

## Grace and Peace

- Romans 1
- If your Ecclesia received a letter from Paul, you didn't have to turn it over and look on the back to see who it was from...
- The opening gives it away
- Every single one of Paul's Letters begin with the phrase, "***Grace and Peace***"
- We read it today in Romans 1
- Romans 1:1-7
  - 1) Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
  - 2) which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,
  - 3) concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh
  - 4) and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,
  - 5) through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,
  - 6) including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
  - 7) To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: **Grace** to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- What a lovely way to begin a letter
- I think that there is a great lesson for us to learn from these two words
- Paul uses an interesting play on words when he does this
- Paul had a lifelong goal of seeing both Jews and Gentiles worshipping together
- He uses a play on both the traditional Greek greeting and the traditional Hebrew greeting
- It was common for Gentiles to greet each other by saying, "*Greetings*"

- The Greek word for “Greetings” is “Chairein”
- Paul uses the Greek word for “Grace” instead, and says “Charis”
- A cute way of saying a word that SOUNDS like your saying “Greetings”, but in reality you are talking about something entirely quite different
- Of course, we are all familiar with the traditional Hebrew greeting, “Shalom”
- And, now that you think about it, you realize that “Shalom” means “Peace”
- So, Paul’s common greeting of Grace and Peace would catch the ear of both Jew and Gentile
- It kind of became the “Christian” way of greeting, and you see other writers using the same kind of greeting
- I want to talk a bit about Grace and Peace this morning
- I always got Grace and Mercy mixed up, until I found a helpful saying to remind me
- Grace is getting what you don’t deserve, and Mercy is not getting what you do deserve
- We all need Mercy
- It’s very clear in the Bible, and we can easily see it in our own lives, that each one of us is a Sinner
- We are all intimately aware of how we have fallen short of Righteousness, and we are all very clear what the Bible teaches about Sin
- We know that the wages of Sin is Death, and it’s kind of obvious that each one of us deserves Death
- Mercy is not getting what you deserve
- We fully understand that each one of us deserves Death
- But, we are thankful that our Father loves us so much that he is not going to give us what we deserve
- We are grateful that God has offered us Eternal Life instead of Eternal Death

- We all fully understand that we need Mercy
- But, what about Grace...
- Sometimes, I find it a little harder to understand Grace
- Grace is getting what you don't deserve
- Maybe it's because we are all so proud that it's harder to think that we don't deserve something...
- Maybe it's because we get so stuck in the idea of "Earning our Salvation" that we kind of think in the back of our head that we "deserve" it
- Let's look closer at what Grace is...
- This concept of grace goes little beyond the basic definition of "getting what you don't deserve" or "unmerited favor" or "the free gift of God"
- But since grace is at the very heart, indeed, it is the very foundation of salvation, we should have a better grasp of this important word and its truth
- The ramifications of God's grace to us in Christ vitally affect our lives on every hand
- Throughout the New Testament the effects of God's grace are emphasized
- Everywhere we turn, we run into this word - 104 times in the New Testament
- Jesus himself is actually described as the very epitome and manifestation of God's grace
- Grace is actually an integral part of correct Doctrine
- Every aspect of doctrine is related to grace
- Grace stresses God's character and man's sinfulness while mercy stresses God's strength and man's helplessness
- Grace finds its necessity in the fact of God's holiness and in the sinfulness of man, and in the nature of God as the Creator and man as the creature
- Grace is opposed to and excludes any idea of works for merit, works done as a means of blessing or as payment for what is done

- Grace means you never deserve it nor can you earn it even by the old fashion method of working for it
- Look what Paul says in Chapter 4
- Romans 4:1-5
  - 1) What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?
  - 2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.
  - 3) For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”
  - 4) Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.
  - 5) And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,
- God gives us Mercy because we need it
- He gives us Grace because he loves us
- Grace always brings benefits and one of these benefits is reflected in the other word that Paul always uses in his Greeting... **Peace**
- I think that the order is significant
- First Grace and then Peace
- Until we know and appropriate grace, we can't really experience peace
- “Peace” was a typical Jewish greeting, and it carries a much deeper meaning than you normally would think
- Shalom means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, and harmony
- Paul connects these wonderful two words together
- Many people feel like they are lacking something
- People are often looking for something to “complete” them... to make them whole
- If you understand Grace, then you can begin to understand what it means to be whole

- If you truly believe that God is giving you what you don't deserve, then you might begin to feel whole
- As humans... Frail, sinful, weak humans it is only logical that we would feel incomplete and lacking
- God wants us to feel fulfilled
- He wants us to feel that sense of being a part of something bigger
- He wants us to appreciate that we are part of something wonderful
- He wants us to be at peace with who we are
- Not struggling over all the mistakes that we've made, but understanding that he will fill our lives with Mercy, and by his Grace we will be a part of the everlasting
- That is the Peace that Paul wishes upon us
- And Jesus is the Prince of Peace
- Jesus perfectly describes that sense of fulfillment and completeness that is Peace
- Come to know Jesus, and you will come to know Peace
- Come to understand Grace, and you will find Peace
- As we take this Bread and Wine we can turn our thoughts to this wonderful gift that we've been given
- Sure, we didn't deserve it
- It was an act of Grace
- And understanding that, should give us Peace