

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: August 29, 2010

Title: The Benediction - Please Remember

Text: Ephesians 6:21-24

Theme: As a result of the cross God works within His people peace, love, faith and grace. His people are both the recipients and the instruments of God’s working.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2010

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

"The letter to the Ephesians was an encyclical letter and the bearer from church to church was Tychicus. Unlike most of his letters, Ephesians gives us no personal information about Paul, except that he was in prison; but Tychicus, as he went from church to church, would tell how Paul was faring and would convey a message of personal encouragement."¹

- Who is Tychicus?

"From Acts 20:4 we learn that Tychicus joined Paul towards the end of his third missionary journey from Corinth through Macedonia and Asia Minor to Jerusalem remaining with the Apostle to the final point of the journey. Paul mentions in his Second Epistle to Timothy (4:12) that he has sent Tychicus to Ephesus. Since it is also stated that Tychicus shared the Apostle's first Roman captivity and was the bearer of the Epistle to the Colossians, that to the Ephesians and to Philemon, this may have been the purpose of the trip. Paul indicated that he would tell them of the state of the apostle (Colossians 4:7-9). After friendly greetings (10-14), he bids them interchange this letter with that he had sent to the neighbouring Laodicean Church. Tychicus is also mentioned in Paul's Epistle to Titus (3:12) as one of two people who might be sent to help Titus."²

- A beloved brother
 - A faithful minister
 - A dependable friend
- What is his purpose?
 - To inform his audience of Paul's well-being and whereabouts
 - To calm and comfort their hearts

Application

1. May we have such friends and ministers as Tychicus.
2. Communication is the core and cultivation of all relationships.

Paul finishes with a blessing – and in it all the great words come again. Let us consider those great words.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Paul ends where he began with the words of peace, love, faith and grace. Packed between these two towering bookends found within the greeting and the benediction lays the unfathomable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). It is a vast expanse of God gifting His people peace, love, faith and all this because of the surpassing riches of His grace (Eph. 2:7). Paul lies before

the reader the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (3:18, 19). Consider with me once more the path laid before us and on which we have tread.

The Storyline:

This is The Story. From Genesis 3:15 comes a promise and from Genesis 3:21 comes a picture. Here in Ephesians the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul unpacks and applies the implications of the promise and picture as seen in the cross and the resultant formation of His body, the Church.

This is the pinnacle and apex of what has been viewed only in shadow. We now see the substance which is Christ.

The Problem:

We get lost in the clutter of existing in a fallen world.

Questions:

1. Was Ephesians a letter for others to read?
2. Who carried the letter from church to church?
3. How is Tychicus described in this letter?
4. What is the purpose of his report?
5. What four qualities are found in God and flow from God?
6. Can humanity apart from God fabricate these qualities?
7. What does a flesh-produced peace look like?
8. What does a flesh-produced love look like?
9. What does a flesh-produced faith look like?
10. Can the unbelieving know grace apart from God?
11. How is peace produced by God for the believer?
12. Can love and faith ever be without "works"?
13. Is horizontal peace and love possible apart from a vertical peace and love?
14. Can any of these qualities exist independent of the other qualities?
15. How would you define biblical peace?
16. How would you define biblical love?
17. How would you define biblical faith?
18. How would you define biblical grace?
19. Is it possible for your affection toward God to grow cold?
20. How might you restore affection for God? What suggestions would you make?
21. How do we guard against a subtle legalism working its way into our relationship with God?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the rudiments of the Christian life.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to live in the depth and simplicity of the Christian life.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of knowing God's peace, love, faith and grace.

Outline:

I. The cross speaks of peace

Paul's letter opens with peace (1:2) and will end with peace (6:23). The need for peace presupposes estrangement and alienation (2:14). War exists and peace is the desire or outcome. The means and end of peace is found fully and finally in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2:15-17). This is the gospel, and the gospel is one of peace (6:15). Peace is purchased in or by the cross, and we are called upon to diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:3). Such maintenance is marked by humility and gentleness with patience showing tolerance for one another in love (4:2).

Peace received is to be a peace given (6:23).

"Generally, in Ephesians it signifies a lack of hostility between God and the believer (1:2; 2:14, 17; 6:15) as well as between individual believers (2:15; 4:3). It not only expresses objective peace but also a subjective feeling of well-being. In the present context 'peace' refers to the peace that comes from God, but indeed, peace of God within believers should produce peace between believers."³

This enables us to note two simple truths.

A. Our peace with God is from God

There is no peace apart from the redemptive work of God. His redemption is the means whereby we are reconciled to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Apart from the application of this provision there is no peace.

B. Our peace with humanity is from God

If I am not at peace with God, there can be no peace with my fellow man. Peace on earth is a complete impossibility apart from God changes the hearts of humanity and sitting on the throne of David.

The best we can hope for in this economy is that we do not globally kill ourselves.

"Peace with God, peace with one another across all traditional barriers: that is central to the message of Ephesians, central to the great vision of God's people that it offers. Peace, here as elsewhere, is bound up closely with love and faith. It comes from the one true God, the father, and the Lord, King Jesus, and it comes as a sure blessing on those whose love for this same Jesus will outlast death itself."⁴

"To the believer he is not only God but a personal father. In the present verse this prepositional phrase indicates that the attributes of peace and love with faith have their origin in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵

II. The cross speaks of love

Love is a motive in God predetermining to adopt us as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself (1:4, 5). This love is described as being great and provokes God to be rich in mercy toward us who are dead in transgression (2:4, 5). Love is the soil in which we are embedded and from which we grow (3:17), and it is this exceeding and excessive love we need to comprehend and lay hold of (3:14-19). It is the love of God flowing to us and through us that reaches out to those around us (1:15). It is from this soil and source we speak truth (4:15). Such action is indispensable in preserving the unity of the Spirit (4:16). It is only as we love we are able to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:2, 3). Those who are embedded in His love walk in love (5:2). Such love is selfless and sacrificial (5:2). It is a love who has the interests of others above their own. It is a love that edifies and matures others. It is love that marks and is openly manifested in all relationships even our most personal and intimate (5:22-6:9). Because He loves us, we love Him and as a result of this love, we love one another (John 13:34, 35).

Although the Letter speaks much of love, let us note two simple thoughts from Paul's concluding words.

A. Love is from God

Both love and faith come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I will not believe apart from their working, and I cannot love apart from their working. I love, simply because He first loved me. Husbands will never provide a loving headship to their wives and families apart from them loving God first and foremost. Wives will never manifest a love for their husband's headship apart from them loving God first and foremost. It all begins and ends with God.

B. Love is never alone

Love is never independent of the other qualities noted. Love along with faith is from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hoehner does not see faith as a "separate attribute along with peace and love" in this text. I disagree with him (873).

III. The cross speaks of faith

A. Faith is from God

Like peace and love faith is a consequence of God's gracious work toward undeserving sinners.

B. Faith is visual

James is correct; show me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by my works. Faith from God resulting in faith toward God produces peace and love. No one can hate their brother and yet confess a love for God. The two ideas are inseparably linked.

IV. The cross speaks of grace

When we speak of peace, love and faith it is almost always impossible to separate these things from the idea of grace. It is His grace that enables Him to give His peace, love and faith without condition. Like peace, his grace both begins and ends his letter to the Ephesians. God's redemptive activity is a celebration of His grace (1:6). There is glory in His grace. There is a richness and lavishness to His grace whereby sin's debt is redeemed and trespasses are forgiven (1:7; 2:7). Although love moves Him to act, it is grace that enables and allows Him to act without cost to the recipient (2:5, 8). There is an immeasurable aspect to His grace (2:7). Salvation and its outworking and proclamation are all expressions of God's grace (3:2, 7, 8; 4:7). One cannot speak of grace without speaking of Jesus Christ (3:8). He is peace and grace and love. In receiving grace we become instruments of grace for others (4:29). Just as we have experienced the love and peace of God without condition so also must/should we extend love and peace toward others without condition. Our text speaks of a directed or narrowed application of grace. This will presuppose a grace that is more inclusive and broader in its application. Let us consider these two points.

A. Grace is inclusive

The common grace of God enables the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust equally. The idea that the unbelieving are not consumed on the spot and God tarries for their redemption is a sign of His common grace.

Yet there is a broader application of God's grace that is selectively given includes common but reaches deeper and is fuller. This is efficacious or effectual grace. Paul's language in verse 24 speaks to this selective application of God's wonderful grace.

B. Grace is exclusive

In passing let us note how the text is not speaking of degrees of love by those who love the Lord, but between those who love our Lord and those who do not. Thus His grace is upon all who believe, whose love is incorruptible. He is not withholding His grace to the believing if He finds within them a corrupted love. This is not what the text is telling us. Yet there is a subjective aspect to this type of love and we will note this in a moment.

The word "incorruptible" occurs only six times in the NT and only in Pauline literature (Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:42, 50, 53, 54; 2 Tim. 1:10). It is a love that is not corrupted by death, thus a love that is unceasing, undying, or endless."⁶

"This benediction of grace is for those who are committed to loving Christ and who need his grace in order to survive in a world that will hate them as it hated Christ (John 15:18-20). The counterpart to this benediction of grace is in 1 Cor 16:22 where Paul states, 'if anyone loves not the Lord, let him be accursed.'"⁷

Paul calls grace on those who love our Lord with an incorruptible love. The application of this grace falls outside of an arbitrary or non-descript use. This grace is a consequence of our relationship with the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

Paul writes to the Ephesians in 60AD. He speaks of peace, love, faith and now grace. He calls them to remember. How well did they persevere in their faith? Turn with me to Revelation 2:1-7 [PLEASE READ]. The year is 90AD and here is what the apostle John says to the church of Ephesus.

They were maintaining a form of truth without cultivating the relational side of truth. They were still married to the truth, but without any intimacy or affection. I always want to caution us in the handling of this passage (Rev. 2, 3), but neither do I wish to dismiss its weight or implication for us.

They still believed God, but did not look to Him as Father. John might very well be speaking to those who are pretending faith or professing love without actually possessing faith or love. Yet speaking from experience, I find it possible to lose my affection for God. He gets lost in the hustle and bustle of life. It is for this reason I believe we need to regularly submerge ourselves in the Scripture. Such activity keeps us from getting lost in the shadow. This is why the author of Hebrews says (PLEASE READ Heb. 4:19-36),

¹⁹ “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 4:19-25).

Is he not saying something similar to that of John? This is what Paul alludes to in our present text. Friend, do not take the peace and love and faith and grace of God for granted. Remember and do not forget all that God has done and is doing for you in the person and work of Jesus Christ; enter richly into all aspects of a Trinitarian relationship. If you forget, you will drift and in drifting there is great danger. Do not play with God. I might not be able to fully understand and explain all that Revelation 2:5 and Hebrews 4:26-36 means, but neither do I wish to simply dismiss it without due diligence.

This is the entire intent of this letter. The letter invites the unbelieving to believe and the believing to enjoy all they are in the person and work of God as Trinity.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Do you have the peace of God and thus are you at peace with God?
2. Do you have peace with God and thus are you at peace with one another?
3. Have you experienced the love of God and do you love one another?
4. Are you gracious or is your love and peace conditional?
5. For me, within the context of our larger discussion, consider the application of this benediction within the household and within the local church.

¹ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 185.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tychicus>

³ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 873.

⁴ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*, 79.

⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 874.

⁶ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 875, 877.

⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 875.