

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

#### *Grace to you*

The grace of God; what an amazing thing; what an enormous subject. How can we begin to do justice to this topic, this wonderful gift?

Firstly, what is grace? How do we earn it, or receive it? There are a number of meanings of grace in Scripture, dependent on the context. It can mean:

1. Gracefulness of form or appearance ([Luk 4:22](#))
2. Graciousness in attitude towards another ([2Co 8:6-7](#))
3. The gospel as distinguished from the law ([Joh 1:17](#), [Rom 6:14](#))
4. Gifts freely bestowed by God for service, such as miracles, prophecy, preaching, etc ([Eph 3:8](#))
5. The glory revealed at the 2nd Coming of Christ ([1Pe 1:13](#))
6. Gratitude as an emotion awakened in the recipient of favour ([Rom 6:17](#))
7. A gift, as in charity ([1Co 16:3](#))
8. The calling and empowering to serve the Church ([Rom 1:5](#))
9. The gift of life ([1Pe 3:7](#))
10. The favour of God towards man ([Rom 11:6](#), [Eph 2:5](#))

This last meaning is the most important one theologically. We will deal with this one when we come to [Eph 2:4-5](#). Here, however, it is used more as an expression of good will, and a desire to bless the Ephesians. Paul must have had a great love for this church after spending so long there. The depth of their feeling for each other can be seen in [Act 20:17](#) and [Act 20:36-38](#).

#### *And peace*

Peace is more than the absence of war or persecution. Though these things were real threats to the Ephesian believers, and to vast numbers of modern day believers, this is only secondary to the real benefits of peace.

The most important peace to be had, and Paul may well be reminding them and us, of this here, is peace with God ([Eph 2:12-17](#), [Rom 5:10](#)). Although there was once a time when God was their enemy, that has now all changed through the cross of Christ. Now satisfaction has been made, and the wrath of God turned away, so that what now remains for believers is grace and peace from God.

The price paid by Christ includes peace in our own consciences also ([Heb 10:17-23](#)). We no longer need to pull back from God, or try to hide from His all-seeing eye. We can now come into His presence with boldness and confidence, certain that the justice of God has been satisfied, the wrath of God has been turned aside, and the grace and peace of God are now extended to us in infinite measure. Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

But more..... peace is now possible with fellow believers, a peace that brings us into unity with each other as members of His body ([1Co 12:12-27](#)).

And still more..... peace from God is peace from anxiety and stress. He has promised to provide for all our physical needs, food, clothing and shelter ([Luk 12:22-31](#)).

And as if that is not already a super-abundance of blessings, this peace is eternal ([1Jn 2:17](#), [Rev 22:3-5](#)).

These blessings are reserved for the people of God. While unbelievers benefit from the "side-effects" of this peace, it is reserved for those called and chosen of God only ([Isa 48:22](#), [Eze 7:24-25](#), [Isa 32:18](#)). The unbeliever speaks of peace, but cannot do anything to deal with the root of the problem, the guilt of man and the wrath of God.

The best he can hope for is a truce (and only a temporary one, at that) between human beings, and friendly relationships with his neighbours. But the issues of the heart and soul that cause the rupture between God and man, and man and his fellow man, are beyond his capacity to repair. Only the grace of God, and the peace of God extended to man can heal the breach.

*From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The source of this grace and peace is God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As the old saying goes, "No God, no peace. Know God, know peace." Every attempt at peace apart from God is doomed to end in disappointment and disaster.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace ([Isa 9:6](#)). It is only through His mediatorship that we have peace ([1Ti 2:5](#), [Heb 9:15](#)). Were Christ to refuse this task, there would be no grace, no peace, no hope. For Scripture is clear that man does not have the capacity within himself to meet the demands of God for holiness, righteousness, obedience. Therefore, man is doomed to eternal condemnation and punishment unless God acts to heal the breach.

And thanks be to God that He has done this for us! He has transformed us from a stench before Him, to the aroma of Christ, a sweet smelling fragrance in His nostrils ([2Co 2:14-15](#)). We are the aroma of Christ *to God*. How could we achieve that on our own? It is impossible. There is nothing pleasing in us, that He should feel an obligation to save us. There is only that which is abominable to Him, unless and until He acts to remove our sin, our guilt, our condemnation, our punishment, our unrighteousness, and replaces it with the righteousness of Christ.

This very act moves us from alienation from God, and brings us into family relationship to Him. He becomes *Father* to us ([Gal 4:4-7](#)). In spite of the misunderstanding, and even wishful thinking of many, God is not the Father of all, but only the Father of those whom *He* chooses to adopt as sons, as we shall see soon when we get to Eph 1:5.

The Fatherhood of God must be one of the most precious doctrines of Christianity. Unfortunately, in modern Western society, the term "Father" can have negative connotations, not positive. The experience of many people with their earthly father is fraught with disappointment. It is a tragic fact that many suffer lack of affection, alienation and rejection at best; fear and violence at worst. Is it surprising that some would shudder, not rejoice, at the thought of Father? Even for those whose had a positive relationship with their father, their earthly fathers fall far short of the qualities of Fatherhood that God has within Himself.

The English term "father" provides some clues to the qualities of fatherhood when its etymology is studied. It stems from the Greek *pater*, from the root *pa*, which means "nourisher, protector, upholder." These may be surprising concepts for many today. But they are fundamental to the nature of God, as well as being the pattern for mankind. Whatever admirable qualities may be found in human fathers are magnified infinitely in God the Father. Protection, strength, love, grace, authority, compassion, intimacy, guidance, provision, correction, delight in His children; all are functions of a Father God in relationship with His adopted children. More than that, these are not just actions of God towards us, but in fact belong to the *essence* of God.

Not only does God desire to relate in this way, He is powerful enough to do so, without any limitation on His ability, or opposition able to prevent it. He is both *mighty* and *loving*.

These blessings are not just from the Father alone, but from His Son as well. There is a branch of Christendom that considers the Son to be less than pleased with humanity,

and seeking an opportunity to punish them. It is thought by them that the Son needs to be convinced not to punish. But Paul makes it clear that grace and peace come from Jesus Christ as well as from the Father. There is nothing within Jesus which seeks to punish the children of God, because the punishment due *to them* has already been meted out *to Him*, by His own desire, design and will. There is nothing left but grace and peace to shower upon us.

Paul concludes his brief introduction to the letter here. The remainder of the letter consists, in Paul's usual style, of laying a theological foundation for a practical response. Up to Eph 4:16, he is dealing largely with theology. From Eph 4:17 he moves into our response and the logical outworking of what he has been teaching. This is an important pattern. Our daily Christian walk must be based on *something*. We don't act in love towards others in a vacuum, merely because we have been told to. It is the appropriate response to understanding the extent of the atonement. As in all of life, our world-view, our belief system shapes our actions, attitudes and responses. Right thinking produces right behaviour. For this to be any other way is merely moralism or legalism. Paul tells us in Rom 12:2 "*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...*". This is the correct basis for right behaviour. As we spend time in His Word, commune with Him and worship Him, we are gradually transformed in our thinking, our understanding, and our Christ-likeness. The natural result of this is godly, loving behaviour. As we become more like Christ, it becomes as natural to respond in love and grace as it formerly did to react with anger when we felt our rights and freedoms were being taken away. Never underestimate the value of correct doctrine. But also, never overestimate the value of correct doctrine in the absence of a healthy relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This situation quickly descends to legalism, judgmentalism, and a "holier-than-thou" attitude which is toxic.