

It's All You Really Need

Colossians 1:1-8

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8 and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

As Paul begins his letter to the Colossians, he intentionally uses the greetings as a way to begin his message of encouragement to them. Expanding beyond the normal 1st Century greeting, Paul provides us with a beautiful picture of God's people and God's provision.

I. The People of God (vv. 1-2a)

Paul uses the opening of his introduction to describe both himself and those to whom he is writing. In doing so he gives us five insights into who we are as the people of God. We are by the *will of God*, called to be *saints* (set apart) and *faithful brothers* (a new family) who are *in Christ* and *in the world* (at Colossae).

II. The Provision of God (v. 2b)

In the 1st century, letters would begin with the simple salutation, "greetings." Here in Colossians and in all of Paul's letters, he always begins by saying "grace to you and peace to you." Why grace? Well Paul certainly means more than just enjoying the kindness of God. Paul would want his readers to understand the fullness of grace offered to us in the Gospel. Why peace? Again, Paul is referring to something more than just the absence of conflict. He wants his readers to think of the Old Testament idea of *Shalom*, which means wholeness or completeness. It is also interesting to note that in all of Paul's letters grace always precedes peace. We can never really know the peace of God until we have known the grace of God.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some characteristics of a "saint" of God? Can you always recognize a "saint" of God?
2. What does it mean to be a "faithful brother in Christ"?
3. How does being "in Christ" make your life different?
4. What are some ways in which grace is manifested in your daily life?

5. Why does grace always come before peace?

6. Describe the biblical definition of peace.

Going Deeper

1. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. What are you by the will of God? Do you see your vocation or place in life as calling?

2. How do you experience grace and peace in your life?

3. How does the Lord's grace and peace make a difference in your life?