

Sermon Series: The Book of Titus
Sermon title: Putting Greetings in Order
Scripture reading: Titus 1:1-4
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
June 9, 2019
S.C. Brown, Pastor

My favorite restaurant in Hong Kong is a place down in Yau Ma Tei called **Salaam Namaste**. The food is excellent and the owner is a Christian brother from Nepal. But it has an odd name. It's mixing *Salaam*, an Arabic greeting meaning 'peace' with a South Asian greeting, *Namaste*, meaning 'I bow to you' but the meaning is that I bow to the divine in you.

Oddly enough, since my friend the owner is a Christian, like other Nepalese Christians he greets believers differently. Instead of using 'Namaste' they use *Jaimahshi*, which translated means 'Praise the Messiah', meaning, 'Praise Jesus'.

The way we greet people is important, though most of the time we don't really even think about it.

Well, as we come to Titus chapter 1 verse 4 we have a greeting from Paul.

Titus 1:4 says,

To Titus, my true child in a common faith:

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Is this a normal greeting for his time? Why does he use the words that he does? What is he hoping to convey? What are we to learn from this?

Let's pray.

In every single one of Paul's letters he starts off with greeting his recipients (whether a person or a church) with the words, '**Grace and Peace**' with some variation in some letters, but always including grace and peace.

Take for example **Romans 1**. "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

This exact phrase he uses in 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians and Philemon.

In the letters to Timothy he adds the word, 'mercy'.

Peter uses grace and peace as well, as does John in 2nd John and Revelation.

James alone uses something different besides grace and peace. More about that in a moment.

Was this 'Grace & Peace' a common greeting?

Was Paul just using what everyone else used?

Well, as I studied about letters written in that time period, what I found is that Paul invented this greeting.

It never existed before.

The common way that people used to greet one another in Greek letters in the first century was, "*Greetings*".

In fact, we have some examples of it in the Bible.

Acts 15:23

They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, **greetings**.

Acts 23:23-26

23 Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. **24** Also provide mounts for Paul

to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”

25 And he wrote a letter to this effect:

26 “Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix,
greetings.

I mentioned that James uses something different in his letter. He uses the standard greeting of the day..‘Greetings’. **James 1:1** says,

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: **Greetings.**

So, the common greeting of the day was simply,
“Greetings” but that’s not what Paul used.

He invented a whole new way of greeting people.

He greets Titus and the churches in Crete with, **Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.**

Why the words grace and peace?

Why not health and wealth?

Why not safety and security?

Why not faith, love and hope?

I. WHAT IS GRACE?

How would you define it?

Some have said it is ***"God's riches at Christ's expense."***
That's a pretty good definition.

Some have said it is ***"God's unmerited favor"***.

I believe Joel Beeke is right when he says that God's unmerited favor is too weak and that we should define grace as, ***"God's unmerited favor in the place of merited wrath."***

It's not God taking us from a 0 to a 10. It is God taking us from a -10 to a 10, or better yet...a -100,000 to a 100,000.

An 18th century English Baptist pastor named Abraham Booth defined grace this way, ***"It is the eternal and absolute free favor of God, manifested in the [granting] of spiritual and eternal blessings to the guilty and the unworthy."***

Listen to a few verse from the Bible about grace and see if this helps us see what it is.

Ephesians 1:3-8

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in

him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **to the praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of his grace**, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

So here in Ephesians we see the grace of God that brought us to salvation. God purposed us for adoption and we have redemption due to his grace. This is God's unearned favor to those who have earned punishment. God extends grace to sinners and forgives them.

But the grace that Paul is talking about here in Titus is the grace of God that *continues* to flow to Christians after they have already been saved. It is **sustaining grace**. When Paul speaks of this grace and peace...it is TO Titus and the churches. It is not a just a past grace but a coming grace.

It's like even when we say, "Good morning" to someone we aren't saying that I hope yesterday's morning was good but we are saying I hope this morning is good.

Is that how you see grace, as something that God continues to give you or do you see it only as something that came to you in the past?

Let me give you some examples of the sustaining grace that continues to be dispensed to us from God.

2 Corinthians 9:8

God is able to make all **grace** abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

In this passage, grace is God's favor, abounding to us, of no merit of our own so that we will have all sufficiency, all the time, in all things..so that we can abound in every good work.

That's amazing grace!

Or what about **2 Corinthians 12:9.**

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me.

Here in this verse, grace is God's power working through us and in us.

**So, what is *sustaining* GRACE from these 2 verses?
God giving us all sufficiency, in all things, at all times
so that we can abound in every good work.**

But Paul also greets Titus with PEACE.

Paul is using here the Hebrew greeting. He has taken the word *Shalom* and translated over to Greek, added it to grace to greet people. It means peace.

WHAT IS PEACE?

What does the Bible say about peace?

Jesus said in **John 14:27** (*in the context of teaching on the Holy Spirit*), Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Here, peace is something that Jesus gives us, something lasting, that causes our hearts to not be troubled and afraid...and the peace that is given by God in the Bible is a peace that we experience irregardless of our circumstances.

Philippians 4:6 says, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What is peace?

Peace is the internal rest experienced when the grace of God is dispensed through the Holy Spirit.

Sustaining grace is God giving us all sufficiency, in all things, at all times so that we can abound in every good work. Peace is what we experience when we are given that grace.

So, Paul is greeting Titus in the best way. He is saying, 'Titus, may God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ give you grace....may he give you all sufficiency, in all things, at all times and may you have internal rest no matter how things are going.'

That's a lot better than saying, 'Have a great day.'

How does God do it? Through what means does he dispense grace and peace?

2 Peter 1:2-4

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.

Grace and peace comes to us through the promises of God, through the word of God.

In fact, Grace and Peace is coming to Titus through the very words that Paul is writing to him.

I submit to you that the reason why this greeting of Grace & Peace is used all over the New Testament is because this is exactly what we all need.....every day!

In our work.

In our marriage.

In our parenting.

In our ministering to others.

We...need....**grace & peace.**

We need God to supply to us all sufficiency, in all things, at all times- so that we can abound in every good workand experience the internal rest that comes through the Holy Spirit.

Where do you need grace this morning?

Where do you need peace?

How are you expecting these things to come to you?

Just by wishing?

No, instead grace and peace will come to you from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Savior as you listen to God....by reading the word of God.

Have you read Titus? May Grace and Peace be multiplied to you as you take up and read.