

SERVANTS AND SAINTS

(Philippians 1:1-2)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 2)

...Introductions are an important social skill that needs to be taught and practiced by people living in community. When I was a young man, my father taught me the mechanics of introducing, meeting, and greeting people. He taught that it was proper to present the younger to the older, to call each by name, to look into the eyes, and to offer a very firm handshake when meeting. This has only helped me navigate better through life.

...As the Apostle Paul begins to write his letter, "The Joyful Letter," he begins with a proper introduction filled with hope for all of us. For in these few words, Paul tells of the riches that are ours in Christ.

TWO QUESTIONS UNFOLDING A FEW RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL THAT ARE OURS IN CHRIST. For the Gospel changes everything, we are no longer the same!

I. Who Is Identified In This Introduction? (v.1) "In Christ, all things are new."

- A. The writers of this letter: "Paul and Timothy." Both of them are trophies of His grace.
1. Paul had persecuted the early church by murdering Christians. (Acts 8-9)
...Surprisingly he was captured by Jesus and saved on his way to harm others. (Acts 9)
...Jesus prepared him to be His choice instrument in reaching Gentiles with the Gospel; he traveled through Asia and Europe planting churches.
...He is truly a trophy of God's grace...and so are you if you know Christ as Savior.
 2. Timothy was born of a Greek father and a Jewish mother in modern day Turkey.
...His mother was a believer, but his father was unsaved. (Acts 16)
...Timothy, as a young man, became Paul's understudy in pastoral ministry. "His son."
...He is also a trophy of God's grace...as all of us are who are captured by grace.
 3. Paul and Timothy are called, "Servants of Jesus Christ."
...It is a spiritual law; no one can become a servant of Christ until he realizes that by nature he is a servant of sin. Three ways one might become a slave in this day:
 - a. By birth, conquest, and debt. Sin makes us a slave in like manner.
 - b. In Christ, we are bought from sin and now free, free to serve Him...."Servants" emphasizes two things: Voluntary submission and dependency.
...(Illustration) Sleep reminds us of our total dependency upon God...
- B. The receivers of this letter, The Church at Philippi, are called "Saints in Christ Jesus."
...Both the church leadership, "Bishops and deacons," and all people are included in the greeting.
1. All believers in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are "Saints" through their spiritual union with Him. The word actually means, "To be set apart," and points to our position of being "In Christ." It does not refer to your personal holiness, though your conduct should correspond increasingly to your standing in Him.
...Also, it does not refer to the dead, for the believers in Philippi were fully alive.
 2. "Bishops and deacons." Paul addresses the local church leadership who received this letter and would read it to the congregation. The leaders were also involved in raising the recent gift of money for Paul. "Bishops" (overseers) and "Deacons" (ministers).

II. How Does Paul Greet Them? "Grace and peace." True Wealth... (v.2)

- ...This was a common Greek and Hebrew expression in that day but wholly changed with Christian meaning.
- A. Grace (GK: charis): This is the unmerited favor of God toward men and women. It is completely undeserved and extraordinary that God should so extend His favor to rebellious people like us.

...God does not love us because of our good deeds, our virtue, or our repentance. No! Rather God has acted graciously toward us in Christ entirely apart from human merit. (John Newton)

...More than unmerited grace, it is abounding grace overflowing to us throughout eternity!

- B. Peace (shalom): This peace comes from God alone. Grace is God's favor toward men and peace is the result of that favor. It is the result of the reconciliation of man and God through Jesus' death—a peace obtained at the cross of Christ.

...We are not by nature at peace with God. We are born at war with Him, and hence at war with each other and ourselves. Misery, unrest and brokenness are the result of this conflict.

...Peace with God through saving faith will result in the "peace of God" within our hearts.

- C. Finally, it is always in this order: Grace comes before peace, and never the reverse.

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. It is God's Gospel alone that makes all things new. Only the Gospel can take us as broken, lost, and rebellious sinners and remake us into something whole. God is calling out sinners for salvation, sinners of all kinds, from all places, and He is changing us into His likeness. Oh the joy of our new life in Christ.
2. If you have been saved, you are no longer a slave to sin, rather now you are a "bond-servant" of Jesus Christ. We now voluntarily serve the Lord by living in daily dependency upon Him and obedience to His Word. "Servants of Christ Jesus," that's who we are...and "not your own." Live as the servant of Jesus.
3. Daily thank the Lord for His saving and sustaining grace. He is the great Gift-Giver. Everything you have is from Him, both physical and spiritual, both life and salvation. His grace is extravagant, beyond comprehension.
4. This morning Jesus continues to call men and women to receive His wonderful gift of salvation. Acts 16:30-31 told us, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Will you settle this today? This is life's greatest decision.

Life Group Questions

1. In our study we saw how God's grace had captured and changed Paul. This is what Jesus is doing today in building His Kingdom. How did God's grace find you, and how has His grace changed and sustained you since salvation? Knowing that our stories are different, what is your story?
2. What is the difference between the peace of God, and peace with God? Please explain both of these in your own words. Does one of these come first? Why?
3. Does knowing that you are already a "Saint in Christ Jesus" make any difference in your daily life? Should it? What's the difference between a living saint and a dead one?
4. Often the Gospel is called the great treasure. Why do you think it is called this? Is there anything known that might be compared to it?