

GRACE AND PEACE

Colossians 1:2

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. This past September my family went on vacation to Dauphin Island, Alabama, which is about four hours from Lafayette. After we arrived, we noticed that we made several packing blunders. First, we brought a suitcase full of suitcases. That was frustrating. It was hard making everything fit in the truck, so when we realized that one of the suitcases we packed was just a suitcase filled with suitcases, we had a good laugh. Second, we forgot the crock pot. Second, I forgot to pack my medication. Now this is not like a multivitamin that you can just stop taking cold turkey. This is a powerful medication that will result in serious side effects if you stop taking it. I needed my medication. I would not have enjoyed my vacation without it. So we had to drive about 30 minutes to the nearest CVS and pick up an emergency prescription for the week.
- b. This morning we are going to learn about two things that you need for life. These are two things that you cannot live without. You cannot make it as a Christian without these. You cannot be a fruitful, happy, victorious Christian unless you have these.

II. TEXT

- a. **Colossians 1:1-2** “1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, and Timothy our brother: 2 To the saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers and sisters. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
- b. These two verses make up the greeting (or salutation) of Paul’s letter. Typical of that culture, it begins by identifying the sender and recipient. But then Paul includes a short prayer for the Colossian saints: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father.”
- c. Paul begins every one of his 13 NT letters with this prayer. (In 1 & 2 Timothy he adds the word “mercy.”) Peter begins both of his letters with the same prayer, as does John in 2 John and Revelation.
- d. What is so special about “grace” and “peace”? Why is Paul so eager for his readers (us) to have these blessings?
 - i. In the OT, God gave a very special prayer to Moses and told him to instruct the priests to pray it over the Israelites regularly.
 - ii. **Numbers 6:22-27** “The Lord spoke to Moses: ‘Tell Aaron and his sons, This is how you are to bless the Israelites. You should say to them, May the Lord bless you and protect you; may the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord look with favor on you and give you peace. In this way they will pronounce my name over the Israelites, and I will bless them.’”

- iii. This is a prayer of blessing. Paul is simplifying the OT priestly prayer for his readers, interceding for their grace and peace.
- iv. Four Observations:
 - 1. While the prayer was originally only for the Jews, it is now extended to all those who are in Christ. We can claim this prayer for ourselves.
 - 2. Grace and peace are blessings that God wants to bestow upon His people. We should praise God for His loving kindness.
 - 3. If God commanded the priests to say this blessing over Israelites, it implies that grace and peace are gifts that we need. We cannot live without them. We should recognize our neediness.
 - 4. Grace and peace are blessings which are transmitted through intercessory prayer. We should pray this prayer over one another.
- e. Let us learn more about grace and peace, and how we can tap into them.

III. GRACE

a. Word Study:

- i. Greek, *charis*. God's unmerited kindness to us.
- ii. Free gift.
- iii. Unmerited favor.
- iv. Grace is God giving you what you do not deserve.
- v. Example: After Adam and Eve sinned against God, their eyes were opened to their nakedness, and they were embarrassed. Genesis 3:21 "The Lord God made clothing from the skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them." This was after the fall, yet God was kind to them.

b. 2 Kinds of Grace:

i. Common Grace:

- 1. God's unmerited gifts and provisions to all creatures. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology
- 2. Common to all mankind. Benefits experienced by the whole human race without discrimination between one person and another.
- 3. Examples:
 - a. Christ sustaining the universe. **Hebrews 1:3** "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word."
 - b. God's provision of the seasons – seedtime and harvest.
 - c. God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good.
 - d. God causes the rain to fall on the just and unjust. **Matthew 5:43-45** "43 'You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his

sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

- e. The institution of marriage, which allows for the blessing of family.
 - f. The institution of government, which prevents society from decay and chaos.
 - g. The law of God written on every human heart, along with the conscience to detect when that law has been violated. People instinctively have a good idea of the difference between right and wrong, and their conscience excuses them when they do right, and accuses them when they do wrong.
 - h. God has given mankind the ability to subdue and cultivate the earth – to build, create, solve, explore, and discover.
 - i. God has given mankind the ability to enjoy His creation.
- 4. That God is gracious to both the just and unjust is a display of His goodness, for which we must ever be thankful. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “Give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
 - 5. Every day God bestows countless blessings upon all people not because we deserve it, but simply because He is gracious.

ii. Special Grace:

- 1. The grace by which God redeems, sanctifies, and glorifies His people.
- 2. Only bestowed upon those who have received eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 3. Acronym: God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.

c. 2 Kinds of Special Grace:

i. Grace for Salvation:

- 1. What is saving grace?
 - a. “The unmerited favor of God toward sinners whereby, for the sake of Christ He has provided for their redemption.”
Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary
 - b. Salvation is by grace. It is undeserved, unearned, and unmerited.
 - c. The gospel is called “the gospel of God’s grace.” Acts 20:24
 - d. **Ephesians 1:7** “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”
- 2. How do we receive saving grace?
 - a. By faith alone.

- b. **Ephesians 2:8-9** “8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.”
- c. Put no confidence in the flesh.
 - i. Do not try to earn your salvation.
 - 1. If salvation can be earned then, Christ died for nothing
 - a. **Galatians 2:21** “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.”
 - 2. To try to earn salvation is to forfeit grace.
 - a. **Galatians 5:4** “You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace.”
 - ii. Do not think that you deserve salvation.
 - 1. This is called poverty of spirit.
 - a. **Matthew 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”
 - b. It is the recognition that you are a sinner in need of a Savior. That if you were treated as you deserve, you would be sent to hell for all eternity.
 - 2. This is also called humility.
 - a. **1 Peter 5:5** “God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
 - b. You must see yourself as undeserving; as having nothing to offer God; that God owes you nothing; that your only hope for salvation is the grace of God poured out through Jesus Christ.
- d. Your answer to this question will reveal rather you are qualified to receive saving grace: Why should God let you into heaven?
 - i. If your answer points to Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf, then you are ready to receive saving grace.
 - ii. If your answer points to your merit, then you are cut off from grace.

ii. Grace for Service:

- 1. What is serving grace?

- a. The God-given resources required to live a fruitful life.
- b. Zondervan Bible Dictionary “The sustaining influence enabling the believer to persevere in the Christian life. Thus, grace is not merely the initiatory act of God that secures the believers’ eternal salvation, but also that which maintains it throughout all of the Christian’s life.”
- c. New Bible Dictionary “Grace includes the idea of the divine power which equips a man to live a moral life.”
- d. Simply put, serving grace is God’s help; divine assistance.
- e. **Hebrews 10:20-21** “20 Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”
 - i. God’s serving grace is His equipping us with everything we need to do His will.
- f. Examples:
 - i. God’s grace enables us to reach the lost. **Romans 1:5** “Through him we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles”
 - ii. God’s grace gives us spiritual gifts. **Romans 12:6** “According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts”
 - iii. God’s grace enables us to be Christlike. **2 Corinthians 8:1** “We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia:”
 - 1. This “grace” was the ability to be extravagantly generous.
 - 2. **Tyndale Bible Dictionary** “God’s grace manifested in Jesus Christ makes it possible for God to cause believers to reflect his grace in their character and relationships.”
 - iv. God’s grace provides for our needs so that we can be a blessing to others. **2 Corinthians 9:8** “And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.”

- v. God's grace enables us to endure trials. **2 Corinthians 12:9** "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.'
 - vi. God's grace helps us when we are in need. **Hebrews 4:16** "Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."
 - g. Serving grace is God's help, His empowering, equipping, and enabling us to serve Him.
2. How do we receive it?
- a. Humility.
 - i. **James 4:6** "But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
 - ii. **James 4:10** "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."
 - b. How to humble yourself before the Lord:
 - i. Prayer. Admit your dependence upon the Lord. Declare your dependence. Cry out for God's help.
 - 1. **Hebrews 4:16** "Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."
 - ii. Obedience. Admit that you are not in charge; that you exist for God; that your sole purpose for existence is to do God's will.
 - 1. **Philippians 2:8-9** "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death – even to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name."

IV. PEACE

- a. Word Study:
 - i. OT: *Shalom*; used over 200 times to mean peace in the OT. It means more than the absence of conflict; it referred to wholeness, total well-being, prosperity, and security.
 - 1. Shalom was the standard Jewish greeting. It is like saying, "I want and pray for you to experience God's peace – total prosperity."
 - 2. In the OT, one of the offerings was called the peace offering (NIV, "fellowship offering"). One scholar calls it the "sacrifice of well-being." The worshiper, his family, and a Levite would have a

communal meal together, eating a major portion of the sacrifice after it was offered. This offering was given for the purpose of thanking God for the peace (prosperity) that He had bestowed upon the worshiper.

- ii. NT: *Eirene* (i-ray-nay). This is where the female name Irene comes from. It is used 90 times in the New Testament. It is the Greek translation of shalom.
- iii. The New Testament mentions 3 kinds of peace promised to believers.

b. 3 Kinds of Peace

i. Spiritual tranquility.

- 1. Peace with God.
- 2. It begins with salvation.
 - a. Salvation is described in the Bible as peace with God. Being right with God. Before salvation we are enemies of God, children of wrath, headed for eternal destruction. But through Christ we are forgiven, and reconciled to God, and now we have peace with God.
 - b. **Isaiah 53:5** “But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds.”
 - c. We enjoy peace with God by faith.
 - i. **Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 3. It continues with communion / friendship. It is possible to have union with Christ but not communion.
 - a. You can be married but be separated. You can have parents but be cut off from their help.
 - b. We enjoy communion with God through confession.
 - i. **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
 - ii. Remember the 4 parts of true confession: Admit your sin. Apologize. Align yourself with God’s will. Ask for forgiveness.

ii. Relational tranquility.

- 1. Relational harmony; concord. The absence of strife and conflict with others. Getting along with others. Healthy relationships.
- 2. We enjoy relational harmony by cultivating the virtue of peacefulness – working hard to get along with others.
 - a. **Romans 12:18** “If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

3. How to cultivate peacefulness:

- a. Patience: Give people permission to be imperfect. Don't get upset and offended every time people slip up. **Ephesians 4:1-2** "Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love"
- b. Acceptance: Allow people to be different. To have different convictions. To have different values. To have different tastes. To have different styles. To have different priorities. **Romans 15:7** "Therefore accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God."
- c. Forgiveness: Give people a second chance; don't hold grudges. Be kind to those who hurt you. **Ephesians 4:32** "And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ."
- d. Avoidance: Avoid those behaviors that disturb the peace. **Ephesians 4:25-31** "25 Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don't give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. 29 No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. 30 And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice."
 - i. Avoid offensive behavior – actions that anger, aggravate, hurt, frustrate, or insult others (Pr 17:19).
 - ii. Avoid arguing and bickering (Pr 26:21).
 - iii. Avoid mocking – making fun and teasing others in a hurtful way (Pr 22:10).
 - iv. Avoid a hot temper – getting angry about everything (Pr 15:18).

iii. Inner tranquility.

- 1. Peace of mind. The freedom from guilt, fear, worry, anger, discontentment, jealousy, or depression. Quiet confidence.
- 2. **Nelson's Bible Dictionary** "the inner tranquility and poise of the Christian whose trust is in God through Christ."

3. This is the kind of peace that allows you to sleep well at night; that allows you to concentrate on your work; that allows you to relax and enjoy your life.
4. Jesus promised us this kind of peace. **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful."
5. How to enjoy inner tranquility:
 - a. Faith. **Isaiah 26:3** "You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you."
 - b. Prayer. **Philippians 4:6-7** "6 Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
 - c. Thankfulness. **Philippians 4:6-7**
 - d. Righteousness. Conformity to the will of God. **Isaiah 32:17** "The result of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quiet confidence forever."
- c. There is a kind of peace that the Bible does not promise us in this life.
 - i. Outer tranquility.
 1. Security. Life, property, and health unthreatened. Needs met.
 2. This kind of peace is not promised to believers in this life.
 - a. **John 16:33** "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."
 3. But if we have spiritual, relational, and inner tranquility, then we can endure the absence of outer tranquility.
 4. And we can look forward to death, when we will escape this body of sin, and this life of pain, and be with Christ forever.
 5. **Philippians 1:21** "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

V. CONCLUSION

- a. Living without God's grace is like Drew Brees trying to win a football game all by himself. It is impossible. You are going to lose. You are going to get injured. You are going to get killed. Living without God's peace is like standing in the middle of a soccer field during a severe thunder storm. It is terrifying. And extremely dangerous. And both of these scenarios are just plain dumb. There's no good reason for Drew Brees to play alone. He has a team that can help him. There's no reason to be standing in the middle of a soccer field during a severe thunder storm. Find shelter! Get inside. In the same way, it's just plain dumb for a Christian to live without God's grace and peace. He wants you to have it. He stands ready to provide it. But you have to do your part.

- b. What is your part? It essentially comes down to humility.
 - i. Humble yourself by admitting that you are a sinner, and you need Christ to save you.
 - ii. Humble yourself by submitting to God's authority over your life; turn from your sins. God doesn't bless sin. He punishes it.
 - iii. Humble yourself by becoming devoted to prayer. Every day, multiple times a day, you should be praying, "Lord, please give me Your grace and peace!"
- c. This morning I want to close by praying the priestly prayer over you.
 - i. "May the Lord bless you and protect you; may the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord look with favor on you and give you peace."