

Grace and Peace

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

~ Philippians 1:2

Discover the Context Philippians 1

 This is just the beginning. All week long we are going to work our way through Philippians 1. With every theme (fellowship, prayer, suffering, etc.), these two components in Paul's greeting provide the basis for confidence in God's continued work in the lives of the Philippian believers.

 What's an area at camp that you are most in need of God's grace right now? How does knowing that God's grace has come to you in Christ give you hope that He will give you grace in this area of need? Who is someone that you need to be more at peace with right now? How does being at peace with God help in this relationship?

 Why isn't the Holy Spirit mentioned in today's verse? Is there any way in which unbelievers can experience grace and peace?

Cue the camp songs. Light the bonfire. Introduce the staff, chaplain, and camp nurse. Present the theme and set the tone for the whole week. It's opening ceremony at camp!

Paul does pretty much the same thing in all of his letters—except for the bonfire. He begins almost every letter the same way: introduces himself, identifies who he's writing to, express thanks and a wish for good health, and then gives a greeting, similar to the verse at the top of this page. While the wording might be slightly different, in the greeting of all 13 of his letters, he mentions both *grace* and *peace*.

Every time. It's like his opening ceremony.

You might be tempted to think your camp's opening ceremony is a meaningless ritual, but it's not true. There's a purpose for every component. Every action and word is designed to set the stage and provide a context for a week of ministry.

The same thing is true with Paul's greetings. While each of his letters addresses a unique situation, he knows his recipients always need to receive grace from God and have peace with God.

Grace from God is the root of the gospel. It's how we're saved. We can't earn God's favor. We don't work our way into a right relationship with God. We've sinned and rebelled against Him; we're His enemies. But by His grace—meaning He chose to do something we didn't deserve—He sent Jesus into this world to bear the penalty for our sins. By His grace, He sent His Spirit into our hearts to make us alive. By His grace, He declares us righteous and gives us eternal life.

Peace with God is the fruit of the gospel. No longer are we His enemies, running away from His will and loving ourselves. We are now at peace with our creator. We lay down our arms and declare Him to be the victor. We love His rule and reign.

Grace and peace are the platform for ministry this summer and throughout life. [JCR]