

Grace and Peace

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

~ Ephesians 1:2

Discover the Context

Ephesians 1



Look up the greeting in each of Paul's letters (Romans-Philemon). The greeting is the first two or three verses, or in the case of Romans, the first seven verses. What do they all have in common? What is the meaning of the repeated formula? Why does Paul mention both the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in his greeting to the Ephesians?



Try to think of some creative wording that you can use when you greet people today that will cause people to think about God and his goodness. Something more spiritual than, "Greetings earthling," or "Howdy partner!"



What Paul wishes for his readers is exactly what we should be praying for. Ask God to give you his grace today for unexpected trials. And ask for his peace in the midst of chaos and uncertainty.

Can you remember back to the beginning of camp? To break the awkwardness of meeting new people and being in a new place you may have played some ice breakers to help make greeting each other a bit more meaningful. In many cultures greetings don't have much meaning. For most people living in North America we greet each other with, "Hi, how are you doing?" That can even be an awkward greeting at times—especially at funerals or in the midst of family problems. We lack a meaningful greeting.

In biblical times greetings were a lot like blessings. When Paul began each of his letter with a similar greeting, it wasn't a meaningless expression, it was a blessing that God would fill his readers with grace and peace.

This week we are going to be studying Ephesians chapter 1 and its message. The greeting here in verse 2 clues us in to that message and how it is filled with grace and peace.

What is Paul's greeting communicating? First, he is praying that his readers would receive grace from God. Grace is our Father's unmerited favor that he lavishes on his children. For the Christian, that grace is channeled through the work of Jesus Christ—as we'll see tomorrow when we get into verse 6. Grace is how we're saved. It's the foundation of our hope.

One of the by products of grace is peace. It is a gift from God made possible through the reconciling work of Jesus. The word encompasses the idea of tranquility—of being in harmony. It definitely has a spiritual connotation to it; it's not just peace from worldly troubles.

Paul's greeting expresses his desire that what follows would be a means of communicating the good news of God's grace so that, among other benefits, the readers would experience the peace of God.

As you read this week's devotions, may you experience and embrace the grace and peace that God showers on you through the work of Jesus your Lord. (BHK)