

Philippians 1:1-2 (Part 2)

This letter is a call to spiritual action, a call to continue developing as a local church with an inner resolve to stand for the gospel of Christ in a culture that would always have a strong following for the opposite of what the Bible stands for. And society always has deeper pockets to push their agenda. Which is why Paul will write these kinds of words to the Philippian church – I’m praying that you will “*be children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and a twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*” (**Philippians 2:15**)

In common, everyday Greek this verb form of the word “grace” is translated “good will” or “well-being” or “greetings.” However, Paul uses the noun form of *charis*, which gives us the word *grace*. Paul is going to transform the typical Gentile greeting and enrich it with gospel meaning.

Grace, as Paul will define it, is unmerited favor from God:

- Grace is the origin of our salvation – “*for by grace you have been saved*” (**Ephesians 2:8**)
- Grace is the source of our spiritual growth – “*by the grace of God I am what I am*” Paul wrote in **I Corinthians 15:10**
- Grace is the basis for our service (**Ephesians 3:8**) – Paul writes, “*I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace . . . though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given.*”
- Grace is the source of never-exhausted, unfailing strength, “*His grace will always be sufficient for you*” (**2 Corinthians 12:9**)
- We have redemption by God’s grace – “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*” **Ephesians 1:7**

In Sam Gordon’s book, *The Odyssey of Joy*: “*Grace gives us what we do not deserve and what we could never pay back. Grace stoops to where we are: grace is everything – for nothing – to those who don’t deserve anything.*”

John Newton, in his own biographical notations, made it clear why he ran to Africa – he wrote, “*I went so that I could sin my fill.*”

Paul not only opens with a variation of the typical Gentile greeting, he also opens with the typical Jewish greeting, “*Grace to you . . . and peace.*” The concept of peace would become a concept the Roman Empire was proud of, as if they’d invented it. Just 6 years before Paul wrote this letter, the Roman statesman Seneca had coined the phrase Pax Romana – which was official Latin for the phrase – Roman Peace.

Peace had come at a steep price for those who supposedly enjoyed its fruits. Political oppression, religious crackdowns, suffocating taxation and widespread slavery was all part of Rome’s version of peace. And people paid dearly for it. The peace that comes from Jesus Christ comes at the expense of Jesus Christ. It doesn’t come through the death of subjugated people; it comes as a result of His death. He’s the one who dies; He’s the one who pays the price; His grace pays for our peace. The order is not a coincidence here; first grace from God and then peace from and with God.

Paul does not employ the usual Jewish greeting of shalom which is translated into English as “peace.” Instead he uses in an unconventional way the Greek word “εἰρήνη” (*eirēnē*.) It means a state of peace. It has the nuance of rejoicing in the fact that peace has been achieved through victory.

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Application – Even in our greatest despair and failure, we cannot lock Jesus out of our lives

- The work of the cross is finished and it has brought peace (*Ephesians 2:14 and Romans 5:1*)
- The gospel that every believer is to communicate to his world is not called the gospel of “I sure hope this works and we get out of it alive” – No, it’s called the gospel of peace (*Romans 10:15*)
- We should rejoice, Jesus Christ has conquered!

When Paul uses this word “peace”– tweaking the typical Jewish greeting of shalom and with the word grace, he wants to remind them that even though they are repressed in the Roman Empire, God has them there in Philippi. He will keep them there and by His grace will use them there for His glory.

Application – Only when Jesus Christ is Lord / Ruler over your life can one experience salvation, grace, and peace

Vs. 2 – “*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” True grace and peace can only come to those who know God as their Father. And how do you come to know God as your Father? John writes, *But as many as received Him [Jesus Christ] “who believed in His name – to them He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)* Believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and God the Father becomes your Father, and you become His child.

Also, these gifts come to those who call Jesus Christ their Lord. The Greek word “*kyrios*” has several applications depending on how it is used in the text. In this case *kyrios* means “ruler,” literally “one who commands.” Christ as *kyrios* means the Lord is the One who commands as ruler over our lives.

The construction here in verse 2 “*God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” emphasizes the equality and oneness between God the Father and Jesus Christ. God the Father shares His essential divine being with the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was and is equally divine; equally eternal; equal in essence with the Father.