

Edgemont Bible Church
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2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

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Intro:

Thus far in this letter, Paul has had to deal with a myriad of topics. God's retribution on the wicked rejecters of the Lord Jesus Christ and their eternal punishment (1:6-10). God's judgment on a sinful world in the Day of the Lord (2:1-2). The predicted coming of the final antichrist, his abomination of desolation, and his destruction with the return of Christ (2:3-12). The warning of deceiving wolves in sheep's clothing (2:2-3). The rebuke of lazy Christians (3:6-15). As is his pattern, Paul goes from giving detailed instruction on dealing with those issues which they could not implement in their own strength to encouragement to look to God for enablement to accomplish that which was instructed. In 1:5-10, after instructing them about the 2nd coming of Christ to bring judgment, Paul says (1:11-12). After instructing them about the Day of the Lord, Paul closes the exhortation with prayer (2:16-17). After asking them to pray that he would have an effective ministry (3:1-2) and then instructing them about God's faithfulness being the motivation for their obedience (3:3-4), that section is closed with prayer (3:5). Here after instructing them about those that refuse to work and the Church's responsibility to discipline (3:6-15), Paul expresses the desire of his heart with a prayerful benediction (3:16-18). "Now" marks the transition from command and exhortation to benediction expressing the desire of his heart for four blessings in their lives.

VIII. A Prayer for Divine Enablement - vs 16-18

A. Peace - vs 16a

1. 1st request like his other letters – 2 Co 13:11; Eph 6:23
2. Peace as seen by the world – a sense of calm when everything is going well
 - a. can be produced by lies, self-deception, at least until things fall apart
 - b. such peace is fleeting and easily destroyed by conflict or trouble
3. Biblical peace is a deep settled confidence that all is well between me and God because of His loving, sovereign control of one's life here and eternally.
4. Characteristics of Biblical peace
 - a. Comes from God - may the Lord of peace Himself
 - i. Himself is in the emphatic position
 - ii. Peace comes from each of the members of the Godhead
 - From the Father - called the God of Peace – Jd 6:24; Ro 15:33; 16:20; 1 Co 14:33; 2 Co 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Th 5:23; Heb 13:20
 - From the Son
 - called the Lord of Peace – 1 Th 5:23
 - called the Prince of Peace – Isa 9:6
 - He is our Peace – Eph 2:14
 - From the Spirit
 - the source of Peace – Gal 5:22
 - the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit – Ro 14:17

- The Father decreed it, the Son purchased it, the Holy Spirit brings it

b. It is a gift from God - give you peace

i. Included in priestly and apostolic prayers

- Num 6:26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.

- Ps 29:11 The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.

- Ps 85:8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak, For He will speak peace To His people and to His saints; But let them not turn back to folly.

- Is 57:19 "I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," Says the LORD, "And I will heal him."

- Ro 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Appears in the greetings of all of Paul's writings

- Appears in 1 & 2 Pet, 2 & 3 Jo, Jd, and Revelation

ii. God does not give true spiritual peace to unbelievers

- a facet of salvation – Ro 15:13

- there is no peace for the wicked - Is 48:24

- the false peace that they experience . . .

-it is the false peace of delusion

-based on pride, thinking that one is worthy to deserve it

-separates peace and holiness, that which God inseparably links – **Is 32:17**

-cannot survive the tests of life – 1 Th 5:3

c. It is continually available – always

i. It can be interrupted

- Paul regularly prays for believers to experience it

- weak or disobedient believer's peace can be disturbed through sin, doubts, fears, and anxieties

ii. It can be restored

- by trusting God – Ps 42:11

- by repentant obedience – Lev 26:3,6; Ro 2:10

- It may be restored by accepting God's chastening – Job 5:17-24

- It may be restored by walking in the Spirit – Gal 5:22

- It may be restored by loving God and avoiding legalism – Gal 6:16

- Pray that God will restore it

- d. It is available in every circumstance - in every way.
 - i. It is unaffected by anything in the worldly realm
 - because it is based on eternal promises Heb 5:9,
 - made by a God who cannot lie Tit 1:2
 - ii. It is anchored in Phil 1:6
 - iii. Not being like worldly peace Jo 14:27, it stabilizes the believer in every situation Phil 4:7

B. Strength - vs 16b

- 1. The Lord be with you all.
- 2. Believers need God's strengthening presence to
 - a. resist temptation – 1 Co 10:13
 - b. face Satan and for Spiritual warfare – Eph 6:10-13
 - c. effectively serve Him
 - i. Eph 3:7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.
 - ii. Col 1:29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.
 - iii. 1 Tim 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,
 - iv. Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen.
 - d. persevere – 2 Tim 4:18; Jd 24
 - e. endure trials – 2 Co 12:9-10
 - f. effectively evangelize – Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 9:22; 18:9-10; 2 Tim 4:17
- 3. Paul's prayer shows the need the believer has for God's strength – Eph 3:16-19
- 4. Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

C. Truth - vs 17

- 1. A slight interruption in the benediction
- 2. Concerned that they have the truth
 - a. False teachers had come – 2:2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.
 - b. Possibly had a letter said to be from Paul that contradicted some of his teachings
 - c. normally dictated his letters – Ro 16:22
 - d. signed every letter – 1 Co 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; Phi 19
- 3. Paul had a deep concern for Truth

a. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.— 2 Co 4:2

- b. Because many called him liar, consistently affirmed he told the truth
- i. I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, – Ro 9:1
 - ii. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.- 2 Co 11:10
 - iii. for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying--a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. - 1 Tim 2:7

4. Paul's concern with truth was dictated by the person of God

a. The God of Truth

- i. He is truth - Ps 31:5; Isa 65:16;
- ii. His words are truth – 2 Sam 7:28
 - He is abundant in truth – Ps 86:15
 - He is true when others lie - Ro 3:4
 - He cannot lie – Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Tit 1:2; Heb 6:18

b. Jesus is the Truth – Jo 1:14,17; 7:18; Eph 4:21; Rev 3:7,14; 19:11

c. The Spirit of Truth – Jo 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jo 5:6

D. Grace - vs 18

1. Paul next lists his desire for all believers, that they might continue to experience grace

2. grace is the undeserved goodness of God

- a. it is decreed by God—Ps 84:11
- b. it is given through our Lord Jesus Christ - Jo 1:17; Ro 5:15; 1 Co 1:4; Tit 2:11
- c. it is essential
 - i. not only for salvation - Acts 15:11; 18:27; 20:24; Ro 3:24; Gal 1:6,15; Eph 1:7; 2:5,8; 2 Tim 1:9
 - ii. for endurance - 2 Co 12:9; Pro 3:34
 - iii. For service - Ro 12:6; Eph 4:7; 1 Ti 1:12-14; 1 Pet 4:10
 - iv. For growth - Acts 20:32; Heb 13:9; 2 Pet 3:18
 - v. for giving 2 Co 8:1
- d. It is experienced through
 - i. trusting Him
 - ii. Obeying His word
 - iii. Enduring chastening
 - iv. Doing good
 - v. walking in the Spirit
 - vi. And praying