

Series: While You're Waiting Still

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3

Title: Amazing Grace

Jack Hibbs on how to stop gossip.

1. Do I need to know this?
2. Can I quote you to others that you said this?

In 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18, we have the conclusion of his epistle. Paul says, **“16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all. 17 HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING— PAUL. I DO THIS IN ALL MY LETTERS TO PROVE THEY ARE FROM ME. 18 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”**

There are three elements to this conclusion. First, is a prayer, in verse 16;

Second, is a salutation, in verse 17;
Third, is a blessing, in verse 18.

First, we have Paul's prayer.

Verse 16: **“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.”**

This verse has been called "a peaceful close to a stormy Epistle."

Paul prays that the suffering saints at Thessalonica may know the peace of the Lord of peace at all times and in every way. As Christian's we are not dependent on anything in this world for our serenity. Our peace is based entirely on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. The world cannot give it or take it away.

God hasn't promised to calm every storm but He does promise to be with us even in the midst of the storm!

Jesus has the capacity to calm the wind and the

sea but often times He uses the winds of chaos to move us to distant shores. To His own disciples Jesus did not calm the seas each time there was a storm. Yet He did promise He would be with them and bring them safely to their destination. How we arrive isn't as important as we do arrive.

Paul writes, “**the Lord of peace.**” Normally, Paul refers to “**the God of peace,**” referring to God the Father.

But this is a unique phrase that Paul uses here. There were a lot of trials going on in the church at Thessalonica: they were being persecuted, deceived, some were lazy and disobedient, so Paul prays that God gives them peace. And when he uses the phrase “**the Lord of peace,**” referring to Jesus Christ, who is called “**the Prince of Peace.**”

So the peace can come from God the Father, “**the God of peace**”; it can come from God the Son, “**the Prince of peace**”; and it can come from the Holy Spirit. It can come from all three

Persons of the Godhead. But here Paul singles out **“the Lord of peace”** none other than Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself said in John 14:27, **“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”**

Pastor Chuck Smith, in his book “The Gospel According to Grace” writes, **“Grace and peace are called the Siamese twins of the New Testament because they're always coupled together. This is the proper order of the two words, for you can't have the peace of God until you've first experienced His grace.”**

Then in verse 16 Paul uses the expression, **“at all times and in every situation”** which is interesting. So Paul keeps piling it on. He says, **“the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation.”** Because Paul understood the problems the church was facing he kept piling on the need for peace, which can only come from knowing

Jesus Christ.

When you come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, you have peace with God. Having peace with God, you now can then experience the peace of God in your soul.

If anyone knows this for sure its the apostle Paul.

*****The cure for anxiety is the presence of God.*****

Paul talked about that in Philippians 4.

1. Paul says in... Philippians 4:6, **“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.”**

The peace of God comes from trusting Him in our lives.

Remember the bumper sticker... **“Know God Know Peace, No God No Peace”**

2. When we are at peace with God, then, in Philippians 4:7, he says, **“Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”**

What a blessing it is to have His peace! Peace comes from, or its source is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Lasting Peace is not found in alcohol, and it’s not found in drugs. Lasting Peace comes from Jesus. All these other forms of escapism are not lasting; true peace, lasting peace comes from the Lord of Peace Himself, Jesus Christ.

*****The peace of God is a shield to guard our hearts and our minds *****

Then Paul prays for strength. In 2 Thessalonians 3:16,

Verse 16: **“The Lord be with you all.”** Notice

the word “**all.**” He prayed they “**all**” would get grace. So that would include the disobedient. It included those who were out of line. He prayed that “all” would have peace, that “all” would have the Lord.

Psalm 133:1, “**How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!**”

When Paul prayed that “**The Lord be with you all,**” it’s not only talking about the presence of the Lord—it is that—but the idea is that the Lord’s presence not only brings His peace, but it also brings His strength.

Have you ever been faced with a struggle or a situation that was simply too much for you to bear and you cried out to God to help you, to be there with you knowing just His preence will give you all the strength you need to get through the trial?

Thats what Paul is praying the church in Thessalonica would know.

Things you need to know!

1. God's peace is in His presence...

Exodus 33:14-16, “**14 The LORD replied, “I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you.” 15 Then Moses said, “If you don’t personally go with us, don’t make us leave this place. 16 How will anyone know that you look favorably on me—on me and on your people—if you don’t go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth.”**

Isaiah 26:3, “**You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!**”

Mark 4:39-41, “**39 When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind**

stopped, and there was a great calm.
40 Then he asked them, “Why are you
afraid? Do you still have no faith?” 41 The
disciples were absolutely terrified. “Who is
this man?” they asked each other. “Even the
wind and waves obey him!”

*****There is no storm that you can face that
Jesus presence is not greater still.*****

2. God is more than enough... Some people
think God isn't enough and Paul is reminding us
that Jesus is more than enough!

That's what Paul was saying when he wrote in
Philippians 4:13, **“For I can do everything
through Christ, who gives me strength.**

God's presence doesn't just bring you peace.
His presence provides you strength.

In verse 17, we see Paul's salutation, or his

personal greeting where he takes the pen from his

(a-man-u-ensis)—his personal secretary to whom he dictated his letters—and would write the salutation with his own hand. It would have his own signature.

This was especially fitting for 2 Thessalonians, because we read in chapter 2, verse 2, that someone had forged a letter with Paul's name on it to the Thessalonians that said they were in **“the day of the Lord.”**

Paul wanted the church to know that this letter of 2 Thessalonians was the real thing; that this was his “John Hancock.” so to speak, so he took the pen and signed the letter. That way they knew it was from him.

It is believed that Paul had a very unique signature due to his poor eyesight. He probably wrote in a large font size that distinguished his signature from other peoples.

In verse 18, Paul gives the benediction; he

proclaims his blessing over the church there in Thessaloniki.

Verse 18: **“May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”**

We could spend all morning on this one verse. So much could be said of this benediction in revealing Paul’s heart for the church.

First, he wants nothing more than for the church to experience the grace of God personally. Second, he wants them “All” to experience God’s grace, even the ones who are lazy and unruly and gossipers and back biters. That’s the beauty of grace.

Grace is best defined as “unmerited favor”
Grace is “getting what I don’t deserve”
Grace is like the acrostic, “Gods Riches At Christ’s Expense”

Pastor Chuck Smith taught on God’s grace all the time and he wrote extensively about it.

In one of his books, “Why Grace Changes Everything” he wrote,

“All of us are either trying to work and be good enough to please God, or we are believing and trusting God to do for us what we can't do for ourselves. At each moment of our lives we find ourselves on one road or the other. If we are still trying to please God through being good enough, defeat and frustration will be our lot. If we have trusted in God's grace to transform us and form Christ within us, we will enjoy life and peace.”

“Whenever a person says, "It's good to believe in Jesus Christ, but it takes more than that," watch out! The minute you tell me that I have to be righteous and must prove myself before God by my holiness, you are not bringing me to God; you are pushing me away from Him. I am not righteous and I am not holy and there is no way I can be, so what you are telling me is not good news. It is far from good news. It's

a proclamation of death.”

That's why Paul wrote Romans 7. He had tried as much as humanly possible to live for God in his own strength and he learned like many of us, he learned the hard way that it can't be done! We need grace and the Good News of the Gospel is Jesus offers us Grace!

Again, Paul was including the disorderly in his benediction.

Paul's letters always opened with grace, and they closed with grace. We are saved by grace, we're sustained by grace and one day we will be completely sanctified by the grace of God in His presence.

I like John Bunyan's "Amazing Grace" in which he said,

**“Grace hath brought me safe thus far, And
grace will lead me home.”**

That is grace that saves me, grace that sustains

me and grace that will take me to heaven. We need God's grace. Peace, strength and grace God gives to this church.

In conclusion, the Lord is coming soon for His church. People say, we have been saying that for 20 years. True and we are 20 years closer than when we first believed!

But we shouldn't just sit around and do nothing. We shouldn't quit our jobs. We shouldn't stop working. Jesus said we should "Stay busy" and "Occupy till I come".

The problem today is not that we're quitting our jobs, putting on white robes and sitting on a mountain waiting for the rapture. The problem today is that we forget that Jesus is coming back. And we work, work, work to get more and more things. Our priorities are wrong. We go the wrong direction. We know Jesus is coming, but we disregard that; and if we don't live for the kingdom of God we are living for the kingdom of this world.

It was Jesus himself who said in Matthew 6:24, **“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”**

Don't get bogged down with the things of this world.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18, **“17 For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18 So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”**

So then, how are we to live in light of the Lord's return? We are to live obediently, in purity, in unity and in expectancy. Jesus Christ is coming again.