Grace, Mercy, And Peace

Intro: *Grace and Peace* is often used in the introduction to Paul’s letters by way of greeting (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon). In both of Peter’s letters he uses this greeting and John in the Revelation also does. However, Paul also uses *Grace, Mercy and Peace* in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, as does John in 2 John. Then, Jude uses *Mercy and Peace* in his epistle. Since, they are in the salutations, we often overlook these terms, yet they are of great importance.

I. The Meaning of the Terms
   A. Grace—the favor of God, often referred to as unmerited favor.
   B. Mercy—kindness or goodwill toward those who are in distress with a desire to help them.
   C. Peace—mental tranquility, or harmony.
   D. While we usually use grace and mercy interchangeably there is a distinction between them.
      1. Adam Clark: “Grace, the favour and approbation of God. Mercy, springing from that grace, pardoning, purifying, and supporting. Peace, the consequence of this manifested mercy, peace of conscience, and peace with God; producing internal happiness, quietness, and assurance.”
      2. William Hendrickson: “Grace is God’s love toward the guilty, mercy his love toward the wretched or pitiable; grace concerns the state, mercy the condition....The term ‘mercy’ frequently occurs in a context of extending help to those in misery.....[Mercy] indicates not only the actual outpouring of pity upon those in distress but also the underlying lovingkindness of which God’s creatures, particularly his people, are the objects, regardless of whether in the given context they are viewed as being ‘in deep misery’ or more generally ‘in need of help.’ In the later case the person concerned is usually viewed as God’s child, dependent in all things on the heavenly Father, who cherishes toward him a feeling of tender affection and is ever ready to help him.”
      3. Joh Huther in Meyers commentary: “Grace points more to the soil from which the gift comes, and peace denotes its nature, while the mercy (standing between the two others in the Pastoral Epistles) lays stress on the element of compassionate love in grace.”
      4. Conclusion: God’s mercy is the demonstration of God’s grace and is the outgrowth of that grace with peace being the end result.
      5. However, I will be using the terms interchangeably in this lesson.

II. Grace.
   A. It is the favor, gift, that which is unmerited, of God.
   B. Physically.
      1. This world and all the blessings associated with this world.
      2. Jam. 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
      3. Mat. 5:45 “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”
C. Spiritually.

1. It is the gift of Christ to die on the cross through whom we obtain salvation.
   a. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whomsoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
   b. The grace that saves has been offered to all men.
      (1) Tit. 2:11 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”
      (2) Heb. 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

2. Saving grace is not unconditional.
   a. Since offered to all, if unconditional then all would be saved.
   b. The majority will be lost; Mat. 7:13-14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”
   c. God’s grace teaches us.
      (1) Tit. 2:11-12 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”
      (2) It teaches us to believe, repent, and be baptized for the remission of our sins.

3. Only those in the church of Christ possess God’s saving grace.
   a. 1 Cor. 1:2-4 “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;”
   b. Rom. 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”
   c. 2 Tim. 2:1 “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”
      (1) The person outside of Christ has no grace, no mercy from God.
      (2) We get into Christ by baptism.
         (a) Rom. 6:3 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”
         (b) Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
         (c) This is how we appropriate God’s grace.

4. Grace leads to separation.
   a. Tit. 2:11-12 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”
   b. Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

c. Grace does not give a license to sin.

(1) Jude 4 “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(2) Rom. 6:1-2 “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

III. PEACE.

A. Definition.

1. It is not the absence of war, trials, or tribulations.

2. Peace is the presence of God; the tranquility and serenity within the individual who is in a right relationship with God.

B. Phi. 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

1. First there must be peace with God who is its source.

a. At least 25 times peace is attributed to God.

b. Col. 3:15 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

(1) We are called by the gospel; the gospel being the death, burial, and resurrection; we obey the gospel in baptism.

(a) We are called by the gospel; 2 Th. 2:14 “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(b) The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; 1 Cor. 15:1-4 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”

(c) We obey a form of the gospel; Rom. 6:17-18 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

(d) That form is baptism; Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

(2) In the body is where we have peace.

(a) We get into the body by baptism.

(b) The body is the church and the Lord adds us to the church when we by faith are baptized into Christ.
(c) Acts 2:41, 47 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.... Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

c. Rom. 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. Peace comes through Christ.
   a. John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
   b. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”
   c. How we get into Christ.
      (1) Rom. 6:3 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?”
      (2) Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

3. This produces peace with self.
   a. John 14:1 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”
   b. We can have a calmness and tranquility of mind knowing:
      (1) God is on our side; Rom. 8:28, 31 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.... What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”
      (2) We can take everything to Him in prayer.
         (a) Phi. 4:6-7 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
         (b) 1 Pet. 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

4. As much as possible, we then have peace with others.
   a. Rom. 12:18 “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”
   b. Heb. 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

Conclusion: We must concur with Paul, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15). We must thank God for His marvelous grace which demonstrates itself in the giving of His Son of die for our sins with the resultant peace. However, only those who are Christians and faithful Christians possess God’s grace. Those outside of Christ are without God’s grace. Because of God’s love for man, He gives man the opportunity to appropriate His grace by being baptized into Christ. If you are not, become a Christian now.