

Greetings and His Blessing

Scripture Reading: Phil. 4:21–23

The Apostle Greeting Every Saint in Christ

Paul's words of greeting in verse 21 are related to what he says in verse 20 about glory to our God and Father. This indicates that he greeted the saints with the very weight of glory spoken of in verse 20. When we send greetings to others, or ask others to greet certain ones on our behalf, we may greet them with our best regards or with our love. However, Paul did not greet the saints in Philippi in a superficial way, merely with his best regards or with his love. I believe that what was within him as he wrote this word of greeting was God's rich supply and glory. Paul had just written, "And my God shall fill every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (v.19). No doubt this was the substance of his greetings to the saints. He wanted every saint to be greeted in Christ in this way.

The Brothers Who Were with the Apostle Greeting the Saints

The brothers who were with Paul certainly must have greeted the saints in the same way Paul did. (v.21) This means that they greeted the believers not with their best regards, but with the assurance of God's repayment and with His glory. We may even say that Paul and those with him greeted the saints in Christ Jesus with the entire contents of the whole book of Philippians, i.e., with all the words in this book. The very fact that Paul simply said to greet every saint in Christ, not specifying in what way the saints should be greeted, implies that he greeted them with all the points covered in this Epistle.

Any saint who would not receive all these points could not have a share in Paul's greeting. Those who would participate in his greeting must first enjoy all the points covered in this Epistle. These points were Paul's best regards sent to them. Paul's best regards to the saints were that they would live Christ, magnify Christ, take Christ as their pattern, hold forth Christ, count all things loss in order to gain Christ and be found in Him, pursue Christ, lay hold of Christ, and do all things in Christ. Seen in the context of the whole book, Paul greeted every saint with all the profound aspects of the experience of Christ. A further indication that this was Paul's concept in sending greetings to the saints is that he uses the expression *in Christ Jesus*. (v.21) This phrase implies the contents of the whole book, for, as we have pointed out again and again, this book deals with the experience of Christ and in Christ. Paul wanted every saint to be greeted **in the very Christ** whom we live, magnify, take as our pattern, hold forth as the word of life, and pursue and with the whole contents of the book of Philippians.

All the Saints in Rome, Especially Those of Caesar's Household, Greeting the Saints in Philippi

Paul continues, "All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar's household." (v.22) Caesar's household included all who were attached to the palace of Nero. Some of these were converted through contact with Paul and became believers in Christ in Rome. The expression "those of Caesar's household" is both puzzling and encouraging. It is puzzling because we are not altogether sure to whom it refers; it is encouraging because it shows the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel had spread even into the household of Caesar Nero. God's move in His economy had gained even some of Caesar's household. What a tremendous victory! This indicates how worthwhile it is to have fellowship which results in the furtherance of the gospel, in the spread of God's move on earth for His economy. It is significant that in writing to the Philippians Paul deliberately refers to "those of Caesar's household." I believe that Paul had fellowship with these ones, perhaps even telling them that he was writing a letter to the believers in Philippi. Then those brothers and sisters must have asked Paul to send their greetings to the saints in Philippi.

The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ

In his word of blessing Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." (v.23) Grace is God in Christ as our supply and enjoyment conveyed to us and realized through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (1:19). To experience Christ as Paul did we need this grace. When Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," he means that the supply and enjoyment of the Triune God by and through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ should be with us. When we have such a supply, we enjoy and experience the Triune God all day long.

With Our Spirit

According to Paul's word, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit. (v.23) The spirit here is our regenerated spirit indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. It is **in this spirit of ours** that we enjoy Christ and experience Him as Paul did. Many Christians today have missed the mark of the regenerated spirit. They speak much about the Holy Spirit, but not of the human spirit. Because of this neglect of the regenerated human spirit, there is very little experience of Christ or enjoyment of the all-inclusive grace.

In 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (lit.). Love is the source, grace is the course, and fellowship is the flow. Here we have Christ the Son, God the Father, and the Spirit—the enjoyment of the Triune God. Furthermore, in this verse we have the dispensing of the Triune God into us as love, grace, and fellowship. However, these three are

actually one; they are all related to the enjoyment of the Triune God. By means of love as the source, grace as the course, and fellowship as the flow, the Triune God dispenses Himself into our being to become our enjoyment. This is the grace which is with our spirit. How wonderful that the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit now indwells our spirit! This marvelous enjoyment is with our spirit.

If we would enjoy the grace which is with our spirit, we need to exercise our spirit. The way to exercise the spirit is to pray, pray-read the Word, and call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Whenever we call on the Lord Jesus or pray to God the Father, we automatically exercise our spirit. This is very different, however, from praying in a religious, formal manner. That kind of prayer does not require the exercise of the spirit, but simply exercises the mentality. In contrast, when we call on the Lord, pray in a proper way, and pray-read the Word, we truly exercise our spirit. Exercising our spirit in this way is the secret to enjoying the grace which is with our spirit. Oh, we all need more exercise of the spirit to enjoy the Lord!

We know that man has three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body. Bodily exercise is necessary and profitable. When I exercise physically, I sleep better at night. It is hardly necessary to speak of the exercise of the soul, especially of the mind, since this is emphasized so much in the schools. But there is a great need to emphasize the need to exercise the spirit. The church is a spiritual gymnasium where we can exercise our spirit. The more we exercise the spirit, the more we shall be healthy and strong in our entire being. Our physical body will be healthy, our mind will be sober and keen, and our spirit will be energized. I can testify that day by day I have bodily exercise, psychological exercise, and spiritual exercise. Again I say, the exercise of the spirit is the secret, the unique way, to participate in the very grace which is the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit. As we enjoy Him, we become healthy and strong in our spirit and in our whole being. We thank God that, in His mercy, He has brought a good number of us into the enjoyment of the Triune God through the exercise of the spirit by prayer, pray-reading, and calling on the dear and excellent name of the Lord Jesus. In this way we have the church life full of rejoicing, full of the enjoyment of the Triune God.