
GRACE AND PEACE

Hey! It's Robin. Welcome to week 2! What a great introduction last week! We learned so much about Paul and the Church at Philippi! Keeping what we learned in mind, we are now starting the study of chapter one. I pray that God guides you into His word daily! Let's start by reading Philippians 1:1-5.

"Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ Jesus,
to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
I thank my God in all remembrance of you,
always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,
in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now."

As we learned in our introduction last week, Paul is the writer of the book of Philippians. Timothy was present with him as he wrote. Paul introduces them as servants of Jesus Christ and more specifically bond slaves of Christ. At the time of the writing of the letter, a bond-slave was a free man who chose to give himself as a slave to a master. He would work for the master in exchange for his livelihood and safety. Paul calls himself and Timothy bond-slaves of Christ. They chose to give up their freedom to serve Him.

Do we identify ourselves as bond slaves of Christ? How have we given ourselves up to serve Christ?

Read Matthew 16:24. It tells us that giving up ourselves is the only way to serve Christ!

What does a life as a bond slave look like? Compare that to your life. Write your thoughts here.

Paul goes on to address his letter to all the saints who are in Christ Jesus in Philippi. Paul is speaking to saints, the believers, those set apart in holiness to serve. The word "saints" identifies believers who are set apart because they are in Christ. Ephesians 1:4 says,

"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,
that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

Once we place faith in Christ we receive HIS holiness. It is because of the work that Christ did, and our faith in Him, that His holiness is attributed to us. God now sees us as holy and blameless. We are placed in Christ and our status as a saint is never revoked. Let that sink in for a moment!

If we truly believe we are holy and blameless, how would our lives change? What actions, attitudes and thought processes would change?

Paul is also addressing the overseers and the deacons. They are the spiritual leaders and the providers of the physical needs of the congregation.

In verse two Paul says he desires "grace and peace" for those he is addressing. Those things come from a specific location, God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul knows these are the only places where true grace and peace come. All other places are counterfeit.

Let's look at the word 'grace.' In the Greek the word is 'charis' meaning unmerited favor. God gives us what we don't deserve. He gives us unconditional love, forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, His resources, His power and eternal life. None of these things are deserved, but God gives them to us anyway. He shows us favor when we haven't done anything to earn it.

How has God shown you unmerited favor? How has He loved you despite your actions?

Write your thoughts here.

God looks at us with grace and loves us despite what we've earned and truly deserve.

These 3 acrostics help us understand God's grace.

~ Grace for Salvation: God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense

~ Grace for Living the Christian Life: God's Resources At Christ's Expense

~ Grace for Eternity: God's Realm At Christ's Expense.

Each aspect of God's grace is essential in our relationship with Him. He gives us His righteousness at salvation, His resources to live the Christian life after salvation, and His realm when we leave earth.

Let's take a look at a few verses concerning our time here on earth. These verses explain how God's resources provide for all our needs. When we are stuck, frustrated, afraid, angry or sad, these verses remind us that it's God's resources that will sustain us and not our own.

Look up each verse and explain how God's resources are sufficient in all of life's circumstances.

1 Corinthians 10:13:

2 Corinthians 12:9:

Philippians 4:19:

Hebrews 4:14-16:

James 4:6-8:

Do you have any favorite verses that you go to when you are looking for God's guidance or comfort? Write them here.

God's word gives insight to all aspects of life: money, friendships, dating, our spouses, and many more. God not only tells us the right way to act, but He also tells us how to carry out that action. Through understanding the principles found in His word, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to live the Christian way of life in a manner that honors God and brings peace and joy to our lives.

Let's move on to our final verses, three through five. In verse three Paul states he is writing the letter with joy. He is thankful for the believers in Philippi and thanks God for them every time he remembers them.

He continues his point in verses four and five saying that his prayers on their behalf are accomplished with joy because of their fellowship in the gospel. Those at Philippi have fellowship with God and with one another because of their common bond - their belief in the

gospel and their practice of it. Paul prays joyfully on their behalf knowing the believers are united in fellowship because of their belief and practice of the gospel.

Are you joyful because of a friendship with a fellow believer? This person understands your relationship with God, the struggles you face and the grace that God gives through every circumstance. There is a connection and joy found in your relationship that causes you to praise God. Paul understands this and wants those in Philippi to understand his love and joy as well.

As we end, explain a relationship you had that brought joy because of your commonality in Christ.

Finally, read Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Thank God for His provisions in your life.

REVIEW

~ Bond-slave: Are we Bond-slaves to Christ? Willing to give up all that we are to serve Him? Matthew 16:24

~ Saints: As Christians we are saints, holy and set apart for service to God. Do we live that way? Ephesians 1:4

~ Grace: Unmerited Favor - Do we believe that God's righteousness, resources and realm are sufficient for us? 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 4:14-16, James 4:6-8

~ Joy in Prayer: How many times do we go to God asking for things? Let's not forget to thank Him for His provision too! Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18