

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

Benediction

1

Introduction

Paul has instructed, encouraged and admonished his readers on several topics. As he closes out his epistle, he calls upon God to grant four blessings that are essential for spiritual maturity: peace, strength, truth, and grace.

2

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all. ¹⁷ The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.
Amen.

3

Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16a

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

Paul's first request here is for **peace**. The world defines peace as the sense of calm, tranquility, quietness, contentment, and well-being that comes when everything is going well. But that definition is shallow. A calm, tranquil feeling can be produced by lies, self-deception, unexpected good fortune, the absence of conflict and trouble, meditation, drugs, alcohol, even a good night's sleep. Such peace is fleeting and easily destroyed. It can be shattered by the arrival of conflict and trouble, as well as by failure, doubt, fear, anxiety over circumstances beyond one's control, being disappointed or mistreated by others, making bad decisions or anything else that is perceived threat to one's security.

4

Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16a

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

But true spiritual peace is completely different from the superficial and fragile human peace. It is the deep, settled confidence that all is well between the soul and God because of His loving, sovereign control of one's life both in time and eternity. That calm assurance is based on the knowledge that sins are forgiven, blessing is present, good is abundant even in trouble, and heaven is ahead. The peace that God gives His beloved children as their possession and privilege has nothing to do with the circumstances of life.

5

Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16a

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

That peace has several characteristics. First, it is divine, deriving from the Lord of peace Himself. The God who is peace grants peace to believers. It is the very essence of His nature, one of His attributes. God is at all times at perfect peace, without any discord within Himself. He is never under stress, worried, anxious, fearful, unsure, or threatened.

He is always perfectly calm, tranquil, and content. There are no surprises for His omniscience, no changes for His immutability, no threats to His sovereignty, no doubts to cloud His wisdom, no sin to stain His holiness. Even His wrath is clear, controlled, calm, and confident.

6

Peace

2 Thessalonians 3:16a

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

Second, divine peace is a gift from God. It is His good pleasure to give to those who belong to Him.

A third element of the divine peace that God gives to believers is that it is always available. Though true peace is always available it can be interrupted. Weak or disobedient Christians may find their peace disturbed by the same sins, doubts, fears, and anxieties that destroy the false peace of the unredeemed. It can be restored by trusting in God and repenting from sin.

A fourth element of the divine peace that God continually gives the redeemed is that it exists in every way or in every circumstance. It is unaffected by anything in the worldly realm because it is based in God and in the promise of eternal salvation.

7

Strength

2 Thessalonians 3:16b

The Lord *be* with you all.

This statement may seem strange as God is omnipresent and always with and in us. Paul is speaking of God's presence to empower believers to live for His glory. It was His enabling presence that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of in Matthew 28:20 when He said, "**I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

Regardless of what the believer faces, he knows that he is not alone. **Philippians 4:13 tells us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!**

8

Truth

2 Thessalonians 3:17

The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

Since Paul was the agent of God's truth. He did not want them confused if this letter was authentic. There were many false teachers who were writing letters claiming to be Paul. Therefore, Paul decided to write this closing salutation with his own hand. This was the distinguishing mark in every epistle Paul wrote.

9

Grace

2 Thessalonians 3:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Paul concludes his benediction by expressing his desire that all those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ continue to experience grace. Grace is God's undeserved goodness and benevolence granted to those who in no way deserve it. Saving grace was decreed by God (Ps. 84:11) and given through our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. John 1:17; Rom. 5:15; 1 Cor. 1:4; Titus 2:11). Grace is essential, not only for salvation (Acts 15:11; 18:27; 20:24; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 1:6, 15; Eph. 1:7; 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:7), but also for endurance (2 Cor. 12:9; cf. Prov. 3:34), service (Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7; 1 Tim. 1:12–14; 1 Peter 4:10), growth (Acts 20:32; Heb. 13:9; 2 Peter 3:18), and giving (2 Cor. 8:1).

Believers experience God's enabling, sanctifying grace by trusting Him, obeying His Word, doing good, walking in the Spirit, and praying.

10

So What ...

There is a wonderful mystery to living the Christian life to the glory of God. To do so requires all the understanding, obedience, commitment, dedication, and effort that the redeemed can give. But all of that would be futile were it not for the peace, strength, truth, and grace that only God can supply. Paul had the balance when he wrote, “To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily” (Col. 1:29).