

Peace, Love, Faith, and Grace
Ephesians 6:21-24

Introduction

This morning, we conclude our study of the book of Ephesians. We have spent 17 weeks in this letter. We have considered deep theological matters like election, salvation, and the nature and purpose of the church of Jesus Christ. We have been equipped with profound ethical instruction regarding how we are to “put on Christ,” “walk in love,” “be filled by the Holy Spirit,” and “put on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the schemes of the devil.” There is much more that could and should be taught from the book of Ephesians, but we have enjoyed a small taste of the goodness of God’s Word from this letter, which brings us to Paul’s final words in Ephesians 6:21-24. Here is what we will find today as we conclude our study...

M.P.S. – The deep theology and profound instruction that we encounter in the book of Ephesians is intended by God to work peace, love, faith, and grace in everyone who loves Jesus Christ.

In other words, the deep and profound topics that we have been studying these last 17 weeks are intended by God to give us peace, strengthen our love, build up our faith, and give us grace.

Ephesians 6:21-24

²¹ So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

Exposition

I. A Pastoral Concern (Vss. 21-22)

In these verses, we encounter Paul expressing a pastoral concern by sending a “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” to the church in Ephesus to “tell them everything” about His ministry. As Paul states in verse 22, “I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.” I want to note two points from this passage. First, the church in Ephesus cared about Paul’s ministry. They wanted to know how things were going. They were concerned for Paul. This is most likely because Paul was imprisoned during this time. And while in prison, Tychicus ministered to Paul.

Yet, and this is the second point that I want you to see, while Tychicus was ministering to Paul, Paul refused to keep him for himself, but instead, he sent Tychicus to the church in Ephesus to encourage them. So, the point here is that both the church in Ephesus and the apostle Paul shared a mutual love and concern for one another. As the end of verse 22 states, Paul wanted to encourage the hearts of the believers in the Ephesus.

T.S. – How, then, did Paul want to see their hearts encouraged? We are told in verses 23-24...

II. A Prayer for Blessing (Vss. 23-24)

Verses 23-24 are a benediction, that is, a prayer of blessing, over the church of Ephesus. The prayer exists in two parts: First, a prayer for peace, love, and faith from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, a prayer for grace with immortality.

Let's look at this first prayer in verse 23 together: Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. On Paul's prayer for peace, Clinton Arnold notes that

His prayer for peace (εἰρήνη) is fitting, given the importance of this concept throughout the letter. The high point of his teaching was the declaration that "[Christ] is our peace," based on the fact that, through his blood, we have been brought near to God (2:13-14). Paul, in fact, characterizes his gospel as "the gospel of peace" in this letter (6:15). This good news of peace with God is what the apostles proclaim through the empowerment of the Spirit, which results in the establishment of the church (2:14-17). But this peace is not only a gift from God that believers experience and enjoy; it also unites all believers into one body. The gospel of peace unites Jews with Gentiles, slaves and freedmen, people of different social classes, and folks from all different ethnicities. Paul's prayer is for an ongoing and deeper experience of this peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second aspect of Paul's prayer is for the people to know the blessing of the love that comes from God. One commentator noted that Paul's prayer for the blessing of God's "love" to be poured out in deeper measure on the readers is also a major focus in his prayer that we find in Ephesians 3:14-19. The virtue of love is crucial for the Christian life, but, as Clinton Arnold has noted, "it can only be displayed to the degree that Christians themselves have been profoundly touched by God's love in Christ. Thus, Paul wants his readers to grasp the abundance of God's love for them (2:4)."

The third aspect of Paul's first prayer for blessing is faith, which is crucial to understanding the message of salvation in the book of Ephesians. As one theologian explains the significance of faith in the book of Ephesians, he states

The Ephesians have entered their relationship with the Lord through faith (1:13; 2:8), and Paul wants them to grow in their relationship to Christ by faith (3:17-19). Faith will be essential in their struggle to stand against powerful and hostile supernatural forces (6:16)... Paul has already heard about the faith and love that his readers exhibit in their lives. Now he prays that this will grow and be strengthened all the more.

And, as I have already mentioned in passing, all of these virtues (peace, love, faith) have their origin in God. Christians must look to God for the fullness of these virtues. While the world might speak of peace, love, and faith, these virtues come from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. If we look elsewhere, we will be woefully unsatisfied.

Finally, Paul prays for grace with immortality in verse 24. Not only with the believer enjoy eternal life, their eternal life will be marked by an endless and immortal grace. The grace of God will not run out. This is the grace that not only saves us, but that keeps us. And it is a grace that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion - We study and meditate on the deep things of God for our good and His glory. We think deeply about the mystery of our reconciliation to God in Christ and to others. We meditate on the magnitude of God's mercy toward us. We worship in light of the doctrines of God's sovereignty in our salvation. God has intended this to be the case for all who love Christ.