

The Letter of Paul to the Philippians

Part 1 - The Greeting, Philippians 1:1-2

I wanted to begin our time this morning by talking about something that has been in the news and that is what is happening across the pond as they would put it. What is happening in the royal family of England.

I don't know if you follow the goings on concerning the royal family but it is hard to ignore from time to time.

PIC 1 The latest goings on has to do with Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the duke and duchess of Sussex.

Now let me put in a disclaimer. I don't really know very much about what is going on within the Royal family nor do I want to. I am just going to use their circumstance and a little speculation of my own for an example.

As I have read a couple of articles concerning Prince Harry and Meghan, it seems to me like they don't really appreciate the position they are allowed to be in and because of that they are wanting to back away and do things differently. Maybe it will work, maybe it won't.

But to be born into the royal family as Harry was, and then marry into it as Meghan was, it seems they don't have a good handle of what the possibilities are of being in such a honored position.

I have no doubt that both Harry and his brother William have been plagued with all kinds of very difficult emotional events. An unfaithful father, the tragic untimely death of their mother and just the pressures of constantly being in the media as the royal family is.

But the opportunities afforded them by being royalty are tremendous.

PIC 2

I think of Harry's mother Diana. After she married into the royal family she set about her honored position with gusto. She surrendered her old life and embraced the new life she was given. She championed AIDS research and she was seen embracing AIDS patients when everyone else was running scared. She was involved in the removal of landmines in places around the world where they had been wars. She saw the children that were being killed and maimed by these leftover bombs and she used her position to bring attention and finances to clean up these lands.

I think if she would have had more support from her husband and the royal family, no telling what good she could have accomplished in the world had she lived a full life.

Please put in another pic of some kind...to get people's focus off of the Princess Di pic

I am not sure surrendering their lives is what Harry & Meghan have in mind though. I may be wrong but it seems to me more like they are heading down a path of selfish pursuit than one of service.

Similarly, like this latest royal couple though, I wonder if some Christians have went down a similar path where they miss out on the best part of what their Christian life affords them. Because they wither don't know or appreciate the royal family they have been born again into, they miss out on how God can use them in their honored position in great and wonderful ways to impact the world around them.

I think this is the main theme of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi. There is an opportunity He says, for each of us to walk the high road, to live among royalty, to go with a King to only where a King can take you.

So let's begin as we read the opening of the letter of Paul to the church in Philippi.

Philippians 1:1-2, “Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Not to give too much background on the writing of this letter but Paul was writing this letter to the church in Philippi that he had founded some years before. In fact, Timothy was with him in the founding and setting up of the church. It seems also obvious that Timothy is with him when he writes this letter as he mentions later that he hopes to send Timothy to them.

Found within this opening are some amazing truths that I think are core to not just our understanding of this letter but understanding of our Christian faith.

First, Paul addresses the church in Philippi as saints. He says “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including deacons and overseers.”

I think we have covered this quite a bit in the past but it presents the question, who is a saint? Well, as it says here,

1. Saints are those who are in Christ Jesus or have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.

So guess what? If you have accepted Jesus Christ from the heart then you are a.....???? saint.

Ray did a good job last week of presenting the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ being the bridge between us, an unholy people, and a holy God. Nothing we can do or bring to the table bridges that gap. Not your good works, your good name, the blood that courses through your veins,

nothing but accepting Jesus Christ and the blood He shed for you sins. That is what qualifies you into sainthood.

So if I was writing a letter to this church I very well could begin it with to the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Wiggins. Paul goes on in verse 2. Look with me. **“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

In all thirteen, possibly fourteen letters that Paul wrote, this is almost always the exact greeting he began his letters with. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is sharing a great truth with the church right from the beginning and that is grace and peace. The two go together salt and pepper, cookies and milk, peaches and cream, peanut butter and jelly.

2. Grace and peace, where you find one you will find the other.

Paul knows where he finds peace he will find the understanding of the grace of God operating and where he finds the understanding of the grace of God operating he will find peace.

I saw this definition...

Definition: Peace, the tranquility and joy of a heart that realizes and lives in the grace of God

I think this hits it right on the head. I was talking with someone the other day and he said it was the grace of God that arrested him, that got his attention. In fact he is reading a book by Max Lucado that you might want to look into called In the Grip of Grace.

Book – Max Lucado, In the Grip of Grace

I haven't read this particular book yet but I have read a number of books by Max Lucado and I know he will not steer you wrong.

The grace of God is where its at for a Christian.

3. Without an understanding of the grace of God and how it operates in our salvation and in our continued journey with God there will be no growth, no joy and no power.

I think Ray Meyer did a masterful job last week of explaining the grace of God for salvation. If you were not here I would recommend getting on our Facebook page and take a look at last week's sermon.

But the grace of God does not stop with our salvation. It continues to work in our life now on a daily, minute by minute basis and for eternity. Again, if we aren't operating in the knowledge and the understanding of the grace of God in our daily lives then I don't believe that we can move very far into victorious living.

So, it really is all about grace, understanding grace, the unmerited favor we have received from God.

I saw this example of how a lot of people think God sees their Christian life.

Dots

Sheet

Think about these passages. **Romans 8:1, "Therefore is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

Are you in Christ Jesus? Is He in you? Then you have experienced the grace of God. Think about this passage I have shared before.

1 John 4:15-19, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in them and they in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us....”

Do you know the love God has for you? Do you know that He has removed your sin from you as far as the east is from the west meaning it is gone. Never to be seen by God again. Not only the sins of yesterday and today but also, if you can believe it, the sins of your tomorrows.

That is grace. You don't deserve it but that is who our God is and that is what it means to stand and live in Christ Jesus and to have Him live in you.

You can go your own way, blaze your own trail like Prince Harry & Meghan. You can try and figure life out on your own but wouldn't it be better, wiser if you embrace the royal life that you have been born into? The privilege, the honor, the blessing of living as the daughter and son of King Jesus.

4. The more you come to know, accept and live in the grace of God the more your life will be filled with peace

Filled with grace and peace, it is how the Christian life is meant to be lived.

In closing I want to share a couple of things that will help you. First look with me at Psalm 123.

Psalm 123:1-2, “To You (O God) I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of the maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord...”

Secondly, a prayer of truth. Look with me.

Father, I thank you that this very day, You and the Lord Jesus are releasing grace, peace and mercy into my life. Thank You that Your grace, Your love, and the communion of the Holy Spirit are mine this day.

If you will lift your eyes to the Lord every day, giving Him thanks for the grace you have received, are receiving and will receive, it will transform your life.

Let us close as we lift our faces and our eyes to the Lord this morning and pray this prayer in closing.