

Greetings of the Saints, Grace of Christ's Richness – Philippians 4:21-23

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Philippians 4:21-23; Psalm 133.
- Teaching Scripture text: Philippians 4:21-23

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. **22** All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

- From the greeting section at the end of this letter, we will discuss how we as saints should greet one another in the church, and we will summarize the richness of God's grace as seen in this letter.
- Outline:

Title: **Greetings of the Saints, Grace of Christ's Richness**

1. **Greetings of the Saints** (vv 21-22)
2. **Grace of Christ's Richness** (v23, summary of Philippians)
 - 2a. Grace of Believing in Christ
 - 2b. Grace of Suffering for Christ
 - 2c. Grace of Being Preserved
 - 2d. Grace of God's Word
 - 2e. Grace of Providence
 - 2f. Grace of the Church
 - 2g. Grace of Life

Greetings of the Saints (vv 21-22)

- “Greet x3”: Here are some basic principles of Christians greeting one another: It demonstrates our love for one another (John 13:34-35); It should be sincere and unforced (1 Peter 1:22); It should have the warmth of a family (1 Timothy 3:15, Matthew 10:29-30). Its manner should be properly enthusiastic (“Greet one another with a holy Kiss”, Romans 16:16).

1 Peter 1:22 “Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.”

- “every saint”: The singular noun emphasizes that no one should be left alone without being greeted. It also implies that we need to know who are the saints among us. It is apparent that in early the church everyone is committed to each other and to the whole church. Praise God that our church is one that emphasizes commitment. I pray that no one here is attending worship just as a mere audience.

- “in Christ Jesus”: This term defines a saint. A saint is a person in Christ. All who are in Christ are saints. There’s no ranks. “Saint” literally means “holy one”, and since Jesus is holy, we who are united with him are separated from the world to be holy.
- “The brethren who are with me”: Colossians 4 lists many coworkers who are with Paul at this time, such as Luke, Mark, and Tychicus. They all are great men used by God mightily. Paul calls them simply “brethren”, whereas he addressed the Philippian believers as saints. “Brethren” is a most affectionate, intimate, and unassuming way to address fellow believers. Paul is modeling humility, a lesson the Philippian church especially needs to learn (See Philippian 2:3-4)
- “All the saints”: Clearly referring to the believers in the Roman church. Many of them have never met the Philippian believers, yet they too send their greetings through Paul. The pure brotherly love among believers in the early church transcended all boundaries and differences.
- “those of Caesar’s household”: This greeting comes from the darkest place of Satan’s power! The reigning Caesar at that time was the notorious Nero. Not long after this, he’d begin to slaughter Christians. Some of those mentioned here might be killed very soon. By the same salvation, they are our heavenly brothers. Greeting of the saints will last into eternity.

Grace of Christ’s Richness (v23, summary of Philippians)

- “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”: This echoes the beginning,” Grace to you ... (1:2).” Grace is the beginning and the end of the letter, so the entire letter is enveloped in the grace of God given richly to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of salvation is not for our own gain, but to reveal God’s rich glory through us.

This letter revealed the richness of grace that Christians received. Summarized below:

Grace of Believing in Christ

- “For to you it has been granted ...to believe in Him (1:29): Faith in Christ is the beginning of all spiritual grace, for it is the only way for sins to be forgiven. Sin is the root problem of all human souls, and the only solution is by what Christ did (2:6-8) and through faith in Him.
- “the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith” (3:9): This kind of faith is no mere head knowledge, but a faith that produces a complete life transformation, which is shown in verse 7-8.

Grace of Suffering for Christ

- “Not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake (1:29): Suffering is God’s grace because 1) it shows that you’re united with Christ (3:10); 2) it intensifies the sweetness of

union with Christ (4:11-13); and 3) it produces testimony for the progress of the gospel (1:12-14; 2:14-16).

Grace of Being Preserved

- “He who began a good work in you will perfect it” (1:6): And that’s why Paul’s prayer for them is filled with joy (1:4). Even the exhortation for them to pursue sanctification is based on God’s preserving work (2:12-13). Therefore, Paul plans to send Timothy to visit them, knowing their wellbeing will bring him much encouragement (2:19).
- “If in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you” (3:15): The grace of preservation implies that God will reveal to you your sins so you may repent. And the way God reveals them is often through discipline. So, although we still struggle with sin, we can have the eternal hope of 3:20-21 that we will be made perfect when Jesus returns.
- “press on”: God’s preservation cannot be separated from our pursuit as believers. The promises of God’s preservation in 4:7 and 4:9 both have a condition, and the condition is our pursuit of holiness in all areas of life.

Grace of God’s Word

- “for your progress and joy in the faith” (1:25): This is Paul’s goal in life, that God may give word through him so that believers may grow and be joyful in the faith.
- “To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. “(3:1): All extortions in this letter are the grace of God’s word. The grace of preservation is through the grace of God’s word.

Grace of Providence

- “but you lacked opportunity “(4:10): This shows Paul’s understanding of God’s work of providence. Providence describes God’s work where He meticulously guides all things without breaking any natural law so that all things happen exactly according to His will. God used Paul’s circumstances to bring about a greater progress of the gospel (1:12-14), and He used Epaphroditus’ trial to manifest the deep love among the saints (2:25-30), and all these are results of God’s providence. Therefore, Paul can be content in whatever circumstances he is (4:11-13)

Grace of the Church

- “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (1:27): This extortion of church life is based on the grace of believing in and suffering for Christ in verse 29. In other words, the grace of personal salvation is to accomplish the grace of the

Church. Accordingly, Paul says “you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction” (4:14). If a Christian fails to live out this kind of church life, you can say in a sense that the grace of personal salvation is wasted on him. The entire chapter 2 is about church life. A stable spiritual life also needs a healthy church life (4:1-3).

Grace of Life

- “For to me, to live is Christ (1:21)”: This statement is in the form of a definition. Christ is the definition of life for a Christian. Eternal life isn't a quantity; it's a quality. It's not just about the length of life; it's about the depth and the height of life. Christ defines the life of Christians. Everything a Christian does is for Christ. You work for Christ, have family life for Christ, eat for Christ, sleep for Christ. The time you spend with unbelievers is to witness for Christ; the time you spend with believers is to serve Christ and build up His body; the time you spend alone is to commune with Christ and seek Christ. Whenever and whatever you do anything with another motive, you depart from “to live is Christ” and are not fully in the eternal life that God gives by grace.
- “to die is gain.” (1:21): Another statement of definition. The definition of death for Christians is gain. Why? Because death is no longer a punishment of sin, but a key step toward complete sanctification so we can depart from this filthy body of sin in order to gain a new and holy body to be with the Lord forever (1:23, 3:20-21). Praise the Lord for giving us such grace of life!