

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes May 9, 2007

Ephesians 1:2

- 1: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus:
- 2: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION:

- When you or I accomplish a great feat, successfully complete a task, or withstand great opposition, to what or to whom do you account for your success? Your education? Your natural talents or skills? Your persuasive or winnable personality? What then happens when you find yourself up against a task or opposition that you know is beyond your education or abilities or power of persuasion? Especially if that insurmountable task is something you know God is calling you to do? Do you give up, or do you rely on the power only he can give? This is part of what we will be discussing today on **Deep In Scripture**.

- Welcome ...
- "The Gambler" ... "know when to hold'em...fold'em...walk away...run!"
- website / phone numbers / special:
- Discussion of St. Paul's Greeting ... much to learn in something we too often take for granted;
- Today greetings in conversation, letters, and email are generally no more than convention;
 - But in the past greetings were carefully worded, set the tone, & carried great meaning.
- Last week: examined the salutation from Paul at four levels:
 - As an example of St. Paul's normal letter style...shaped by
 - What does it reveal about Paul's understanding of himself;
 - What does it reveal about how the recipients were to understand themselves;
 - What does it reveal about how you & I should understand ourselves.
 - *Our name says that we are truly unique in the eyes of God;*
 - *We have been set apart by our baptism, called to be Holy;*
 - *We are not an accident, but set apart by the will of God, which we must freely choose;*
 - *We are called to be faithful to our calling, not a guarantee; requires obedience;*
 - *We must understand all this in relationship to being "in Christ."*
- This week, we'll examine the second part of Paul's salutation:

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

1. In this case, nearly identical in every letter...

- Like today, we use stock phrases to begin letters / emails...
- Yet, we do shape to fit our audience...
- Commentators believe he combined & adjusted Greek & Semetic forms
 - (like we might end a letter with Sincerely in Christ)
- However, St. Paul showed very little creativity here:
 - Almost as if he is repeating a set, established, recognized saying.

2. What does he mean by the terms in this saying:

A. GRACE

- Both grace & peace will be common themes... he assumes they understand...
- Paul makes a distinction between grace and peace...
- What is meant by Grace?
 - "charis" = favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill (Grk-Eng Lexicon)
- Only used in reference to two people in the gospels:

- Jesus:
Luke 2: [40] *And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*
[52] *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.*
John 1 [14] *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*
[16] *And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.*
[17] *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*
- Mary:
Lk 1: [28] *And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" ... 30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*

- In rest of NT, carries emphasis of divinely given blessing / aid:
Acts 4[33] *And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.*

Acts 6 [8] *And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.*

Acts 13 [43] *And when the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.*

Acts 15 [11] *But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."*

Acts 18 [27] *And when he wished to cross to Acha'ia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed,*

Acts 20 [32] *And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

Eph 1[6-7] *to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*

Ephs 2 [4-5, 7-8] *But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ... that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God."*

Ephs 3 [2] *assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you,*

[7-8] *Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*

Ephs 4 [7] *But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

[29] *Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.*

Ephs 6 [24] *Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying.*

- B. **TO YOU:** Paul is prayerfully wishing or even conveying this gift to them from God;
- C. **PEACE:** more than mere harmony, though includes this; equivalent to salvation; a fruit of grace:
Mt 5:[9] *"Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God.*

Mt 10:[13] *And if the house is worthy, let your **peace** come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let*

your **peace** return to you.

34] "Do not think that I have come to bring **peace** on earth; I have not come to bring **peace**, but a sword.

Jn 14: [27] Peace I leave with you; my **peace** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Jn 16: [33] I have said this to you, that in me you may have **peace**. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Jn 20: [19] On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

[21] Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."

[26] Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you."

Gal 5: [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,...

Eph 2: [14] For he is our **peace**, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,

[15] by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making **peace**,

[17] And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near;

Eph 4: [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of **peace**.

Eph 6: [15] and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of **peace**;

[23] Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil 4: [7] And the **peace** of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

D. FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

- He presumes they understand & find no confusion:
 - Most likely baptized in the "Trinitarian" formula;
- This demonstrates the danger of "sola Scriptura"
 - Paul never addresses the relationship between the Father and Jesus;
 - In time, creative thinkers ran with their own collection of verses into heresy;
 - The Church eventually had to address these challenges

3. Is this more than St. Paul's stock opening line?

- Possibly a developing liturgical invocation;
- The liturgy was the place where all these letters & Gospels were read!
- We believe Ephesians was specifically a homily to be read in liturgy to newly baptized gentile converts;
- So, in essence, an opening blessing, calling down God's grace & peace upon them.
- And importantly placed at the beginning of every letter: what they need most!

4. How does this apply to us today?

- The Church has recognized the universal message of the canonical Scriptures;
- This invocation is to us: Paul is calling down God's grace upon our lives that we may experience the fruit of peace in our lives & relationships.
- Christ called us to seemingly insurmountable tasks: "be perfect...have no anxiety"
- As Paul promised in Ph 4:13, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."