

Ephesians **Grace & Peace**

Ephesians 1:1-2
February 2nd, 2025

I. Introduction: All of Christ for all of life

In Ephesians, Paul unfolds in plain terms God's great work of redemption: God's great plan to sum up all things in Jesus Christ. In the first part of this letter, the apostle unpacks the mystery of God's redemption, and then in the second half, he kneads this Gospel into the ordinary life of the everyday Christian. The first three chapters he soars in theological profundity, and then the next three chapters he shows how this heavenly Gospel transforms our ordinary lives. It is, as Moscow puts it: "All of Christ for all of life."

II. The Text: Ephesians 1:1-2

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

III. Grace & Peace

Paul intends to impart grace and peace. Now, what is this *grace*? This grace is God's redemptive kindness toward us, His people. Grace is God's undeserved favor of us. But it doesn't just refer to the fact that God has warm feelings toward us. It is an _____ grace. It is a fruitful grace. God by His gracious activity in our lives raises us from the dead, forgives our sins, cleanses us from all unrighteousness, and causes us to grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ. God's gracious activity in our lives redeems us from sin and leads us into all _____.

Now, what about *peace*? *Peace* is Paul's translation of the Hebrew _____, which features prominently throughout the Old Testament as one of the chief blessings of Israelite hopes. They looked forward to the day that they would be restored to *shalom*. This *peace* is something much, much more than simply a lack of conflict. This peace is a _____. To use a musical analogy: peace is a universal _____. When all things come together into a perfect, singing wholeness—that is the peace in view here. That was the peace in view in the Old Testament.

IV. The Scope of the Gospel

As we study through this letter, we should expect God's gracious activity to at work in our midst. As we attentively listen to and heed His Word, we should expect Him by His gracious activity to bring about this wholeness, this harmonic peace in our midst.

The disorder and anarchy of our world begins with *me*, with *you*. There is corruption in our very own hearts, of our very own minds. Each of us, apart from God's gracious activity, carry within ourself the seeds of hell. We carry within ourself disordered desires, darkened thinking, deceitful reasoning. The harmonizing effect of God's grace, therefore, must first be seen in each of us.

After this, God's grace works peace in our _____. When God saves a man He does more than just save a man. The effect of this redeeming grace pours out into his home. The peace that God works in our hearts becomes peace in marriage. And a peaceful, grace-filled marriage bears godly offspring: children who are not merely obedient, but who rejoice in obeying and honoring their parents; who rejoice in obeying and honoring the Lord. From our families, God's grace through us restores our neighborhoods, our city, our state, our nation, and this world.

It is too little of a thing for God's grace and peace to be limited to just one corner of His created world. He desires that it would fill up and transform _____. And in due time it will.

V. Rival Gospels

This is the true Gospel of God's grace and peace, but there are a number of rival Gospels that we must beware of. These rival gospels are centered on rival—and erroneous—ideas of grace and erroneous ideas of peace. Whatever these gospels are, they are not the true Gospel unfolded in this letter.

Just Forgiven Sinners. There is the gospel centered on an idea of grace that simply forgives but does not _____. This is half a gospel. God's grace does not only forgive us. God's grace resurrects us. It gives life to dead men. Grace finds us dead, but it does not leave us that way. It works in us life. Why does it do this? Because God's goal is a full restoration of peace in our lives and in the life of this world. It is a _____ peace.

The Private Gospel. Another false gospel is centered on just you, on just me—in the privacy of my own heart. God does love you and have a wonderful plan for your life. But His wonderful plan for your life involves the entire cosmos. The Grace of God imparts a deep peace, a broad peace, a cosmic peace which transforms not just your own heart, but your life, your home, your marriage, your church, your neighborhood and nation and world. It is a very _____ Gospel.

This means that we cannot remain isolated. We cannot be in our own corner, off doing our own thing, being a Christian by yourself. It doesn't work that way, for that is not the grace of God at work in your life. This is not the peace of God He is bringing to this world.

The Egalitarian Gospel. Another false gospel propagated in our day magnifies—and distorts—what Paul says, for instance, in Gal. 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The egalitarian's gospel destroys all _____, making all things equal, flattening all order. It takes all of the order that God has built into this world and boils it down to a tasteless muck.

But the grace of God at work in this world, and the peace that our God is effecting is not egalitarian. It is a restoration and perfection of the good order, the good distinctions God has made in this world—the good order, the good distinctions that sin has disordered and destroyed. In the process of restoring these things, God's grace makes it all _____ again. In singing, you need parts. You need distinction. Not all notes sound the same. Not all musical scales sound the same. Not all voices sound the same. And this is all very good.

VI. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ