

GRACE AND PEACE (EPHESIANS 1-4)

[Ephesians 1:1-2 (Greeting)]

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ **by the will of God, to the saints** [the same is with us, we are called by the will of God through Christ for the building of His eternal kingdom; we all do our part (4:16) who are in Ephesus, and **faithful in Christ Jesus: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

[While God's grace has already been given to us, leading us to believe on Christ Jesus and then receiving Him, and that we have the peace of God in holding on to the promises that we have in Christ, we also want God's grace and peace as we agonizomai (strive, struggle, fight, labor fervently) to stay on the right path, as to go through that narrow gate, as Jesus warned us, "**Because narrow is the gate and difficult [root: thlibo] is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**" (Matthew 7:14) And as we experience the thlipsis (tribulation), the pressure or pressing in upon us at times to where it seems to be there is no room for escape, we need the grace and peace of God, no matter what. One of Jesus' Beatitudes, in His "Sermon on the Mount", He said, "**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**" The Greek for blessed is "makarios" (mah-kah-ree-os) which means blessed, happy, or fortunate.¹ Yet in context it really means supreme favor, from God, that is, the grace of God, is to the peacemakers. So Paul is speaking of God's favor and peace to the Ephesians (and to us, for "such a time as then, and now this", so then we can ask ourselves, how then will we respond to His grace and peace? We pass it along, as Paul did, as we continue to share and show the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus! The love of God in Christ is intrinsically, internally connected, to the peace of God through Christ. As God is love (**1 John 4:8**), and Christ Jesus is our Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6**). As we know, the fruit of the Spirit, to those who have believed on Christ and received Him is, "love, joy, peace, patience/longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control [engkrateia, temperance]." (**Galatians 5:22-23**)]

[Ephesians 1:3-14 (Redemption in Christ)]

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and without blame before Him in love**, [only possible in Christ, keeping our Great Shepherd before us, clinging to Him, staying on that narrow path with Jesus] having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3107.htm>

us in all wisdom and prudence [phroneo, understanding (understanding God's will) and having the right mindset (having our mind set on God and His will) WWJD] having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together **in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of **His will**, that we who first trusted in Christ **should be to the praise of His glory**. [Am I living to the praise of His glory right now?] In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, **to the praise of His glory**.

[Ephesians 1:15-23 (Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom)]

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your **love for all the saints**, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the **knowledge of Him**, the eyes of your **understanding** being enlightened; that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of **His inheritance in the saints**, and what is the exceeding greatness of His **power toward us** who believe, according to the working of His **mighty power** which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills **all in all**.

[Ephesians 2:1-10 (By Grace Through Faith)]

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience**, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

[Ephesians 2:11-13 (Brought Near by His Blood)]

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near **by the blood of Christ**.

[Ephesians 2:14-18 (Christ Our Peace)]

For **He Himself is our peace** [God is Love, God is Peace], who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace [the Jews and the Gentiles], and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached **peace to you** who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ["Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (**Hebrews 4:16**)]

[Ephesians 2:19-22 (Christ Our Cornerstone)]

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses], having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [based on Jesus' Great Commission, (**Matthew 28:18-20**)] Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. [As the Apostle Peter said, "you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (**1 Peter 2:5**)]

[Ephesians 3:1-7 (The Mystery Revealed)]

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me **for you**, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

[Ephesians 3:8-21 (Purpose of the Mystery)]

To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery [in Christ], which from the beginning of the ages has been

hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose **which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord**, in whom we have **boldness** and access with **confidence** through faith in Him. [bold but humble, confident not arrogant-see fruit of the Spirit] Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you [and to us], according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with might through His Spirit** in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being **rooted and grounded in love** [without love = nothing (1 Cor. 13)], may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height – **to know the love of Christ** which passes knowledge; that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, **to Him be glory** in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

[Ephesians 4:1-6 (Walk in Unity)]

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, **beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called**, with all lowliness [humility] and **gentleness**, with **longsuffering**, bearing with one another in **love**, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

[Paul's other beseeching was to the church in Rome, saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice [remember Peter saying to offer, "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? We are following Christ's example] holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2) The revealing of that mystery is that Jesus is now the Mediator between God and man in the New Covenant of His blood that was shed for the remission of our sins) **Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:15**. We were bought at a great price, the blood and punishment and death on a cross by Christ Jesus, taking our sins upon Himself. The Apostle Paul tells us then, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. **Flee** sexual immorality [AGONIZOMAI!]. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins

against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore **glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**" (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)]

[Ephesians 4:7-16 (Spiritual Gifts) (See also 1 Corinthians 12)]

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. [not speaking of variances of grace regarding the overcoming of sin] Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

[Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."]

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;** that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in **LOVE**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share**, causes growth of the body for the **edifying of itself in LOVE.**

[Ephesians 4:17-24 (The New Man)]

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in **true righteousness and holiness.** [1 Cor. 1:30]

Tying that into His peace, we are told, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

(Hebrews 12:14)

[Ephesians 4:25-32 (Do Not Grieve the Spirit)]

Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

[As the Apostle Paul said to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " (**Acts 20:32**) While those words of Jesus are not found in the gospels, Jesus is recorded as saying, in His "Sermon on the Mount", "**Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.**" (**Luke 6:37-38**) "**Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.**" (**Matthew 5:7**)]

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification [oikodome, building up], **that it may impart grace to the hearers.** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And **be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

[As the Apostle Paul said for each of us to be doing his/her own part, as God is building His eternal kingdom according to His will and pleasure and glory. Jesus did His part, now we are following His example, in Him, to do our part, not to BE SAVED but because we ARE SAVED, we are His! One last thing, we are not being called to just "finish the race" but to win the race (**1 Corinthians 9:24**), as we are in Christ Jesus we will win that race, we have the victory together in Christ Jesus! May we all be abundantly blessed with the grace and peace of God, that it will build us all up into the unity of the faith in Christ Jesus, wholeheartedly loving God and others.]