

Ephesians 1:2 – The Cause, Effect, and Source of Salvation

The Cause of Salvation: Grace

1. What is Grace?
 - a. God's unearned favor and delighted blessing
 - b. God's Rewards At Christ's Expense
 - i. Used primarily in the NT to denote God's unearned choice of believers for salvation through Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death and all the outworking of this Gospel
 - ii. The Great Exchange
 - c. The Gospel summed up in one word
 - i. Paul starts his letter with great theological significance
 - ii. Grace is mentioned over 155 times in the NT, 100 by Paul, 12 in Ephesians alone. This is no mere greeting, this is Paul's purpose and power in the Gospel: Grace!

ILLUSTRATION: What makes Christianity different from all the other religions of the world? Years ago that very question was discussed at a conference. Some of the participants argued that Christianity is unique in teaching that God became man. But someone objected, saying that other religions teach similar doctrines. What about the resurrection? No, it was argued, other faiths believe that the dead rise again. The discussion grew heated.

C. S. Lewis, a strong defender of Christianity, came in late, sat down, and asked, "What's the rumpus about?" When he learned that it was a debate about the uniqueness of Christianity, he immediately commented, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace."

How right he was! The very heart of the gospel is the supreme truth that God accepts us with no conditions whatever when we put our trust in the atoning sacrifice of His incarnate Son. Although we are helplessly sinful, God in grace forgives us completely. It's by His infinite grace that we are saved, not by moral character, works of righteousness, commandment-keeping, or churchgoing. When we do nothing else but accept God's total pardon, we receive the guarantee of eternal life (Tim3:4-7).

2. Why does Paul use it in a greeting?
 - a. Typical Greek greeting in a letter was "Rejoice" (*χαίρειν*), see Acts 15:23; 23:26; Jam 1:1
 - b. Paul typically uses Grace (*χαρις*) in place of Rejoice (*χαίρειν*), see Gal 1:3; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Phil 1:2; 2 Th 1:2; Phlm 3
 - c. Paul chose the "radically richer greeting" for a reason

- d. From the very greeting of this letter the emphasis of the Lord is emphasized in Paul's words: the appreciation, acceptance and appropriation of God's grace
- 3. How does it relate to the effect and the source?
 - a. God's grace toward us in Jesus Christ, through His death in our place and His righteousness imputed to us, brings us peace with God
 - b. God alone is the source of our salvation, not our righteousness
 - i. Grace, that is unearned favor from God, through Christ, also gives us no pedestal on which to elevate ourselves above others
 - 1. This makes forgiveness not only possible, but natural
 - 2. This makes kindness not only possible, but natural
 - 3. This makes our relationships with each other completely unattached to race, history, maturity, economic status, gender, etc (Eph 4-5). We are all saved by grace, blessed by grace, and will be glorified by grace (Eph 1-3).

The Effect of Salvation: Peace

- 1. What is peace?
 - a. The Jewish word, shalom, means well-being, wholeness, complete peace and rest.
 - b. Used 8 times in Ephesians, primarily referring to the believer's peace with God and peace with one another.
 - c. More than just a mere absence of conflict, but a healthy, full, almost joyful relationship.
- 2. Why does Paul use it in his greetings?
 - a. The typical Jewish greeting was "Shalom" or peace.
 - b. Paul takes this concept and sees it as the effect of the gracious work of God in the Gospel.
 - c. Paul wants to set the tone, the foundation of his letter, upon the Gospel: the grace of God bringing peace with God.
- 3. How does it relate to the cause and the source?
 - a. Peace comes from the gracious work of God the Father and the Lord Jesus.
 - b. Peace is extended from the greater to the lesser. This is compassionate, kind, merciful, and full of grace.

The Source of Salvation: God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord

- 1. Father
 - a. God is mentioned as our Father in this opening salutation.
 - b. God as Father is mentioned only 15 times in the OT and over 260 times in the NT, 45 of those in Paul's writings.
 - c. New relationship, which the OT saints longed for and waited for, is now brought to us through Jesus Christ.
 - i. He called God our father (Mat 23:9)
 - ii. His instruction on prayer (Mark 6:9ff)

- iii. Jesus called God “Abba, Father” and Paul utilizes it for us (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15; Mark 14:36)
 - iv. Grace and Peace come, not only from God, but from Him as *our Father*, denoting personal relationship of tremendous position
- 2. Lord
 - a. Lord comes from the word meaning “power, authority, having might”
 - b. Used 717 times in the NT and primarily used in these three ways:
 - i. Secular – lord, master, owner of something, political leaders
 - ii. Used of God to translate YHWH from the OT
 - 1. Romans 4:8 = Ps 32:2
 - 2. Romans 9:3=28-29 = Is 10:22-23
 - iii. Used of Jesus as Lord.
 - 1. 1 Cor 12:3
 - 2. Rom 10:9 – God made Him Lord through resurrection
 - 3. Eph 1:20 – His seat in the heavenlies with God
 - 4. John 10:28 – Thomas’ exclamation of JC’s deity
 - 5. Acts 2:36 – God made Him Lord and Christ
 - iv. Out of the 26 times used in Ephesians, only 2 refer to earthly masters, the other 24 refer to Jesus
 - v. Jesus has authority over all things, including us. He is not equal, He is our master, our owner, for He bought us with a very high price. Although He has given us His privileges and blessings, He is far more worthy, powerful, magnificent, and glorious than us. He is our Lord who extends to us grace and peace.
- 3. Relation of both to Grace and Peace
 - a. God extends His gracious work toward us in Jesus Christ and His death in our place which accomplishes peace with Him
 - b. This work of God through Jesus Christ makes God our Father and no longer our enemy or merely our Creator God.
 - c. Jesus gave His life, by gracious love, to extend peace between God and us.

If God can extend grace and peace to us in such a powerful and costly manner, how can we extend grace and peace to this world around us? How can we, like our Father and our Lord, seek the good of this world? God did not wait for us to clean ourselves up, become more moral, or even to seek Him. He sought us out to show us His goodness. We have opportunities in this world to seek out others to show them the grace and peace of God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. May we not sit back and just wait for Jesus to return, separating ourselves from what we see as a “deservedly suffering” world. May we be gracious, may we seek the wholeness and welfare of this world whether they are believers or unbelievers. May we have the mind of Christ and the heart of our Father, speaking thusly to those in need: May you find grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.