

# Grace and Peace

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Preacher: Jason Webb

[ 0 : 00 ] If the Lord Jesus were physically present and to come here tonight in person, what do you think he would say? What do you think he would say to you?

You aren't trying hard enough. What is wrong with you? What is it going to take for you to get this? So disappointed in you.

Things like that. Words like that. What would he say if he were here? It's a very pertinent question because he is here. He is here.

I think the answer would be and is far, far different from all of that. What do we hear? What do we read again and again and again in the New Testament?

And Jesus loved letters to his church? They're words that you might read over without even thinking about.

[ 1 : 09 ] But every jot and tittle, every word is for our good. What do we read again and again and again is grace and peace.

Grace and peace. Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. After they had forsaken him. They had left him. They had really messed up.

And he said, peace be with you. And a week later, Thomas is there this time. And Jesus came and he stood among them. Peace be with you.

Are those just words that a standard greeting that doesn't mean anything? I don't think so. He wanted them. He prayed.

He wished that they would experience peace. The apostles were Jesus' ambassadors, his spokesmen. They spoke in his name, in his place, with his authority.

[ 2 : 08 ] And what you see again and again is these two things. Paul says in almost all of his letters, Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

To Timothy. Timothy wasn't a church. He was an individual, a pastor, with his own struggles, with his own temptations, with his own problems. And Paul writes to him, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peter was writing to all of the elect scattered throughout the nations, throughout the country, throughout the world. Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Peter wants them to experience something in abundance. John, to a lady and her family and her children, I think, in 2 John.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ. Jude, to his readers, mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

[ 3 : 19 ] In abundance. That is what God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ extends and hands to his people this evening.

Grace and peace to you. That's what this meal symbolizes. That we have fellowship. That we're sitting down as a family.

And we're blessed and we're welcomed into this fellowship. Romans 5.1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through whom we have gained access by faith. Into this grace in which we now stand. What do we experience because of the cross?

What comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ? Peace. And we stand in grace. If you could imagine standing under a waterfall.

[ 4 : 24 ] And it's a waterfall you cannot leave. And this waterfall is the waterfall of grace. Of God's good will. Of his love for us.

That's the place where we stand. And so tonight, Father and Son say to us, you are still under grace. You are still under my grace.

And so we need to hear it again. And we need to feel it again. And we need to believe it again. We're just saying, all your love accepting. That's talking about, yes, he loves us. But do I believe it? Do I accept it? Do I bring it in? Do I own it for myself? Well, God says grace and peace to you. Now our hearts are slow to believe. Are slow, slow, so slow to believe. Our doubting hearts. Our worn hearts. Our tired hearts. Maybe are beaten down with the circumstances of life. [ 5 : 25 ] We can wonder, again, can this be true? Is this really his standing invitation? His open heart to me? Is that his heart towards me?

Well, we need our doubts answered. We need our fears soothed. We don't need it just once or twice. We need that ongoing demonstration, Romans 5, 8, of God's love for us. We don't need to see it once. We need to see it again and accept it again. And so we do need our doubts and our fears answered. We need our hearts strengthened. And so tonight we just want to look at one of these passages and ask the question, who is telling us this? Who is saying grace and peace to you in abundance? Well, turn in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 1 and verse 3. Galatians 1 verse 3. The first thing you have to know about the Galatian church is that they were very close to losing the gospel altogether. [ 6 : 31 ] You get the sense that Paul is extremely agitated as he writes this book. Not in a sinful way, but in the way of a father or a mother who sees his children in trouble.

And he is agitated. He wants them safe and sound and they're wandering away. They're very close to losing the gospel altogether. He says, I'm surprised, I'm shocked that you're abandoning him who called you.

They're close, this close to abandoning God himself. What had happened, they had traded the pure faith that they had believed the gospel with.

Paul had come and he had preached Jesus Christ to them. He had so preached that he said, I have painted Christ before you as crucified.

So with the eyes of faith, they had seen it and they had believed and they had received salvation. But they had traded that pure, unadulterated, simple faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 38 ] He is my salvation. Him alone. They had traded it for works. And so Christ alone, they traded for Christ plus, becoming culturally a Jew, taking on the ceremonial law, taking on circumcision.

So it was, in a way, it was Christ plus Judaism. And it was having a massive, horrific impact upon their lives.

Already, he says, their joy dried up. They'd lost their joy. The joy that would before have torn out their own eyes and given them to Paul, now, it was dried up inside of them.

Already, they were starting to feel like slaves instead of sons. Again, I don't think this was in reality, but in their own minds, in their own perceptions of how they were relating to God, they felt more like a slave, despised, and just bossed around instead of a son.

Paul does talk about the spirit of slavery, and that's where they were. And so God was no longer a willing savior, but a reluctant taskmaster.

[ 8 : 58 ] And so what happened to them? What happened to them can happen to us. We can move away from Christ. That's why this book is in our Bibles.

Because we need, again, to come to Jesus Christ and to believe all over again. So, what can happen, or what happened to them can happen to us.

But I want you to notice that even in this, he doesn't skip grace and peace. Look at verses 3 through 5 there. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

And so we need our doubts soothed, answered. Our fears soothed. And so who is wishing us?

[ 10 : 06 ] Who is wishing us this evening grace and peace? Goodwill. Favor. The full enjoyment of salvation.

Who is saying, I want to do you good. I want to bless you. I want to see you sitting quietly under your own vine and fig tree, experiencing the smile of God.

I am out to do you good. Well, you see who this grace and peace is coming from. Verse 4. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 4. Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ, that is who this grace came from. How do we know that that could be his heart? I've sinned this week.

I've failed this week. I haven't been as strong. I haven't been as eager. I haven't been as zealous. How can I know that yet still this is his heart towards me?

[11:09] Because look at who is doing this. Who is offering us tonight his grace and peace. It's he who gave himself. He wasn't reluctant.

He wasn't reluctant. He was willing. He volunteered. He gave himself. He volunteered his life. He laid down his own life. Jesus said, no man takes my life from me. No man takes my life from me. So the whole world in arms combined could not take Jesus' life from him.

Remember, he was, he is the son of God. And even in those most dangerous moments when they're on the Mount of Olives and they're almost about ready to be arrested, Jesus says, do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels? At once. The father would send them to me. At once. No one, no man takes my life from me.

[12:20] So we're left with a question then. If what we are seeing on the cross is not people taking his life from him, then what is it?

It's Galatians 1.4 here of he gave himself for us. It must have been a voluntary sacrifice.

The only way Jesus would have died is if he wanted to die. And so he wrestled in the garden.

He wrestled in the garden. He was greatly troubled, it says. And that is no doubt true. The fear of death was upon him. The fear of the wrath that was about to come.

He was looking into the cup of the wrath of God that was for us. And he was about ready to drink it. And he was greatly troubled.

[13:23] But he mastered himself. He looked at the fear. He looked at the agony that was in front of him. And so he prayed.

There is a part of me that doesn't want to do this. This is frightening. This is painful. I'm not looking forward to it. And yet, Lord, help me to do your will.

The fact that he was so distressed in Gethsemane and prayed, Lord, not my will, but your will be done, is not proof of his reluctance. It is proof of his diamond-hard determination that I will go through with this.

He would do it. No matter the cost. No matter how much fear rose up in him. Was Jesus a reluctant Savior?

Not at all. He gave himself. He gave himself. He gave himself to the punishment of sin. He gave himself to all the affliction, the agony of body and mind and soul.

[14:29] Every part of him, not a single inch of his body or soul would be spared. These nightmarish depths of pain and of misery. And he's doing it to rescue us.

That is what we have to understand. He willingly, he knew what was in front of him. And he volunteered, I will do it. Although all parts of his humanity, no doubt, revolted against the idea.

But he did it most willingly. It says he gave himself for our sins to rescue us. To rescue us.

Well, now you start to see the urgency of which he is doing this. Why is he willingly putting himself out there like this?

Well, to rescue us. To rescue us, that implies that we're helpless. We're helpless. The situation is absolutely dire and desperate.

[15:33] It is now life or death for his people. If Rex Klotz's car broke down alongside the highway, Rex would not need rescued.

He might need some help. He might need some tools. But he's not going to be feeling helpless and desperate because he isn't helpless and desperate. He's fixed all sorts of cars and all sorts of situations with all sorts of problems.

He has more than enough to handle pretty much anything. He wouldn't need rescued alongside the road. I would need rescued. I opened the thing.

I have no idea what the problem is. That's what it means to be rescued. I can't do it. I can't do it. I have no good thing to give God.

I have no strength to change my life. I have no power to make things right. I am the debtor. Whether it's \$50,000 or \$5,000, I don't have the money to pay it.

[16:41] And I can't get it. And I was drowning. We were drowning. This is what it means to be rescued. We're drowning. We're going under. And God doesn't throw in a guidebook on the ocean.

He doesn't throw me a guidebook, the Boy Scouts book of how to swim. He jumped in. He jumped into the water.

And He threw His arms and He put His arms around me. Around us. And so it was Him. It was His strong strokes that carried me into the boat and rescued me.

It was all Him. And Paul says that we were trapped in this evil age. This present evil age. The picture is that we were living in the city of destruction.

We were living under the wrath of God. The whole world is under the wrath of God. The whole world is being led astray by the God of this age.

[ 17 : 50 ] And so Jesus says, I didn't come into the world to condemn the world. He didn't need to come into the world to condemn the world. It already stood condemned.

The situation was already completely too far gone. He didn't need to come to condemn it. It was already condemned. But His bride was here.

His bride was here. His bride was in Sodom. His bride was in Gomorrah. And the fires of heaven. The fires of heaven were hanging on spider webs above the city of destruction where we lived.

Where we were citizens. Where we belonged. Where we were following the God of this age. But again, He didn't give us a rule book and say now, or a map.

Or He didn't say, now here's how you figure out how to do this. Because the rules, as good as they are, the rules only would condemn us in the way that we were.

[ 18 : 57 ] Because what it said, I didn't do. What it said, I couldn't do. What it said, I had already broken those laws. And so He gave the only thing, the Father, or the Son, gave the only thing that could save us.

He gave Himself. He gave Himself. To pay our penalty. To absorb our punishment, our payment. Someone had to pay the price. And He willingly paid it. And we didn't do anything to earn His love. We didn't do anything to earn His rescue. We didn't do anything to bring it about. We neither planned it, nor initiated it, or did it, or ended it, or anything.

It was all Jesus. It was all Him. All, all Him. And there was nothing in us compelling Him to do it.

[ 20 : 07 ] There was nothing in us demanding that He did it. He do it. It was only His love for us. Only His love.

But His love was more than enough. His love was more than enough to drink down that foaming cup of God's wrath to the very end.

in all of its bitterness to the very last drop. What kept Him drinking even while He was in agony was His love for His Father and His love for us.

He does this most willingly. And so His love pushed Him through. His love pushed Him through the cross while His, while His bride, us.

what did we do? What did we add to the salvation? We sat helplessly by and looked on.

[ 21 : 13 ] We received the salvation. He did it for us in our place. grace and peace to you. Grace and peace.

Him. It's the very one who gave Himself for us. And if He gave Himself up for us, how will He not along with Himself give us all things?

If He would give Him His very self, how would He not also give us grace and peace for everything that we need? Would He cheerfully and gladly and willingly give Himself to the utter agony of the cross while we were enemies, when our backs were turned against Him, when we didn't care about Him, when we didn't need Him, we didn't think we needed Him?

Would He do that for us when we were His enemies and now become scrimping and scraping and reluctant now that we're His friends?

Would He do that? No, He says, He says grace and peace to you tonight. He says, this is my heart for you.

[ 22 : 26 ] This is what I am working for. This is what I want. This is what I will give you. Grace and peace to you. And so what do we need to do? We need to believe Him. We need to accept that.

All that love accepting. And we need to eat with Him. And we need to drink with Him. And we do need to believe again of His love and acceptance.

But Paul says there's still another one who says grace and peace to you. There's still another one. Grace and peace to you from God our Father. God our Father.

Our Father. Martin Luther makes much of even this introduction in his commentary on the Galatians.

And he's saying even from the very beginning Paul is shooting broadsides across the church in Galatia. he's saying remember God was your father.

[ 23 : 31 ] Remember how you used to believe Him and love Him and you felt like a child. Now look at what's happened. All your joy is gone. God our Father says grace and peace to us tonight.

Now I'm I'm crazy about my kids as probably all fathers are. Most fathers are. I'm crazy about my kids. And there's nothing that I don't think that they could do that would ever permanently turn my love away from them.

And if I being evil if I being evil feel that way think that way then how much more our Father in heaven from whom all fatherhood is derived.

Us little fathers exist as just pale reflections of the Father. We are like little tiny pale moons out there in the deep parts of space just reflecting the massive burning fiery sun at the center of our solar system.

And so yes you can see something of Him in us but it's only a pale reflection. He does put something of His character in our hearts.

[ 24 : 56 ] So I have a teacups worth and He has the ocean. He has the sky. He has the heavens above. And so look at what He says. Jesus gave Himself for our sins according to the will of our God and Father to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Why is Paul all of a sudden breaking out into a doxology of the glory to God forever and ever. Amen. It's because he just caught a glimpse of the Father's love and heart for us.

Jesus volunteered Himself in line with, in step with, according to, in harmony with, God the Father's will.

The Father wrote and played the music and the Son gladly danced to it. That's what according to means.

Not opposed to, not against, not despite the Father's will, according to. There is a world of comfort in that little Greek word kata, which just means according to.

[ 26 : 09 ] Jesus gave Himself in step with, in line with, His Father's will, the Father's will. So the cross wasn't Jesus convincing His Father to love us.

Curse that thought. Curse any sort of thought like that. The cross was the voluntary will of God the Father. Isaiah 53.

So no man could take Jesus' life away. We've already seen that. Do you think any man could possibly kill God's Son without the Father being willing? Could anyone snatch Him from His bosom without the Father being willing?

Without the Father willingly sending Him? Now nothing compelled the Father to make this plan. Nothing compelled the Father to initiate this plan, to send His Son. There's nothing in us except it was all in His own heart. It was His own joy.

[ 27 : 16 ] It was His own love. He wanted His children, all of His children, with Him. He wanted them. He wanted to be able to say over all of His people, grace and peace to you.

Go in peace. Go in joy. And that is what tonight is for. It's to remind us again why Jesus died, what He brought about, and really in order for us to hear again, to see again, with the ears of faith and the eyes of faith, to believe again.

There is grace and peace through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit holds out hands of fellowship and of goodwill to us through the cross.

And together, the Trinity says, trust us. God says, trust me. God the Lord.

Now, I think we should be like that woman who we heard about this morning who went on her way with that ringing blessing in Jesus, or Jesus ringing blessing in her ear of go in peace.

[ 28 : 51 ] Your sins are forgiven. That's where, that's the strength to live the Christian life. That's the joy. That's the grace, the help that we need, and that's what God wants us to hear tonight.

Now, if you're not yet a believer, one lie that Satan loves to tell people, and he loves to tell you, and he so wants you to believe it, but I don't want you to believe it because it is a lie.

It's not true. It's this lie that God is a hard, uncaring, unloving taskmaster who sees you drowning and says, here's a book on swimming, you figure it out.

Or, well, there's mercy, there's mercy for a tiny few, but I guess you're not it, so forget it. No, the Bible is quite clear, the gospel, the good news, the proclamation of good news, of grace and peace can be yours, is for all, whoever.

He says, come to all, and I won't turn you away. And so, if you are thinking that God doesn't really care about me, that God doesn't want me saved, that's all this other stuff, that's nonsense, but the real truth is God doesn't really want me saved.

[ 30 : 17 ] God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whoever, whoever, that means if I do it, if you do it, whoever does it, whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

It's not do this or do that, and just get it right. It's not if you believe hard enough, if you feel bad enough, I might save you once you've proven yourself to me.

No, there's no proving yourself to God. Salvation, faith, repentance is not proving yourself to God. It's simply finally coming to the realization that there's nothing you ever could do to prove yourself to God, and you throw yourself on his mercy, and he takes you.

No proving yourself to God, you just trust him. You trust his heart. You trust the kind of God that he is, that he saves sinners, and that's what he was doing through the cross.

Not other sinners, sinners like me. And it's for all who believe. So even tonight, he's saying grace and peace to you.

[ 31 : 40 ] Grace and peace to you. And so if you're outside of Jesus Christ, instead of taking the bread and the cup or not, that is not your business tonight.

You need to pray that simple prayer. God, you save sinners. Save me. God, you say you save sinners. Well then save me.

Save me tonight. May God help us all to find grace for that tonight. Thank you. Amen. Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We say bi importance to us all to

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