved one.

This is done by continuing the grace work of God with the individual in spite of his imperfections.

Grace also undertakes to direct the saved one in the new manner of his daily life after he has been saved.

A new motive for this is set up by the fact that the one saved was perfected forever in the sight of God as being in Christ, therefore partaking of His merit and standing forever.

Nothing of merit need be added to that which is perfected forever (cf. John 1:16; Rom. 5:1; 8:1; Heb. 10:14).

Hence the obligation to gain merit is removed completely, and the whole law system with its merit ceases to be applicable to the saved one under grace.

He is no longer under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14).

The new problem becomes that of how a perfected person should walk in this world.

Grace teaches the saved one concerning his holy walk in daily life.

The standard is as high as heaven itself. God requires, and with reason, that the saved one, by reason of being a citizen of heaven, should live according to the standards of heaven (cf. John 13:34; Eph. 4:1, 30; 1 Thess. 5:19).²

² @book{Chafe-878,
author = {Chafe, Lewis Sperry},
title = {Systematic theology},
publisher = {Kregel Publications},
address = {Grand Rapids, MI},
year = {1993},
pages = {178–179},
volume = {7},
}

THE RICHES OF DIVINE GRACE (CHAFFER)

THIS ASPECT of the saving work of the triune God, though restricted to those transformations which are divinely wrought for the individual at the moment he believes, is not only supremely important since it defines the character of salvation, but is almost limitless in extent.

The restrictions imposed demand that a clear distinction be made between that which has been divinely undertaken by way of preparation for the salvation of a soul, and the salvation itself.

Included in the sphere of preparation are such achievements as the finished work of Christ, the enlightening work of the Spirit, and all other influences which provide the righteous ground upon which a lost soul may be saved.

It is no small undertaking so to deal with the sin question that there is infinite freedom accorded God in saving the lost; nor is it a small endeavor so to move the Satan-blinded individual that he will act by his own choice in the receiving of Christ as his Savior.

These two problems, it will be remembered from previous statements, form the total of that which hinders the salvation of fallen men.

To satisfy the divine demands, a perfect redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation are required, while the problem on the human side is that of man's free, moral agency and the need of such influences as shall insure the right choice of the human will.

A clear distinction is also required between the divine work in the immediate salvation of the soul and those responsibilities and activities which belong to the Christian life and service. Many new realities are created by regeneration and all aspects of human experience are affected by the mighty transformation which salvation secures.

With respect to the distinction between salvation itself and the life responsibilities which follow, Arminianism has again wrought confusion by its misunderstandings, assuming, as that system does, that the immediate salvation—whatever it is conceived to be—is probationary and therefore made to depend, with reference to its permanence, upon holy living and faithfulness.

None would deny that a holy life becomes the Christian in view of the fact that he is a child of God and also of the truth that he is a member of Christ's Body; but to make sonship, which by its nature is and is a position before God which rests wholly on the merit of Christ, to be conditioned by and dependent upon human worthiness is to contradict the whole order of divine grace and to make impotent man to be, in the end, his own savior.

The significant phrase, the "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9), may be interpreted as referring to those mighty positions and possessions which are wrought instantaneously and simultaneously by God at the instant an individual exercises saving faith in Christ.

When recorded in detail—as they will yet be—it will be seen that there are at least thirty-three of these stupendous, supernatural divine undertakings and that the sum total of these achievements is the measure of the difference between one who is saved and one who is lost. The essential and all-determining fact that these divine accomplishments are wrought instantaneously and simultaneously and are never a progressive order or sequence, establishes the truth that all human beings may be, at a given time, classified as either perfectly lost—God having wrought none of these features of salvation for them—or perfectly saved—God having wrought completely and finally all that enters into the immediate salvation of a soul.

There are no intermediate estates.

Of no human being could it be said that he is partly saved and partly lost.

In conformity with the New Testament, it must be maintained that all cultured, refined, educated, moral, and religious people—regardless of outward professions—who have not been saved by a personal faith in Christ are lost, and as perfectly lost as they would be had they none of these characteristics which, in their place, are of great value.

It may be a problem whether an individual has entered into saving grace through Christ—and here there is need of a clear apprehension of the Biblical evidence of so great a change (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 5:13)—but there could be no problem involved with respect to the essential truth that, until perfectly saved by the infinite work of God, the soul is perfectly lost.

Similarly, the messages to be preached to these two classes—those perfectly lost and those perfectly saved—are, of necessity, different in every particular.

It is to be doubted whether any text of Scripture will be found to be applicable to both classes alike.

To the unsaved, God makes no appeal with regard to their manner of life; no improvement or reformation is required of them.

Society and civil governments may press their claims upon unregenerate people as also upon regenerate people to the end that prescribed ideals may be realized, but this fact—in so far as it obtains—must not be confused with the uncompromised attitude of God in His relation to these classes.

He requires of the unsaved that they hear and heed the gospel only.

Over against this, every divine injunction concerning a God-honoring faithfulness is addressed to the Christian and from the moment he is saved.

There are no elementary, curtailed, or diminished requirements which are tempered to those who are beginners in the great responsibility of Christian living.

The Scriptures recognize “babes in Christ,” but they are not such because of immaturity; they are babes because of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1–2), and that form of carnality may be exhibited by those who have been Christians for fifty years.

Next to the delinquency of misstating the gospel with its immeasurable penalty (Gal. 1:8–9), is the so prevalent practice on the part of preachers of presenting Christian-life truth to the unsaved without warning them that such truth is not addressed to them.

By this performance, every suggestion which might arise in the mind of the unsaved that a vital difference might exist between themselves and Christians is obliterated, and the unsaved are encouraged to believe that a Christian is one who merely acts in a certain way and such actions are all that God requires of any person.

No matter how unimportant it may seem to the preacher, he cannot afford ever to address Christians about their specific duties and not remind the unsaved, if such be present, that the word being spoken can have no application to them.

Such faithful discrimination will have the effect, at least, of creating a consciousness in the minds of unregenerate people that they are lost.

The thirty-three divine undertakings in the salvation of a soul, which are here designated as *the riches of grace*, represent all that God can do to satisfy His own infinite love for the sinner.

If at first consideration this statement seems to be extreme, it, in due time, will be demonstrated to be true.

As asserted of an earlier point in this treatment of Soteriology, the primary motive which actuates God in the salvation of the lost is the satisfying of His own love.

To the end that infinite love may be gratified, He accomplishes infinite transformations.

Compared to this, the thought that men are rescued from their plight, though an achievement which transcends all human understanding and naturally appeals to the mind of man, is secondary to the extent that man is secondary to God.

The truth that the salvation of men affords an opportunity for God to gratify His infinite love for His creatures, is a theme which is too often neglected.

It will always be remembered that because of His divine character of holiness, God can do nothing for sinners until satisfaction for their sin has been secured—this is accomplished in the finished work of Christ—and that because of God’s recognition of the free, moral agency of man, God can do nothing apart from man’s own elective choice of Christ as Savior—even though that choice is engendered in the heart of man by the enlightenment of the Spirit.

But when these fundamental conditions are met, every barrier is removed and infinite love instantly responds by lavishing on the man who exercises saving faith the whole measure of divine benefit, even the riches of grace in Christ Jesus.

This, it will be seen, is no less than the greatest thing that Almighty God can do.

One consideration alone will serve to demonstrate this truth, namely, that the saved one is destined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Infinity can conceive of nothing beyond that exalted reality, nor can omnipotence accomplish more.

To be conformed to the image of Christ, to have been purified to infinite perfection by the blood of cleansing, to have received the gift of eternal life, to be clothed upon with the righteousness of God, and to have been constituted a citizen of heaven disposes practically of all that enters into the estate of fallen humanity.

This great transformation is well described by the words: “the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12); yet, of all these marvels, none could be greater than that of being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

Another revelation, which as perfectly demonstrates the truth that salvation in its immediate aspect is the supreme divine achievement, is recorded in Ephesians 2:7.

In preparation for this declaration, the Apostle has mentioned one out of all the believer's possessions, namely, the gift of eternal life—announced by the words, “hath quickened us together with Christ”—and from all the believer's positions, one, namely, “in Christ Jesus,” and these two represent the great reality of eternal salvation.

The answer to the question of why God should undertake the measureless benefit for which these representative possessions and positions stand, is that by so great salvation God may manifest the attribute of grace, which could be manifested in no other way.

Ephesians 2:7 declares: “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

There was that in God which no created being had ever seen.

They had seen His glory, His majesty, His wisdom, and His power; but no angel or man had ever seen His grace.

Other attributes might be subject to a variety of demonstrations; but the manifestation of grace is restricted to what God may do for those among men who, in spite of the fact that they deserve His judgments, are objects of His grace.

As every other attribute or capacity of God must have its perfect exercise and exhibition—even for His own satisfaction — in like manner His grace must have its infinitely perfect revealing within the restricted undertaking by which He saves the lost.

To say that a sinner is saved by grace is to declare that, on the ground of a Substitute's death and in response to faith in that Savior, God has wrought a work so perfect in its entirety and so free from the cooperation of other beings that it is a complete all-satisfying-to-God demonstration of His grace.

A statement of this kind may be made as easily as words may form a sentence; but who on earth or in heaven is able to comprehend the infinity of such a salvation?

This demonstration, it should be added, will, by the very nature of the case, have its outshining in the life of each individual thus saved.

It may be assumed that, had but one of all the human family been selected for the supreme honor of exhibiting eternally before all created beings the infinity of sovereign grace, the salvation of that one would be no different than the salvation of any one of the unnumbered throng from every kindred, tribe, and people who are saved by grace.

Too often it is assumed that divine grace in salvation is a willingness on the part of God to complete in each person's life what, perchance, may be lacking when the individual's own merit has been duly valued, the thought being that, as some, because of human virtue and faithfulness in character, are possessed of more worthiness than others, less grace would be required for those of supposed merit than would be required for those of little or no merit.

The truth, already treated at length in Volume II, is that all men are now divinely reckoned and declared to be “under sin”—a state in which no merit of man is accepted by God—to the end that a standardized grace, wholly complete in itself, may be bestowed upon all alike.

Were men permitted to contribute the smallest fraction toward their salvation, it would cease to be a grace manifestation and become an imperfect display of one of God’s most glorious attributes.

No thoughtful person will conclude that a fallen being could, under any circumstances or to any degree, cause a divine attribute to become an experienced reality.

Man may become the recipient of grace, but he cannot contribute to it in the sense that he enables it to become what it is.

No more conclusive setting forth of this sublime truth will be found than that recorded in Romans 4:16, “Therefore it is of faith [nothing on man’s part], that it might be by grace [everything on God’s part]; to the end the promise might be sure to all the [Abrahamic] seed” (that which is of the flesh, Israel, and that which is of the Spirit, the elect from among the Gentiles).

On what other basis than faith on man’s part and grace on God’s part could any divine promise or purpose be *sure*?

In concluding these introductory words, it may be restated that saving grace is that which God accomplishes on the ground of Christ's death —accomplished and provided as a divine responsibility—and in response to the individual's faith in Christ—a human responsibility.³

³ @book{Chafe-3042,
author = {Chafe, Lewis Sperry},
title = {Systematic theology},
publisher = {Kregel Publications},
address = {Grand Rapids, MI},
year = {1993},
pages = {225–230},
volume = {3},

A PRAYER FOR GOD'S PEACE

Peace is commonly defined as the sense of calm, tranquility, quietness, bliss, contentment, and well-being that we feel when everything is going the way we'd like it to go.

That definition, however, is incomplete because that feeling can also be produced by a pill—or by alcohol, biofeedback, a nap, a generous inheritance, or even deliberate deception.

The reassurance of a friend or someone you love whispering sweet nothings into your ear can also produce that kind of peace.

That's not the kind of peace Paul had in mind.

Godly peace has nothing to do with human beings or human circumstances. In fact, it cannot be produced on a

human level at all.

Any peace that can be is very fragile.

It can be destroyed instantly by failure, doubt, fear, difficulty, guilt, shame, distress, regret, sorrow, the anxiety of making a wrong choice, the anticipation of being mistreated or victimized by someone, the uncertainty of the future, and any challenge to our position or possessions.

And we experience these things daily.

The peace that God gives is not subject to the vicissitudes of life.

It is a spiritual peace; it is an attitude of heart and mind when we believe and thus know deep down that all is well between ourselves and God.

Along with it is the assurance that He is lovingly in control of everything.

We as Christians should know for sure that our sins are forgiven, that God is concerned with our well-being, and that heaven is our destiny.

God's peace is our possession and privilege by divine right.

Let's first consider its origin.

It Is Divine

This peace is defined for us in several ways in 2 Thessalonians 3:16. To begin with, it is divine: "May the Lord of peace *Himself*...grant you peace" (emphasis added).

The Lord of peace is the One who gives it.

The pronoun *Himself* is emphatic in the Greek text and underscores God's personal involvement.

Christian peace, the peace unique to Christians, comes personally from Him.

It is the very essence of His nature.

To put it simply, peace is an attribute of God.

If I asked you to list the attributes of God, these are the ones that would probably come most readily to mind: His love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, wisdom, truth, omnipotence, immutability, and immortality.

But do you ever think of God as being characterized by peace?

In fact, He *is* peace.

Whatever it is that He gives us He has and He is.

There is no lack of perfect peace in His being.

God is never stressed.

He is never anxious.

He never worries.

He never doubts. He never fears.

God is never at cross purposes with Himself.

He never has problems making up His mind.

God lives in perfect calm and contentment.

Why?

Because He's in charge of everything and can operate everything perfectly according to His own will.

Since He is omniscient, He is never surprised.

There are no threats to His omnipotence.

There is no possible sin that can stain His holiness.

Even His wrath is clear, controlled, and confident.

There is no regret in His mind for He has never done, said, or thought anything that He would change in any way. (I discuss this aspect of God's character more thoroughly in my book *God: Coming Face to Face with His Majesty* [Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1993].)

God enjoys perfect harmony within Himself.

Our Bibles call Him “the Lord of peace,” but in the Greek text a definite article appears before the word translated “peace,” meaning He literally is “the Lord of *the peace*.”

This is real peace—the divine kind—not the kind the world has.

Paul's prayer is that we might experience that kind of peace. Its source is God and God alone.

It Is a Gift

Not only is this peace divine in origin, but it is also a gift.

When Paul prayed, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace,” the word translated “grant” is the verb meaning “to give.”

It speaks of a gift. God’s peace is a sovereign, gracious gift bestowed on those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to Psalm 85:8, a verse you may have never noticed before, the psalmist stated, “I will hear what God the Lord will say; for He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones.”

God grants peace to those who belong to Him.

Jesus said, “My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be

fearful” (John 14:27).

There’s no greater gift for the anxious than God’s peace.

Some, however, will seek relief for their anxieties through a false peace.

God is generous to whom He grants His peace, but there is a limit.

Isaiah wrote, “ ‘Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will heal him.’

But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud.

‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’ ” (Isa. 57:19–21).

He will grant peace to those who come to Him from near and far—those who grew up hearing much about Him and those who heard little to nothing—but those who don’t come to Him, the wicked, enjoy no real peace.

Thomas Watson explains further:

Peace flows from sanctification, but they being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace....They may have a truce, but no peace.

God may forebear the wicked a while, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but though there be a truce, yet there is no peace.

The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not.

They may be fearless and stupid; but there is a great difference between a stupefied conscience, and a pacified conscience....This is the devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries, Peace, peace, when men are on the precipice of hell.

The seeming peace a sinner has, is not from the knowledge of his happiness,

but the ignorance of his danger (A Body of Divinity [Carlisle, Pa.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986 reprint], p. 262).

The peace of the wicked is born of delusion.

True peace is the child of saving grace. In a prayer similar to the one that closes 2 Thessalonians, Paul said, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. 15:13).

Peace is a gift to those who believe.

It Is Always Available

God’s peace is the gift that keeps on giving.

A less commercial way to express that truth is how Paul said it: “May the Lord of peace...continually grant you peace” (2 Thes. 3:16).

By adding “continually,” Paul was emphasizing that it is constantly available.

The implication is, however, that it can be interrupted.

It isn't God who interrupts our spiritual peace, but us.

We can suspend the flow of peace in our lives by succumbing to our flesh, which is still part of this world.

Unless we “walk by the Spirit,” our means of controlling the flesh (Gal. 5:16), we are open season to all kinds of anxieties: the dread of the unknown, the fear of disease and death—and we all can list a string of others.

How does this unfortunate process begin?

When we stop focusing on our permanent condition in Christ who will certainly bring us into His glory.

And when we start basing our happiness on the fleeting things of the world.

Those things by definition will change. Thus, if we get upset when they do, we will spend our lives in distress.

People who can ride through the toughest issues of life and remain calm are not indifferent; they're just trusting God.

What if our ride is a little bumpy?

What if we're feeling troubled, anxious, and fearful?

How can we restore the peace?

How can it remain uninterrupted?

The psalmist said to himself, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. 42:11).

He reminded himself that God was there to help him.

We can trust Him because He is trustworthy.

He genuinely cares for us.

Long ago, God made it perfectly clear to Israel that peace comes from obeying His Word (Lev. 26:1–6).

The same truth applies today.

Peace is restored through obedience. The first step is to turn from sin. Sometimes the sin is the doubt, fear, and anxiety itself, but also it can be an underlying sin that has produced those feelings.

Probe your heart and isolate the cause of its unrest.

[CONFESS] the sin that has been revealed to you and obey God by applying the opposite virtue.

In the case of anxiety, that means having faith in God to help you manage life's details.

Something else that will restore your peace is to accept whatever stresses or challenges God has seen fit to bring into your life. In the Book of Job we read:

Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.... In famine He will redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword. You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, neither will you be afraid of violence when it comes. You will laugh at violence and famine, neither will you be afraid of wild beasts. For you will be in league with the stones of the field;

and the beasts of the field will be at peace with you. And you will know that your tent is secure, for you will visit your abode and fear no loss (5:17–18, 20–24).

If you understand that God is using all the difficulties you face to perfect you, you'll be at peace.

It is not all for nothing. You may not always know why you're going through this or that, but be encouraged that there is a good reason.

Turning to the New Testament, Paul said if you want peace, do good (Rom. 2:10).

All who do good will enjoy peace.

To be more specific, “The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable....And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:17–18).

Living according to the Word—according to heavenly wisdom, to God’s revealed standard of righteousness—brings peace.

If you’ve lost God’s peace in your life, you can find it again.

Retrace your steps by trusting God in everything, [CONFESSING YOUR] sin and walking in obedience, enduring His refining work in your life, doing what is good, and living by the Word of God in a righteous way.

As Paul said, God’s peace is continually available to you.

Avail yourself of it.

It Is Not Subject to Circumstances

A final characteristic of God's peace is that it is not subject to circumstances.

Paul's prayer was that we might continually enjoy it "in every circumstance" (2 Thes. 3:16).

This peace is not subject to anything that happens in the worldly realm.

It is not built on any human relationship.

It is not built on any human circumstance.

Rather, it is built on an unchanging divine relationship, and a divine plan and promise from an unfailing God who will secure you in Himself, and who will do everything for your good.

This peace is unbreakable, unassailable, transcendent.

As we noted earlier, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you.

Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27).

He was saying, “There’s nothing to fear or be anxious about because I’m giving you a transcendent peace that—unlike the world’s peace—is unassailable by any human circumstance.”

We demonstrate that Jesus keeps His promises when, in the midst of worldly upheavals that would normally tear us up and trouble our lives, we remain calm.

Exhortations

(Php. chap. 4:8, 9.)

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.”

THESE verses conclude the instructions of the apostle; all that follows being in the nature of a postscript—and, while of deep practical value, not directly addressed to saints as homiletical teaching.

Having throughout the epistle put Christ before his readers in so many different aspects, the apostle now sums all up in this brief exhortation to think on things holy, thus recognizing the Old Testament principle, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Many have missed the very point, however, which it seems clear he is pressing, by taking all these things in an abstract way. It will be found exceedingly difficult to think on things true, honest, just, pure, and lovely, if there be not some definite, concrete example before the mind.

Mere occupation with beautiful sentiments and poetic ideals is not, I take it, what he would here inculcate.

But all are found fully exemplified in our Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Man here on earth; and, in measure, these qualities are reproduced by the Holy Spirit in all who have been made partakers of the divine nature.