

Ephesians 2013-011 and 012 “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.

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.¹

¹ @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.

Peace - Mechanics

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in יהוה always, again I say, rejoice!

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Master is near.

⁶ Do not worry at all, but in every *matter*, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to Elohim.

⁷ And the peace of Elohim, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds through Messiah יהושע .

⁸ For the rest, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is righteous, whatever is clean, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any uprightness and if there is any praise—think on these.

⁹ And what you have learned and received and heard and saw in me, practise these, and the Elohim of peace shall be with you.²

² @book{Institute-249,
author = {Institute for Scripture Research},
title = {The Scriptures},
publisher = {Institute for Scripture Research (Pty) Ltd},
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year = {2000},
pages = {1140–1141},
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