

# His, Theirs & Yours

The Peace of God Part 16  
Philippians 4:21-23 7/22/2017

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Summary: Greetings are important expressions of love, and so we are to greet *every* saint warmly (including the ones on the other side of the conflict). Give glory to God, love to others (through greeting) and for yourself, seek grace, which is more valuable than anything you give. And when you give greetings, the best thing you can wish for someone is grace.

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**Philippians 4:20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. 22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar’s household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

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## Opening Discussion

Think of all the greetings that took place when you walked in tonight.

- 1) Why did you give those greetings?  
I assume there is some difference in the way you greeted ones you are closer to than the ones you don’t know well.
- 2) Why the difference?
- 3) When you send greetings with someone (“Tell her I said hi!”) – why do you do that?

# How to Say Hi

## Greetings Are Important

A year and a half after studying the opening greeting of Philippians, tonight we finally come to the final verses of the book where Paul gives his closing greeting. After all that doctrine and truth, he does what he always does after talking about God – he bursts into a doxology in v.20. Paul’s theology always ends in doxology – discussing doctrine always bring him to praise. That’s the purpose of theology. If your theology doesn’t bring you to worship, it’s bad theology. So Paul starts these closing remark by giving to God what is God’s, namely, glory.

And if this is like several of his other letters, at this point Paul took the pen out of the hand of his secretary who has been taking dictation, and he writes a closing greeting with his own hand.

But Paul doesn’t just give us a greeting; he calls us to greet one another. He’s not just saying “hi” to the readers; he’s calling the readers to do something.<sup>1</sup>

### 21 Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus.

He tells us to greet one another, and then teaches us by example the proper way to greet each other. By looking at his greeting, we learn the right way to greet one another. So we could title this section, “How to say hi.”

That might not have been a burning question on your mind when you drove here tonight. You might feel like you’ve already got a pretty good handle on how to say hi to people. There’s always a temptation to just skip over verses like this, since they just seem like simple pleasantries – nothing really worth studying. It just doesn’t seem all that important, until you realize that this word for **greet** appears 59 times in the NT. That’s more times than the words *redeem*, *confess*, and *obey* all put together. And on top of all that, there are many other passages that are greetings, but don’t use the word “greeting.” So this is a big deal in the Bible. Greetings are very important.

## Greetings Express Love

They are important, because greeting is one of the most fundamental ways to express love. The more you love someone, the more you want to greet them. It’s why we say, “Hey, tell so-and-so I said hi.” Why do we do that? Same reason we give hugs and handshakes. If we love someone, but can’t greet them in person because of distance, we want to send the greeting with someone else. We want them to know we still love them, and that we’re thinking about them, and that we have warmth toward them.

It’s part of love. And that’s becomes obvious when you get a cold reception from someone – you feel that, don’t you? Something happens between you and a friend, you’re not totally sure where you stand with that person now, and the next time you see them, no greeting. They just snub you. They look at you, then turn and walk away without saying a word. That’s not a small thing, is it? How do you feel when you smile at someone, and they frown back? Or you stick out your hand and they just look at it and refuse to shake it? That’s a very significant thing.

Or how about if you’re afraid someone is mad at you or doesn’t like you, and when they see you, they light up, and give you a big, warm, enthusiastic greeting, and there’s no doubt in your mind that it’s genuine? That’s also a big deal.

Greetings are an important part of love, and we are commanded many, many times to give each other especially warm greetings in the church. Twice we are told to greet one another with a holy kiss. A kiss was a not a common, normal greeting for acquaintances back then. That was a greeting only for family

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<sup>1</sup> Obrien says the first greeting is Paul’s greeting, to be conveyed by some unknown person to each member of the Philippian church. He argues that if Paul calls people to extend their own greeting, he uses the term “one another.” But that’s not the case in **1 Thes.5:26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss.**

and very close friends. We are to greet one another in the church more warmly than people typically greet one another.

## The Saints

We should be friendly toward everyone – believers or unbelievers, but especially toward the **saints**.

### 21 Greet all the saints

### 22 All the saints send you greetings

The Roman Catholic church has redefined the word *saint* to refer to only very special people, but in the Bible, the word saint refers to any believer. It literally means holy one, and it's a description of every Christian. Every Christian is holy in God's sight – set apart as special, like fine china. Every single Christian is in that category, including the ones that rub you the wrong way or who have hurt you – every last one of them is holy, and that should be evident in the way we greet them.

## Each Saint – No Selective Friendliness

And I think Paul is going out of his way in Philippians to call us to greet every saint. In v.21 the NIV says "Greet all the saints," but that's not really an accurate translation. The Greek says "Greet *every* saint" (singular, not plural – every saint, not all the saints). He didn't want it to just be a generic, "Say hi to the whole church." He's saying, "Greet *each person* – every single one.

He individualizes it, and yet he doesn't name any specific individuals, like he usually does. For example, at the end of Romans Paul singles out 29 specific individuals in his closing greeting. In Philippians, no individuals are mentioned, and instead he emphasizes that each saint is to be greeted. And that makes sense when you think about what was going on in Philippi. This is a church struggling with disunity and internal conflicts. If you've got a conflict going on in the church, and Paul says, "Hey, tell Mary and James and Simon I said hi," and Mary and James and Simon are on one side of the conflict, that could just feed into the disunity. Paul doesn't want to endorse any particular faction.

So Paul just says, **Greet every saint**. And that teaches us something important about conflict. Don't be selective in your expressions of love. Don't just greet the people on your side. Don't just greet the people who aren't causing trouble. Greet each person in the church. Don't leave anyone out of your expressions of love.

We saw Paul doing that in the beginning of the book. In ch.1 he keeps using the word "all" in places where he doesn't normally use it.

**1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints ... at Philippi 1:4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ...**

**1:7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since ... all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.**

**... 1:25 I will continue with all of you for your progress**

One of the biggest problems with the way we greet one another is hard to notice as a problem, because it has to do with the people we leave out. You read in the NT about greeting one another with a holy kiss, warm, friendly, affectionate greeting and expressions of love, and you think, *Oh, I do that. At my small group – we're all best friends – handshakes and hugs all around. Warm, loving greetings are no problem at all for me – next verse.* Not so fast. The problem with our greetings usually isn't the way we greet our friends. Everyone does that.

**Matthew 5:46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? ... 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?**

That's not to say it's a bad thing to give warm greetings to your friends. That's important. In fact, that's something I need to learn to get better at. I'm the type who tends to let my love go without saying a little too often, and I'm trying to work on that. So yes, greet the ones on your side of the conflict, but also greet those on the other side.

## Greeting as a Test of Love

And that's where this becomes an excellent way to test your love. It's like a love gauge on the dashboard of your heart. Sometimes we think we love someone just fine – we're not really aware of any problem, until that moment when it comes time to give them a warm greeting, we find it hard.

Every time I teach something, whatever it is, God seems to just put everything I'm studying to the test. It happens almost every week. I go my whole life without ever struggling much with anxiety, but the week I'm studying v.4 (do not be anxious about anything...) I'm hit with some of the most stressful, anxiety-producing circumstances. I guess God wants to make sure I have a good enough understanding of the principles in the passage so that they really work. So he puts me to the test every time – even to the point where I get nervous when I see a passage coming up about persevering through suffering or dealing with anxiety. So the week I was studying this passage, I wasn't too worried. A passage about greetings – how hard can that be?

Well, I'm sure you all know that I have a lot of people in the Denver area who seem to have devoted their lives to destroying mine – calling the local news and lying about me, spreading false rumors, posting horrible things about me and my family online. I've tried everything I know to do to reconcile, but they have consistently refused. My most recent attempt was a few weeks ago, when I sent an email to one couple asking if there was any way to be reconciled. The man didn't respond at all; the woman responded and said, "I made a few phone calls and found out that you have done this and this and this, and so I'm not interested in reconciling." And they were all just ridiculous lies that someone made up, and it would have been so easy for her to make just one phone call and find out they were false. But she evidently didn't want to make that call. So I get that response and think, "Well, I tried."

So then Jeanne was in an accident and went to be with the Lord. We went to her funeral and guess what - they were all there. And guess who walked up to me and said hello? That couple that I had emailed. The guy walks up, shakes my hand, and says, "I miss you." You can't believe how hard the struggle was inside me. Everything inside me recoiled at the idea of giving a warm greeting.

Usually when God gives me these tests, I end up doing pretty well, because I have the principles I've been studying in that passage. But I'm sad to say that wasn't really the case this time. I managed to shake the guy's hand and tell the woman hi, but my response was anything but warm. And the rest of that day and the following night, as my conscience kept me awake all night (my conscience is very inconsiderate has zero regard for when I have to get up early the next day). I came up with a dozen different arguments about why my response was justified. *If she refuses to reconcile in private, is this just for show? I don't want to participate in that. Was this another trap (in the past she has hidden a recording device in her purse and then edited the audio to make me sound bad). If this guy really misses me, why not at least reply to my email? If he wants to be friendly, why not take down his slanderous website? I'm not going to engage in a charade and just pretend nothing's wrong.* But this verse just kept saying **Greet all the saints**. I tried my hardest to get around that, but this passage just stood there like a brick wall, easily withstanding all my rationalizations. God wants us to give warm greetings to one another. It doesn't mean you're pretending everything's okay. If you give them a warm greeting, you're not pretending anything; you're just being nice. It's okay to be nice even when your relationship isn't what it should be. If it's really so important to let them know that everything's not okay, I could have just told them that - after I gave them a warm, friendly greeting. I could have given a warm greeting, and then say, "But I do need to say, I think what you're doing is wrong."

So finally I said, "Ok Lord. I repent." And the first thing the next day, I contacted each one of those people and offered a warm, friendly, encouraging greeting. But what I learned from that is this: you

discover what's in your heart toward someone when it comes time to greet them. When it comes time to give a warm greeting, is it hard? Then something's wrong.

Some of us are so committed to loving the saints that we would die for them if need be. And God says, "You would die for them – that's great. But will you smile at them?" If not, that's not love. If you ever hear a preacher say, "God requires you to love the saints, but that doesn't mean you have to like them" – don't listen. That's baloney. You need to love them and like them, die for them if need be, and be nice to them – warm and friendly from the heart.

## **The Believers in Rome**

So Paul calls us to greet all the saints, then he passes along some greetings from the believers in Rome.

### **21 ...The brothers who are with me send greetings.**

Timothy, and whoever else was with him, they all said, "Send our love to the Philippians!"

### **22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.**

The people who were working with Paul had affection for the Philippians. And so did all the saints in Rome that Paul had interacted with. None of them were quite to the point of being like Timothy, where they were consumed with the best interests of the Philippians even above their own interests. So Timothy was the only one qualified to be sent to Philippi. But that doesn't mean the rest of the church didn't care about the Philippians. The point in ch.2 is that Timothy was extraordinary, not that the others didn't love the Philippians. They did, and they wanted to send their warm greetings – especially the one's in **Caesar's household**. In ch.1, Paul mentioned that the entire palace guard knew that he was in chains for Christ. Evidently some of them or other government workers became Christians. And they were especially earnest about telling Paul, "Make sure you express our love to the saints over there in Philippi!"

An interesting little side note – Lightfoot did some research on the various inscriptions we've found from that time within Caesar's household, and quite a few of the names match up with that list of names Paul gives in Romans 16, where he spends a whole chapter greeting the folks in Rome. So these people who are especially eager to send their greetings here – they might be those same people mentioned in Ro.16.

What a beautiful picture of the unity of the body of Christ this is. People from different cultures who never met each other, living hundreds of miles away, and yet so much love in their hearts, they really wanted to make sure Paul extended their greetings to the Philippians.

Alexander Maclaren:

May we not see in this union of members of the most alien races a striking illustration of the new bond which the Gospel had woven among men? There was a Jew standing in the midst between Macedonian Greeks and proud Roman citizens, ... and they are all clasping one another's hands in true brotherly love. ... What was it that drew slaves and patricians, the Pharisee of Tarsus, rude Lycaonians, the 'barbarous' people of Melita, the Areopagite of Athens, the citizens of Rome into one loving family? How came Lydia and the slave girl, Onesimus and his master, the praetorian guard and his prisoner, the courtier in Nero's golden house and the jailer at Philippi into one great fellowship of love? They were all one in Christ Jesus.

## **What's in it for You? Grace**

## You Get Grace

Ok, so let's move on to v.23. I titled the message tonight, "His, Their's, and Yours." That title actually includes v.20 as well. Verse 20 is about what's his (God's) – namely, glory.

### **20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever amen.**

So "His, Theirs, and Yours" – what is his? Glory. What about theirs? What goes to other people? Love, in the form of greeting - that's vv.21,22. We give glory to God, and love to others. That's nothing new. It caps off everything he's been saying throughout the book. All through Philippians Paul's been calling us to have that attitude of humble, selfless love toward one another. But that's hard. And the biggest reason why it's hard is the question, "If I'm pouring myself out to take care of others' needs, what about my needs?" Like that whole section on giving - if I give my money to others, who's going to meet my needs? If my life is like Jesus in ch.2 – just giving and giving and giving, what about me? I have needs; what do I get?

Paul answers that question in the last verse of the book. His – God gets glory (v.20). Their's – to others you give your love (vv.21-22). Yours – that's verse 23.

### **23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

You give God glory, you give people love, and what you get is grace. And you can be as "selfish" as you want with getting as much grace for yourself as you can possibly get. That's one thing it's ok to be greedy for – the grace of Christ. You and everyone else in your life will be better off if you become more greedy for grace.

## Grace Defined

So what is grace? I think most people have a really shallow understanding of what grace is. They think it's basically just God cutting you some slack. Or God winking at your sin. Or a real popular idea is that it is the opposite of law. So God says, "I used to have laws and rules for how I wanted my people to behave, but now it's an age of grace. So just do what you want." So grace is permissiveness or even lawlessness, or a free pass so you don't have to put any effort into obeying God's laws anymore. If you think that way, try to wipe that definition out of your mind, because that's not what grace is at all.

## An Undeserved Gift from a Superior

The most basic meaning of the word *grace* is *gift* – a good thing you get that's not earned. The Greek word is *charis*. When you read about spiritual gifts in the Bible, that word translated "spiritual gifts" is a form of *charis*; it's *charis-mata*. *Charismata* is where we get our word Charismatic (someone who has a particular view on spiritual gifts). So *charis* (grace) means *gift*. And in that culture it was used to describe gifts given from a superior to an inferior motivated by a desire for that person's wellbeing. An inferior could never show grace to a superior, because we are already obliged in various ways to them. Grace is favor that does not arise out of an obligation, but simply out of a person's good will toward the person. And that good will is an important part. Grace isn't just the gift. It also includes the attitude of the giver – a favorable, gracious, kind attitude that desires your well being. Donald Barnhouse said, "Love that goes upward is worship, love that goes outward is affection, and love that stoops is grace."

The English word "grace" generally refers to loveliness or beauty, like when we say, "She is so graceful." That same connotation is in the Greek word – a lovely, beautiful, graceful attitude from an superior to an inferior that moves the superior to give something good to the inferior.

## Your Spirit

And Paul's wish for us is that Christ's grace will be **with your spirit**. That's a beautiful image, isn't it? His loving, gracious favor coming right in close to your spirit – your inner man. That part of you that can commune with God.

## Empowerment

So when we get grace from Jesus Christ – he has that attitude toward us, but what kind of gifts does he give us? I looked up all the times grace is mentioned in the NT, and a lot of them are like this one here – they just say, “grace” without specifying exactly what the gift is.

But of all the passages where it is clear what gift is being talked about, I found a breakdown that I think you might find surprising.<sup>2</sup> In one passage, the gift you get is the ability to have faith in God. In another, the gift is blessing. And in another, it's God's love. Those each occur one time that I found. Twice the gift of grace was redemption, and twice it was sanctification. Election or calling to salvation, 3 times. Justification or forgiveness of sins, 4 times. Salvation in general, 4 times. So each those are described as the gift of grace between 1 and 4 times. Then there's a miscellaneous category that I just call, “the gospel” in general – passages that seem to just gather up the whole message of the gospel, and the whole saving work of Christ. That's a larger group – I found 17 different uses of the word grace in that category.

But there's one more category – by far the biggest. This one has 31 different passages (that I counted) that use the word grace to refer to this particular gift. What is that gift? Ministry – either the ministry assignment itself, or, more often, the empowerment to carry out that ministry. Almost all the uses of the word grace in the book of Acts refer to empowerment for ministry. Ephesians is the same way – either empowerment or the ministry itself. So grace has a lot to do with empowerment – either power for spiritual growth and sanctification, or especially power for ministry.

**1 Corinthians 15:10 ... his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them...**

## Benefits of Grace

So grace from Jesus Christ is favor that moves him to give you those kinds of gifts. And what's the result of grace? If you get some food, the results might be pleasure, satisfaction, energy, and nutrition. If you get a raise, the result is more money in the bank. But what happens if you get grace? Here's some of the benefits of getting grace:

You get eternal salvation (Tit.2:11).

People love you more (2 Cor.9:14)

You will be built up spiritually (Acts 20:32).

You will be strengthened (1 Cor.15:10, Heb.13:9).

You will be made more holy (2 Cor.1:12).

You will have much greater joy that will well up in generosity (2 Cor.8:1-9).

You'll be full of gratitude (2 Cor.4:15).

You will abound in every good work (2 Cor.9:8).

You will finally have self-control (Titus 2:12).

You will enjoy satisfaction in life – even when you suffer (2 Cor.12:9).

You will have encouragement and hope (2 Thess.2:16)

You will have great success in ministry (1 Tim.1:14, 2 Tim.2:1).

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of the passages in each category, see the Appendix.

When we need something from God – anything we need from God, Hebrews 4:16 tells us to approach the throne of grace.

If you are generous with your money, you get more grace. If you are generous with your time, you get more grace. If you show love and kindness and humility toward others, you get more grace. God gets glory, others get your love, and what do you get? Grace. You never have to worry about coming out on the short end, because you can't ever give away anything that is worth as much as the grace that you'll get in return.

## Greeting with Grace

Okay, so three points – His, Theirs and Yours. His - we give God glory. There's - we give people our love which is expressed in greetings. Ours – What do we get for ourselves? We strive to receive grace. That's the passage. But before we wrap up, let me point out one more thing about greeting. We've seen the importance of greetings, but we can't leave this passage without learning from Paul his example of how to give a really good greeting. Think about what we say when we give a greeting.

## Wishing the Best

Our most common one is, "Have a nice day." That's a nice thing to say, right? You want their day to be ... nice. What does that mean? Comfortable, easy – no hardship, no difficulty.

Another one is, "Take care." Or, I love this one - "Take it easy." Just make sure you take the easiest possible path – don't put forth any effort, don't break a sweat, don't do any work, just take it easy.

There's nothing wrong with saying something like "Have a nice day" – it's a friendly thing to say. Most of our greetings are along that line. Although I don't think you would say that if you were saying goodbye to the love of your life for the next several years. "Have a nice day!" No, you'd want to say something a little deeper than that. Or how about giving a toast at a wedding? The best man doesn't raise his glass and say, "I've known these two for 10 years, this guy is my very best friend, and I just want to say to you both, have a nice day." No, we want to say something better than that for the people we really love.

So what's better than a nice day? A lot of times we say, "I wish you all the best," which is great, but what is that? What is best? Good health? Prosperity? What do you wish for the people you love the most?

This is actually an important question, because whatever you most wish for those you love, you will work to help bring that about in their lives. It's what you'll pray for. And whatever influence you have on that person will move them in that direction. So what's the best thing you can wish on someone?

What do we learn from Paul? When he wanted to wish the best for someone, what did he say?

### **Philippians 4:23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

That's his closing greeting – the very last thing he says in the book. And what was his opening greeting?

### **Philippians 1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Other greetings include things like peace, mercy, love, etc., but the one he mentions most often is this one here in v.23 - grace. Again, resist the temptation to let your mind blank out when you read that. It's not just meaningless religious talk. He really means it. God means it. The Holy Spirit meant it when he inspired his writers to write it over and over and over in the NT – grace be to you. I counted thirty-four that happens in the NT. How many things can you think of that are repeated thirty-four times in the New Testament? Paul says it, Peter says it, John, the writer of Hebrews, it is in the book of Revelation. It is not just one writer's style - you see it in seventeen different New Testament books. I think God is trying to make a point, don't you think? The most important key to a good greeting is to wish grace for the person.



## The Value of Grace

That makes sense, given what we just learned about grace, right? It's the most valuable, beneficial thing in the universe. Nothing is more important in the development of your kids or grandkids than that they get grace from Jesus Christ. If they never learn to read or write, but they get lots of grace, they are better off than most people. If they earn multiple PhD's, win the Nobel Prize, and amass a huge fortune, but they don't get much grace, their life is a disaster. Nothing would be better for your parents, your friends, neighbors – anyone. It's the kindest wish, it's the most profound toast, it's the nicest thing you could ever possibly say to someone – "Grace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's the kindest thing you can say ... if you mean it. Obviously, God isn't calling us to greet each other with phony greetings. If you say, "Have a nice day" but you really hope the person has a horrible day, that's not the kind of thing God is calling for. It has to be genuine, which means what God is really after here is for us to actually desire grace for one another. There's no value in walking around church throwing around religious lingo just to sound religious. Think of times when you have had good wishes for someone. Like, you really hoped a friend could get out of his financial straits. Or you really hoped someone would get this job they interviewed for. Or you really wanted your kid to win the game, or your loved one to be healed, or to make it through the storm safely. Think of those strong desires – that's what needs to be behind greetings like this. We need to have such a strong concept of the value of grace, that the desire for ourselves and the ones we love to get some more of it is a driving desire. Once that happens, the greeting will come naturally.

## You Can Give It

And here's an amazing thing – if you really want someone to get some more grace, you can do more than just wish for that. You can actually give them some. "I can give someone God's grace?" Yes. According to 1 Pe.4:10, you are a steward of God's grace. That means when you use your spiritual gift to serve the body, you are actually dispensing God's grace to people through your gift. When the Holy spirit gave you whatever spiritual gifts he gave you, he made you a grace dispenser. That's why the gifts are called "graces" – *charismata*. And you can also dispense grace to people by giving them God's Word. In Acts 20:32 Paul referred to the message of Scripture as **the word of his grace**. So that's an astonishing fact that I think very few Christians really appreciate – you are in control of a measure of the most valuable commodity in the universe – God's grace, that you can dispense to people at will.

## Photosynthesis – Giving & Receiving

God designed plants to capture energy from the sun and store it in food. So sunlight hits the plant, the plant captures that energy, and goes through a process of storing it that requires carbon dioxide, and the exhaust from that whole process is oxygen. So plants are constantly taking in CO<sub>2</sub>, creating food, and pumping out oxygen. And they never run out of CO<sub>2</sub>, because human beings are constantly pumping that out. What we do is eat that food that has the stored energy from the sun, our bodies combine that food with oxygen, it converts back into energy so we can move around, and the exhaust we give off is CO<sub>2</sub>.

So imagine a person who gets real selfish and says, "I'm sick of always, always supply CO<sub>2</sub> for the plants. It's all I ever do is give, give, give. Those plants never give me any CO<sub>2</sub> back. I'm sick of being taken advantage of – I'm not going to do it anymore. I'm setting up some boundaries." And so he sets up a plastic bubble around himself, and he's able to keep all his own CO<sub>2</sub>, and he's dead in a matter of minutes.

Money is a lot like CO<sub>2</sub>. It's a great thing to give, but if you start hoarding it, it will kill you. And not just money. All the other things of value that we are tempted to hoard. God calls us to be generous – freely give of your money, your time, your energy, your gifts – just keep exhaling them like CO<sub>2</sub>. Will you get CO<sub>2</sub> back? No. What do you get back? Grace. Grace is like oxygen. It's not the same thing you

gave, but it's worth way more to you than anything you ever gave. It's so valuable, so priceless, that anything you gave away to get it is nothing compared to what you're getting – God's favor.

So at this point you might be thinking, "Wait a minute – are the people around me plants who need CO2? Or are they people who need oxygen?" They are people who need oxygen, which means they all need grace a lot more than they need money. And that is an important principle to understand when it comes to where you give your money. I don't want my giving to mainly just supply food and clothing to people. If someone is suffering and in need, obviously we want to relieve suffering when we can. But if that's all we do, we haven't really done them much good. The most strategic kind of generosity is generosity that is calculated to bring grace to people. Give to a ministry that brings the Word of God to people. Give most of your help to people who are showing receptivity to the Word.

Giving money to a person may or may not do them good. It might do them harm. Giving someone a place to live may or may not ultimately benefit them. Giving food may or may not help. But giving grace will always, always do the person good – more good than anything else you could possibly give them. And when we understand that, and believe it we will seek grace for ourselves, and long for it for others, and when we get to that point, the greetings will take care of themselves.

Sometimes understanding the Bible and how to live the Christian life can get really complicated, but always remember this: As long as you are striving for these three things: give glory to God, love to others, and seek grace for yourself. As long as you're working toward those three things, you're doing great.

## **Appendix: The Gifts of Grace**

This is the breakdown of the various gifts that come from his grace.

### **God's Favor 1**

2 Thessalonians 2:16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his **grace** gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

### **Faith 1**

Acts 18:27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by **grace** had believed.

### **Future Blessing 1**

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the **grace** to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

### **Redemption 2**

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's **grace**

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the **grace** of God he might taste death for everyone.

## Sanctification 2

Acts 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his **grace**, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that **grace** may increase?

## Election/Calling to Salvation 3

Romans 11:5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by **grace**.

2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-- not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and **grace**. This **grace** was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Titus 3:7 so that, having been justified by his **grace**, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

## Justification/Forgiveness 4

Romans 3:24 and are justified freely by his **grace** through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this **grace** in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Romans 11:6 And if by **grace**, then it is no longer by works; if it were, **grace** would no longer be **grace**.

Jude 1:4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the **grace** of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

## Salvation 4

Acts 15:11 No! We believe it is through the **grace** of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Ephesians 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by **grace** you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

Titus 2:11 For the **grace** of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

## The Whole Gospel 17

Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's **grace**.

Romans 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by **grace** and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring-- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Romans 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's **grace** and the gift that came by the **grace** of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Romans 5:17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of **grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, **grace** increased all the more,

Romans 5:21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also **grace** might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under **grace**.

Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under **grace**? By no means!

2 Corinthians 4:15 All this is for your benefit, so that the **grace** that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Galatians 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the **grace** of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--

Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the **grace** of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Galatians 3:18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his **grace** gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from **grace**.

Ephesians 2:7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his **grace**, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's **grace** in all its truth.

1 Peter 1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the **grace** that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,

## Calling to or Empowerment for Ministry 31

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much **grace** was upon them all.

Acts 6:8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's **grace** and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

Acts 11:23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the **grace** of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

Acts 14:3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his **grace** by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Acts 14:26 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the **grace** of God for the work they had now completed.

Acts 15:40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the **grace** of the Lord.

Romans 1:5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received **grace** and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

Romans 12:3 For by the **grace** given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Romans 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the **grace** given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

Romans 15:15 I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the **grace** God gave me

1 Corinthians 1:4 I always thank God for you because of his **grace** given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way-- in all your speaking and in all your knowledge

1 Corinthians 3:10 By the **grace** God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and his **grace** to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them-- yet not I, but the **grace** of God that was with me.

2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's **grace**.

2 Corinthians 6:1 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's **grace** in vain.

2 Corinthians 8:1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the **grace** that God has given the Macedonian churches.

2 Corinthians 8:6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of **grace** on your part.

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-- see that you also excel in this **grace** of giving.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all **grace** abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing **grace** God has given you.

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My **grace** is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Galatians 1:15 But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his **grace**, was pleased

Galatians 2:9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the **grace** given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

Ephesians 3:2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's **grace** that was given to me for you,

Ephesians 3:7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's **grace** given me through the working of his power.

Ephesians 3:8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this **grace** was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us **grace** has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Philippians 1:7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's **grace** with me.

1 Timothy 1:14 The **grace** of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:1 You then, my son, be strong in the **grace** that is in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's **grace** in its various forms.