

Grace to You and Peace

by Tim Conway

Tim Conway's sermon emphasizes the profound significance of grace and peace as God's heartfelt gifts to His people, urging believers to recognize their importance in the Christian faith.

Duration: 1:07:17

Scripture: John 1:16, Ephesians 1:2, Ephesians 2:1-2, Ephesians 2:4-5, Ephesians 2:14-15, Ephesians 4:3, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Gospel Message"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound significance of the words 'grace' and 'peace' in Ephesians 1:2, emphasizing the need to understand the weightiness of these terms in light of our sinful nature and separation from God. It explores how grace speaks of God's unmerited favor and condescending love towards us, while peace signifies unity, reconciliation, and the removal of hostility between us and God. The sermon highlights the Gospel message of God's intervention in our fallen state, offering grace and peace despite our deserving damnation, ultimately pointing to the heart of the Gospel - restoration of relationship with God.

Transcript

Ephesians 1. Verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus. Verse 2. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we're going to stop right there. I want us to focus our attention on that second verse. Grace to you.

Very familiar words to us. John MacArthur's radio show named Grace to You and Peace. In other words, and peace to you.

Grace to you and peace to you. To you. From God our Father.

And from is implied the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I don't know, I can't imagine whether any of you have ever heard a sermon on this verse or any of the similar verses like this because Paul starts with very similar salutations in his different epistles. But I want to preach just on this verse.

Brethren, I want us to think first off about salutations. We can just look at this. After all, this is just a salutation.

We read right past this. It's so familiar. One of the things we have to watch out for is familiarity when we deal with God's Word because God's Word is not like any other Word and we want to be careful of familiarity because if we become overly familiar with something, what happens is we lose a sense of the weightiness.

You know, sometimes we take verses or portions of Scripture that mean a lot to us and you know, you tag it on the end of your email or something, and what happens over time is because of the familiarity with it, we can lose it. And we think, ah, it's just part of a salutation. Familiarity can set in.

But that's not all. When we're dealing with salutations, sometimes we recognize this. We recognize that a salutation is expected.

And so, we don't put a whole lot of weight into them because after all, people just say them in somewhat of a trivial manner. Sometimes people are looking for something to say because they're ready to greet somebody or they're ready to depart from somebody and they recognize they need to say something and so they just say what is customary. What is traditional.

And they really don't think of the meaning at all. I hear people say, especially in... I don't say adios to people when I'm down in Mexico. Because I know what that means.

I know that that a is to and the dios is God and it's to God and just to flippantly say that, I don't want to say it. It's like saying God bless you or praise the Lord when it's just flippant. It just comes off your tongue.

What it becomes is just using God's name in vain. And the truth is, lots of salutations in our world, they are relatively vain. Because we don't give a whole lot of thought to them.

We just say them. It's kind of like, how are you doing today? Well, most people when they use that don't really expect people to answer. When somebody stops and says, well, let me tell you how I'm doing.

Well, I didn't really mean that. I just really wanted to be just polite and pass by. I really wasn't looking for an answer there.

But what happens is when it comes to salutations, because we so traditionally use them flippantly without a whole lot of thought, what happens is we can even find Paul giving one and not really take it all that seriously. Salutations just typically formalities. Something we just pass by thoughtlessly, casually.

And we have to admit that in many cases, we use them that way. We have used salutations very thoughtlessly, very carelessly, because again, because we just know that it's expected. Things like what? How are you? Farewell.

We use dear, dear so and so. I'm talking about greetings, whether we use them in a letter, in email, whether we greet somebody when we see them face to face, we'll say greetings, good morning, good evening. Godspeed, without really thinking.

Because they're used so lightly, we can just go across them. But we don't want to do that with Scripture. Now here's just the next thing to think about with salutations.

The Apostle Paul is dead serious. He is sincere. Now see, when somebody uses a salutation and their whole heart's in it, that's an added reason.

That's a step up from just using a salutation in any old way. But when you know somebody's dead serious and they look, when somebody writes God bless you, you know that they really mean that. When they write sincerely at the end, and you know they really mean it.

This is heartfelt. This person really loves you. This person really is writing with a passion.

But see, the salutation takes on a deeper meaning then. And none of us are going to argue the fact that Paul wasn't absolutely, he talks about the care that he had for the churches. Oh, when he's writing to the churches, it's with care.

It's with a heart. Paul had a heart for people. Paul would write to people and say, and he's writing even with tears.

Why? Because he was in passion. His emotion, his heart, his whole soul was involved in writing to God's elect. That would be a reason to give this more weight.

But let me give you another reason. Listen, I can be altogether sincere and say to you as I'm leaving you, God bless you, brother. God bless you, sister.

It's possible I say that to somebody who's not a true sister. They go out and get in a car accident and they end up cursed and in God's hell forever. Because I tell you this, as sincere as I might be, my sincerity may not line up with God.

But you need to consider this. The Apostle Paul is writing as an ambassador. That means he is speaking on the behalf of God Himself.

Listen, you need to read this for what it is. When we use certain salutations, Godspeed, the peace be to you actually comes from the very common shalom. Peace.

When we use terms like Godspeed, God bless you, peace, that's as sincere as we might be. That's our wish for one another. And you know when people are sincere that way, we appreciate that.

It's not that it's not appreciated, but I can tell you this, I can be as sincere as I want to be, and yet if I'm not in tune with God, we can say God bless you to people who are actually cursed by God. And I'm not saying we shouldn't do that. God says to bless, not curse.

But like I say, I can say God bless you to somebody that God kills very soon hereafter and sends to hell. And my blessing was not quite in accord. But Paul, see this is what you have to gather from verse 2. This is not simply one man's wish to another.

This isn't Paul saying merely I wish, or I could hope, or my desire for you is that God might show you grace and peace. You know what this is? You see, this is a whole different thing if I say God bless you, brother. But if I actually have been visited by a revelation from God, and God told me, Tim Conway, you go and tell Zeke Coleman from me, God bless you.

That means something different. And he would take it different. If I just say that, he recognizes, hey, you know, brother, Tim cares about me.

That was nice of him. If he's really sincere about that, that's nice of him. I appreciate that sincerity.

But if I do the other, he looks over my shoulder and he says, God is blessing me. And let me tell you something, when God blesses you, you are blessed. See, God doesn't just wish something on somebody.

God is the one who pronounces blessing and He's got the ability to pour that blessing on you. When God says grace and peace, when God says, Paul, go tell them grace to you and peace to you. Sign my name to it.

It's from Me. That's what's said here. From God the Father.

This isn't just a wish. This is a pronouncement that it is so. In fact, when you see this kind of introduction, this kind of salutation come off the pen of John.

In fact, turn over there. Look at 2 John. I want you to see this.

Look, I'll tell you this, if you've got your King James Bible, you won't see this. But all the other translations have it. And the reason they have it is because it's here in the original.

What am I talking about? It's the two words, will be. Notice this. This is a very similar salutation.

This is coming from John. Grace, mercy, and peace will be. You see that? Will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son in truth and love.

Now, in many of these salutations, the will be is not there. But it's certainly assumed. My whole point is this.

This isn't just God saying to Paul, go wish grace and peace on these people from you. From you. This is God pronouncing.

Brethren, the reason that this is so important is this. What this salutation helps me and you to perceive is God's present thought towards His people right now. Do you ever wonder, what's God thinking about me right now? How does God think towards me? You see, Paul as an ambassador comes on behalf of God and says this is how God is thinking about you.

He's thinking thoughts of grace. He's thinking thoughts of peace. Peace to you from me.

You remember when Jesus Christ came into the midst of His disciples and He said, peace to you. Well, He tells them in another place, My peace I leave with you. You have to hear this for what it is.

When God says grace to you, when God says peace to you, He means it's on you. It's coming to you. It's going to be and is even now lavished upon you.

I have a heart of peace. I have thoughts of peace and of grace towards you. And God is powerful to make those things a reality.

That's the reality of this. We don't want to pass by this. Brethren, I'll tell you, when you start to really think about what grace and peace is, it encompasses the wholeness of what the Gospel is.

The Gospel is all about grace and peace if we understand these terms right. Beloved brethren of the Lord, let me tell you, we need to think about what God's thoughts are towards us. Because we live with our own heart, with our own minds, we live with a slanderer who is let loose in this world.

And God has done this. It's like God has given us His truth. And at the same time, He says, that faith that they have in the truth of that Word is going to constantly be tested because I am going to put a slanderer in this world.

The devil is God's devil. And he does God's bidding. And he can never do more than what God allows him to do.

And if he's in this world as a slanderer, you be sure of this, he's here doing what God has bid him do. Why do we need a slanderer? Oh, to test our faith. To test the genuineness of it.

To test our faith locking onto this Word. And you know what the slanderer comes and he wants us to feel all the time? When we try to imagine, how does God feel towards me? So often, he's right there to say, God is just glum and glowering over you. He's frowning.

You ever have that sense? God is just scowling at me. Listen, can God's people displease God and grieve God? Yes, they absolutely can. But I'll tell you what, even on your worst day, even when you've had your coldest day, your most backward day, when you've had a great fall, if you are truly one of the saints, one who is believing, full of faith, in Christ Jesus, God's thoughts towards you, God's attitude towards you, grace, peace, it is on your worst day.

Why? Because that's what the blood of Jesus Christ is all about. Saving sinners. Bringing sinners into reconciliation to God.

Even on your worst day, because our acceptance are not based on your merits, brethren. They're based on that blood that washes you. They're based on the righteousness of Christ.

Ultimately, our justification, brethren, you know this, our justification is outside of ourselves. Yes, we must believe. Yes, there is faith that is required in order to be justified.

But that faith attaches us to the merits of Jesus Christ. It's what He has done in His life and His death. Brethren, if we are indeed these saints, it is simply not so.

God does not hate you even when you sin and fall. Even when you've had a bad week. Even when the slander is right there to tell you, look what you've done.

God wants nothing to do with you. You think He's pleased with you? You think He accepts you? You think He wants anything to do with you? He's just frowning on you. He doesn't like you.

You're at a distance. He doesn't treat you like He treats all other God's people. Why? Because you're in the doghouse.

You don't think you can come to Him. You don't think He wants to receive you into His presence. And you know what God tells us through His Ambassador? He comes to us and He says, all the other voices in this world, including anything that might come from yourself, surrender that all to this grace.

Listen, from God our Father, from the Lord Jesus Christ, from Him, hear this, grace, peace. Oh Lord, you know what I just did? I've fallen. Lord, I could curse myself for what I did.

How stupid! How foolish! Grace, peace. The Son sits next to Him bearing the wounds. The blood speaks in Your behalf.

And so, grace, peace. God reveals to us in this salutation His very thoughts towards His people. Do you hear what I'm saying? You need to hear this.

You don't want to pass over words like this when they're from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And as an inspired writer, the Apostle Paul, that's exactly what these words are. This is God saying, Paul, write to them grace.

Speak to them of peace. The devil's right there. You are pathetic! Pitiful! Yeah, that's right.

I am. I know we have new hearts. And I know there's an obedience that characterizes our life.

But you and I know that though John writes to us that we sin not, we yet often fail. As I said, God may not always approve of what we do, but if you're one of His saints, if you're in Christ, God's heart towards you is expressed in these words. Grace.

Peace. So what are they? What is grace? We often say it's unmerited favor. Yeah, that's a wonderful... I want to bring out five characteristics of what grace is.

Favor. We often talk God's unmerited favor. This word is translated that way.

Listen to this. You don't need to turn there. But just think here.

You know the situation. The angel has appeared to Mary. Mary is a sinner.

Mary says to us that God is her Savior. Mary needs a Savior. Mary is a sinner just like us.

Saved by grace. Listen to what the angel says. He came to her and said, Greetings, O favored one.

The Lord is with you. In Luke 1.28. Again in Luke 1.30, the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. There's our word right there.

Charis. Favor. That's the idea.

Now think with me. Mary found favor. How? She was going to give birth to the Messiah.

Brethren, only one woman was ever set apart. You see, it's the idea of God taking somebody and setting them apart for the sake of Him to show forth His kindness and His benevolence in unusual fashion. That's what the reality is behind Mary being favored.

Among all the women in this world, she was set aside to mother the Messiah. The Savior of the world. To be saved is a manifestation of favor.

Those to whom God shows saving grace are indeed the favored ones of all the world. If you just look up favor, if you just look up favor in any dictionary, you find things like this manifestation of excessive kindness. Have you ever read that through all these coming ages, God is going to show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness? It's a manifestation of kindness.

That's what we're talking about. Favor. It's a preferential treatment.

Listen, Mary was singled out among all the women upon the face of the earth to have this. Brethren, when we read that God shows no partiality, you need to recognize that in the context for which it's meant. What

that means is that God is going to deal with people by the same standard.

He's going to judge people on the same basis. But brethren, you need to hear this. The very fact that God judges Jesus Christ in the place of some sinners is preferential treatment.

He has favorites. There's no question about it. There are people in this world... If you're in Christ, to be a recipient of grace is to be one of the favored ones.

Excessive kindness through all the coming ages. Oh, far more than to be the mother of the Messiah, is to be one who is a partaker of the benefits that the Messiah earned in the stead of sinners. Here's the second thing.

It's unmerited. Listen to Romans 11.6. Don't turn to this, but just listen to it. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.

Otherwise, grace would no longer be grace. What is grace? Altogether aside from works. Altogether aside from what we do.

It's not merited. It is unmerited favor. This is favor that we receive from God, but that you and I have no right to.

No right to. Entirely unworthy. Entirely undeserving.

A third, I heard listening to a sermon by Martin Lloyd-Jones that he likes to refer to grace as condescending love. And when I heard him say that, I got the feeling that he has heard other people down through history describe grace as that. Condescending love.

And you know when he said that, as I was looking through all the verses in the New Testament that use this word, I came across the one there in 2 Corinthians 8. And I thought, I don't know who it was that Lloyd-Jones got that definition from. I can't find that in the lexicons, but he heard that somewhere. But doesn't 2 Corinthians 8, 9? You know the verse.

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor so that you by His poverty might become rich. Grace is literally this, it's the love that stoops down. He became poor.

It's a condescending love. It's God's willingness to send His Son to become dirty. By dirty, I don't mean sinful, but I mean to come into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh.

To come among sinners. To endure from sinners what He endured. He had to get dirty to save us.

He had to leave His glory behind. That's what I mean by that. It's favor.

It's unmerited. It's condescending love. Back when I was at Community Baptist Church, I remember Pat Horner preaching about grace one day.

And he made the point to emphasize that you cannot define grace aside from power. That has always stuck with me. And it stuck with me primarily because after hearing that, and I came across the text in 1 Corinthians 15, I was always struck by the fact that yes indeed, you don't want to separate the idea of power from the definition of grace.

Basically, what you have is favor which is powerful and it's active. That's the reality. And it loads its objects with benefits.

The objects of grace are loaded with blessing. Powerfully so. God powerfully moves so that the one who is a recipient of His grace receives by that grace.

Powerfully so. Don't ever separate it from power. And I'll give you three verses that jump out in the New Testament as coming to the aid of just such a definition.

Listen to this. I mentioned it. 1 Corinthians 15.

You might have wondered what verse I was talking about. Verse 10, by the grace of God, Paul says, I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain.

In other words, it's not inactive. On the contrary, Paul says this, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is within me. Or that is with me.

Now here's what Paul's saying. I outrun everyone. When it comes to living the Christian life, as far as sinners saved by grace, he could call himself the chief of sinners, but I'll tell you this, he also called himself the one running the best, the fastest.

You want to hear it again? He says, I worked harder than any of them. You look at his life. Tireless.

Unrelenting. But you know what he says? I recognize that this is true. And it was true.

Paul's under inspiration. He's writing the truth. For him to say that it wasn't so would not have been truth.

It's not arrogance. It's not pride. When you say like this, what is true? But you see who he accredits it to.

Not to himself, but to God's grace. In other words, God's grace was not idle. It was not inactive.

It was not the kind of thing that well, it's true, but it's unobservable. No, there is a demonstration of power where God directs His grace. He unleashes His power in the channel of grace to bring about some sort of result.

Hear this again. 2 Corinthians 12.9 This is when Paul said, Lord, this thorn in the flesh, would You please remove it? He asked three times. The answer is this, my grace is sufficient for You, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

And what he's doing here is when he says my grace is sufficient, he immediately goes to power. In other words, that grace and that power go hand in hand. They work together.

Paul, my grace is sufficient. How is it sufficient? Because it is a channel of my power. And I will channel that power in a way that it will all be sufficient in the end.

You've got this thorn in the flesh. You've asked for it to be taken away. But Paul, I will uphold you even with it.

You will be an object of my grace. My power will be channeled through you. Even in your weakness, my power is going to go through you.

How about this? Hebrews 13.9 says, it's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace. Again, you have the idea of strength. There's a power that is attached.

And I think if you take grace, not only as favor, unmerited, condescending love, but remember the power aspect of it. A fifth thing. It goes hand-in-hand with this.

Grace is not just a gracious disposition. Sometimes we say, well, they're gracious. And what we mean is they're a kind person.

But the grace of God is not just God having a kind disposition towards us. That's what I'm trying to get across about this salutation. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not just God saying to us. On the first level, it's not just Paul saying, well, I hope God has a gracious disposition for you. Neither is it just God saying, well, I have a gracious disposition towards you.

Though those things might be true, the reality is grace itself always goes further than that. There is an actual demonstration of grace. God's grace is always accompanied by demonstration.

Last one, I wanted to focus on the power of it. This one, on the fact that there is a demonstration of it. What do I mean? Well, maybe a verse like this kind of captures this.

John 1.16 From His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. There is a fullness in Christ and something actually flows out of that fullness to fill us. That is grace upon grace.

When something is actually being imparted to us from Christ, from His fullness, we have received. Brethren, the grace of God has everything to do with what we receive. My point before this was the powerful manifestation.

This one is the demonstration in the fact that a gift is given. It's unmerited. It's a gift.

Something is actually received from the fullness of Christ Himself. Or how about this? Hebrews 4.16 Very well known. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of what? Of grace.

Why? So that He can smile at us and show us a gracious disposition? No, brethren, that's not the end of the matter. Yes, He has a gracious disposition towards us, but it's always that the grace imparts. God being gracious to us.

When you read about through all these coming ages, the immeasurable riches of the grace of God and kindness is going to be flowing upon us age after age after age. What you have to recognize, it's not just God sitting up there having a smile towards us. It's God sitting up there and lavishing all manner of good.

There's an inheritance to be had. It's just giving, giving, giving. Hebrews 4.16 With confidence, even now in this life, we are to draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive.

You always want to attach that. Grace. When you hear grace, it's that we might receive.

Receiving mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Need. Receiving.

Help. That's the idea. There's a reception.

So think, it's favor. It's unmerited. It's God's condescending love.

It's powerful and there is reception. It gives. It gives.

It bestows from His fullness grace upon grace. Brethren, again, I go back to this. On your worst day when the devil is saying, Christ didn't want to have anything to do with you, here's God saying, grace, grace.

My condescending love. Unmerited. The Son of God left the halls of heaven and came down for you.

If I did that, am I going to withhold any other good thing from you? You're an object of My grace. Grace. But Lord, I sinned.

I came to You in the beginning on that basis. I'm well aware. He makes provision, brethren, He makes provision for our falls and our failures in this Christian life.

What He accomplished in Christ makes provision for our stumblings and blunderings today just as much as when we were lost or the first day we came to Christ. The devil may be telling you he didn't want anything to do with you and he's saying, grace to you. My grace to you from God your Father.

Let's talk about peace. Peace. So often, I actually thought about a commercial from my lost days like back in the 70's.

Remember that Calgon commercial? Nobody remembers it. I won't bring it up. But, imagine this.

A father walks into his home, and I'm not saying any father necessarily in this church, into his own home. If the shoe fits, you can wear it. But, I'm just using this picture for imagery, not to describe anybody's home in the church.

But a father walks into his home. The children are crying. The children are fighting.

Mom is screaming. The dog is barking. The TV is blaring.

And he just says, I want peace! We all know what he means. He wants all the blaring, barking, yelling, and crying to stop. Or, we think of not being at war.

Some of you may know, our President just visited Hiroshima where the first atomic bomb was dropped during World War II. We dropped two bombs. The war was over.

Peace, right? We describe peace as the time between wars. Those are two very common ways we use the idea. Peace.

Peace. Irenae is the Greek word. And there's no question about it that this term as found in our New Testaments can relate both of those ideas.

No question. But the thing is, we don't want to stop there. One of the things that can be very helpful in seeking to define words, our first step in defining words as to how they're used in the Bible is not to go outside the Bible.

The first step to defining words in the Bible is to let the Bible help us define those words. That's always the safest way. And what's interesting to me is this.

Jesus sets the term peace, irenae, as opposite to various things throughout the Scripture. He sets it in opposition to tribulation. That kind of goes along with the first usage where the guy walks into his house.

He doesn't want all the tribulation in the house! We may think of trials. Well, there's a trial to Him. He wants peace.

We may think of tranquility. The opposite of tribulation. The opposite of suffering.

That's how Jesus uses it. One way. He also sets it opposite to the sword, which is opposite to war.

He says, I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. But there's another opposite. And I think we really need to feel the way to this.

In Luke 12, verse 51, Jesus says, Do you think that I've come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you. But rather, division. For from now on, in one house, there will be five divided.

Three against two. Two against three. They will be divided.

Father against son. Son against father. Mother against daughter.

Daughter against mother. Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law. Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Now, if you turn there, go back to Ephesians, because I want to show you something in Ephesians. The word peace is used a number of times in this epistle. We're looking at the first usage in verse 2 of chapter 1, but it comes up again and again.

And I want you to get a feel for this. Ephesians 2, verse 14. Now, before I read this, here's what I want you to see.

Jesus in Luke 12 is not just setting peace in opposition to tribulation or to the sword. He sets peace over against division. That's key.

Because so oftentimes we think about peace as a lack. We think about peace as the removal of war. Or we think about peace as the removal of the raucous and the loudness.

But we want to come over to the other side and look at the positive aspect of what peace is all about. Because this is at the heart of the Gospel. Notice this in Ephesians 2. He Himself, that's Jesus Christ, is our peace.

Notice this. Who has made us both one. What's the opposite of division? Well, in Luke 12, you might say peace.

Normally, we wouldn't say peace. You know what we would normally say? It's the opposite of division. Unity.

Unity is a massive part of what peace means. Notice this. Just watch this.

Not only do we have that reality in Luke 12, but in Ephesians 2, He is our peace who has made us both one. Unity. And notice this.

Broken down in His flesh, the dividing. See, we have the division. Peace.

He takes the division. He takes the dividing. He takes the wall that separates away.

You see, we might say, yeah, when the two atomic bombs got dropped, did it really bring peace? Peace, we define peace as being the time between wars, but was there really peace? Did the world really know peace? In fact, as an American, do you think after those two, do you think after those papers were signed, the treaty agreement signed by the Japanese, do you think if you're an American and you walk down the streets of Japan, the dividing wall of hostility was all removed and they were just going to come out and you were going to be one? I'm thinking probably not. But notice this. Verse 15, by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.

You see what it takes to make peace? It takes unity. Now you might get right here the sense, well, isn't He talking maybe about peace between Jews and Gentiles? Yeah, yeah, very likely. But our problem as Jews and Gentiles is not primarily our alienation from one another, it's primarily our alienation from God.

And you'll see that. Notice, keep reading. And might reconcile us both.

Both. We've both been brought together to be one, but we need to be reconciled, both of us, to God. In one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

See, when all hostility... I'm not sure that when we dropped that second bomb on Nagasaki, that all the hostility was killed. But you see, when God says, grace, peace, peace, no more division. You've been reconciled.

There's no more hostility. It's not just the absence of hostility. Go to Ephesians 4.3. The word comes up again.

I think this is most instructive. Ephesians 4.3 Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. What's the idea? What's a bond? It's that which binds together.

You bond things with glue or with cement. That's what God's saying. I'm connected to You.

I'm cemented to You. I'm one with You. You are mine.

Not only is all the hostility gone. Do you remember what Jesus said? You open the door. I'm going to come in.

I'm going to dine with You. I don't call you servants anymore. I call you friends.

This is what God is saying to us when He says peace. We don't want to just think about the negative. What is now gone? The hostility is gone.

Yes, there's a lot that's gone. But we want to go over to the positive side of what peace is. Because this is at the heart of the Gospel.

Brethren, there is reconciliation. Peace is not merely a ceasefire. Peace is God laying down His weapons against us and walking over and embracing us and saying now you are citizens of the people of God.

You are members of the household of God. Christ is saying you're My friend. God is saying My child.

One who's going to marry My Son. You're an inheritor. You're an heir with My Son.

You're going to see the beatific vision. You're going to see Me face to face and not die. You're going to walk in My presence.

You're going to be My people. And through all the coming ages, the immeasurable riches of My grace and kindness, I am going to lavish upon you. I am going to use My almighty power and wisdom to lavish upon you all the good that the mind of deity can conceive.

And I'm going to pour it on you. I did not come to simply lay down My arms and that's it. This isn't just a ceasefire and now there's no hell.

This isn't just a ceasefire. Now go live on an island over here. You'll never see My face.

This isn't just like David and Absalom. You remember when Absalom couldn't see David's face? And Absalom said, what good does it do me to live in Jerusalem if I can't see the face of the King? And it wasn't like that. It wasn't, well, okay, I'm not going to do battle with you anymore, but you've got to live outside the city.

No, what God's saying to us is, you're going to live in My city. You're going to be in My family. You're going to be My friend.

You're going to be My people. You're going to marry My son. I'm going to be a God to you.

This is God laying down His weapons and coming over and embracing us in His arms. If you lose the bond of peace, that which binds us together, if you lose the aspect of reconciliation and peace, you've lost the real heart of what the Gospel peace is all about. This isn't God just saying, okay, I'm not going to throw you into hell and now you can go on and live your lives.

This is God saying to you, you're My people. You have to hear this, brethren, for what it is when God says, grace, peace. You need to hear it.

These two words tell us something about ourselves. Grace. Peace.

What does it say about us? What does it say about who we are? Why does the living God move upon Paul with these two words? Grace. Peace. Tell them that.

Is it not apparent that by His using these two words, it's because these two words teach us some of the most important truths that we can know about ourselves? What do they speak, brethren? These two words speak. They speak volumes. Grace.

Peace. What do they speak? What do they say? Brethren, what they say to us is what we need in light of our sin. What we need in light of our fallen state.

The Apostle specifically describes why it is that we so desperately need these two things. The grace. The grace of God that leads us to this peace of God.

Brethren, right here in Ephesians, we have it. Let's look at chapter 2. We're going to get to this in the course of time, but just look at it right now. You know, if you know this chapter, that verse 4, God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace.

There's our word. By grace, you have been saved. By grace.

Why grace? Why peace? Why is it so necessary? Well, here's why. Go back to verse 1. Where does that come from? But God. What's that over against? But God being rich in mercy, He saved us.

By grace, we've been saved. He raised us up together with Christ. What's that over and against? Why does any of that need to happen? Why do we need mercy? Why do we need grace? What is it that this grace love acts in spite of? Verse 1, You were dead in trespasses and sins.

Obviously, that's not physical death. Dead in trespasses and sins. The problem with man... One of the problems with men today is they don't know what life and death are.

In this world, life and death are categorized by what side of the casket you're on. That's not true life and true death. True life and true death have to do with whether the life of God is in the soul of man.

Whether man knows God, experiences God. Whether he loves God and is in communion with God. That is at the heart of life and death.

Life is not strictly about being cancer-free and able to climb a mountain. What you see here, to be dead in trespasses and sins, oh, it's to be very much in motion. It's to have lots of activity.

But where is the bounds of that activity? It's within this walled-in room of trespass and sin. And all the movement within that realm, Paul says that's death. A lot of movement, but he characterizes that as death.

What is trespass? No trespassing you see. That means to go out of bounds. It means to tread where you ought not to tread.

Sin. Sin is lawlessness, John tells us. That characterizes the life of man.

You see, when we talk about grace and peace, what it does is it strikes right at the heart of why we need a Gospel. What the good news is all about. Brethren, there's no good news.

The greatness of this news is all set against the backdrop and against the contrast of what the bad news is. And this is the bad news. Dead in trespasses and sins.

To be dead is to be alive in our rebellion. It's to be alive in our hatred of God and trespassing all these boundaries that God has put in place. That sort of life is called death by Paul.

But just keep reading. Verse 2, Ephesians 2.2 Following the course of this world, following the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. The Prince of the power of the air is none other than the devil.

We are devil followers by nature. Man doesn't like to admit that. That's what he is.

He's a devil follower. And all you have to do is go back to the beginning to see what that's all about. Eve, you want to be like God? Rebel against Him.

You'll be just like Him. It's this desire to become God. It's this rebellion against God, this desire to become God.

That's what it is to have God as your Father. It's to be living your life trying to be God. And that's what we do.

We set ourselves on the throne. We want to live for ourselves. How do we define right and wrong? By what pleases us.

That's how we live our life. In rebellion. And you know what? There's no peace in this world when that's the case.

Why? Because God will be God. We seek to set ourselves up at God, so immediately we're in conflict with Him. And you know one of the problems we have? We all want to be little gods.

It's been like that ever since the beginning. Eve, you want to be like God? Yeah, I want to be like God. Okay, eat this fruit and you'll be like God.

You won't die, by the way. And we've been doing the same. We've all been trying to be these little gods.

And you know what the problem is? That when you're in a world and you want to be on the throne, but the guy next to you wants to be on the throne, you know what eventually happens? You start punching each other. Because they want to be where you are. You want to be where they are.

You both want to be on the throne. See, that's our problem. The problem with us wanting to be little gods in this world is that the rest of the world doesn't recognize that we're God.

They recognize themselves as God. And by nature, nobody recognizes God as God. And so we're all quite happy when somebody invents evolution so that we can just discredit Him at all.

We don't like the God of the Bible, so let us redefine Him, but better yet, let us get rid of Him altogether. Isn't it amazing how much money our country... I mean, it's billions and billions and billions of dollars our country spends on just trying to prove that there is life somewhere else. If they could passively prove that this universe came into creation somehow without God, or life came into being somehow without God, man will spend enormous sums of money just to try to convince himself of that.

He hates God, and as a result, there's no peace. There's no peace. And you know what? One of the problems is too that God has designed a conscience into us and that peace is not at rest.

Because we try to convince ourselves, lost as we are, that the real God is the God of our imagination, or that there is no God at all. We try to convince ourselves that the bad things we do are actually good. We try to convince ourselves of all these things, but you know one of the problems? God has designed us with a conscience.

And so even though we try to convince ourselves of all these things, we're not at rest. We're just not at rest. You've got these people out there... I saw where all these transgender people get in these operations, and then they're having remorse, and they're falling into depression, and they're not happy.

Why? Because people always think sin's going to make them happy, but it never makes them happy. And the further they go, the more they need, and deeper and deeper, and they spiral. And is there any peace? There's no peace, because there's something inside them that just craves more sin, and so that never lets them be at peace.

And then there's this conscience that says, it's not well, it's not well, it's not well, you are going to die, and there is a God. And there's a conscience that's saying it, even though we try to smother it, we try to get rid of it, we try to... I'm reading right now to my family, John G. Payton to the New Hebrides. When Payton was working as a city missionary before he left Scotland, he came to a man who had rejected God and been an atheist, and his wife was a Catholic, and she invited the Protestant city missionary over to speak to her husband, and he's speaking to him, and the man just blasphemed, and he hated everything about God, and he denied God's existence, and he was just a bitter man and no peace, and what happened? He got worse, he got worse, his health began to deteriorate, and he was now on his deathbed, and his wife called John G. over again, come over, come over, speak to my husband, and he came over and he spoke to him, and he said something like, to the devil with you! And Payton says, oh, so you believe? In a devil now? He says, yes, and I believe in God too, and I hated Him in life, and I hate Him in death.

And the guy died. Grace. Peace.

It speaks to our need as sinners. We are not at peace. And I'll tell you, not just lacking peace, being miserable, being full of sorrows, those are consequences of our sin, but we deserve far more than that.

We deserve damnation. Our sins, every one of them, are capital offenses. And brethren, in that condition, you know what grace and peace speak of? God came along in our condition.

And because we sometimes lose the weightiness of this, because we're so used to hearing about the grace of God, we don't recognize it for what it is. And those angels fell justice. That's it.

But man in his fallen state, man depraved, man with no peace. You know what grace and peace speak? That God is still concerned. God came along and He said, I mean, this is it.

This is the great message of the Gospel. It's captured in these two verses. In this introduction.

That God is still concerned about man. God has not just left us in that state. Grace and peace.

For those words to be said from God through His Ambassador to people who have done the things we've done and thought the things we've thought and said the things we've said, you don't want to read across words like that lightly and flippantly. This is at the heart of the Gospel. That in the state we were in, God intervened in such a way as to help us and show us favor, though we deserve it not at all.

Not in the least. We can say, we didn't sing the song today, but I was thinking about that song. Behold the man upon a cross.

My sin upon His shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice. Call out among the scoffers.

We spit in His face. You may not believe this about yourself, but if you'd been in the crowd in Jerusalem on that day, you'd have helped kill them. Your voice, that's what the songwriter feels.

My mocking voice. I would have been one of them and you would have too. But for all the enmity, for all the hatred, for all the spite, the spit could have been ours.

Because as sinners who wanted our own way, we didn't take kindly. We chafed under the laws of God and the commandments of God. We'd have spit on them and we'd have killed them.

That's what evolution is all about. It's an attempt to kill God. And we're right there in our lost state.

God looked to promise in grace. The result is peace. We want to remember this.

This is the heart of the Gospel. This is what it's all about. It's about coming back.

Listen, God doesn't just say grace and peace to us as though the chief thing is, oh, my sins are forgiven. Sins are forgiven that the separating factor between you and God might be disposed of. Oh, you don't go to hell.

Yeah, but do you hear what hell is? It's the outer darkness. God is light. Outer darkness is the idea of being removed from Him.

The heart of the Gospel is us being brought back together with Him. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that this reality of the Gospel would just explode on us.

The majesty, the magnificence, just the wonder Paul is blown away with. I pray, Lord, what he felt in his soul would be somehow communicated into us in these days ahead. I pray it in Christ's name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/CIBBrNhZniw.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/grace-to-you-and-peace/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net