

Final Greetings

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Thank you again for joining us for worship today. And if you're new here, if you're visiting for the first time, you might find the passage that Clint read to be a little bit odd because that's the passage that we're preaching on and you might find that a little bit odd because we're focusing on the final three verses of the letter to the church in Philippi. This is our 16th week in the book of Philippians. This is our final Sunday in the book of Philippians, at least in here. Hopefully, you continue reading Philippians in your personal time with the Lord. But whenever I came here, I told you that I was going to preach a line-by-line, verse-by-verse style. And I know that that's been slow-paced and probably different from what you're used to or what you've known before. But I want to say I appreciate you sticking it out with me and making it to the end of Philippians. So here we are. With that in mind, would you stand with me for the honor of reading God's Word?

Philippians 4, 21 through 23 says, Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Let's pray together. God in heaven, thank you for your Word. Thank you, God, that we have been able to study this book together. I know that you have more for us here even today as we look at these last three verses. So God, I pray that you would open our hearts, open our minds, and just transform us by your Word. We love you, Lord Jesus, and it's in your name that we pray.

Amen. All right, you can be seated. So today we're looking at the final greetings, the final greetings to Paul and Paul's letter to the Philippians.

And there's two main ideas that I want to draw your attention to. The first is the fellowship of the saints, and the second is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. So these two main ideas, what's interesting about them is that they aren't only found here at the end of the book of Philippians. They actually are also at the beginning of the book as well, in the first two verses. Philippians 1, 1 and 2 says, In fact, every single letter that Paul wrote in the New Testament began and ended with a sentiment of grace.

[2 : 53] Every single one. Grace to you, often at the beginning, and grace be with you at the end. So why did Paul do that so often? Why is it that every letter was kind of bookended by grace?

Why is that the case? There's a few reasons that I think that he did that. The first is that repetition is a really helpful teaching tool. You know, you've probably noticed as we've gone through Philippians that I've repeated some of the same words and phrases time and time again.

Right? If you hear unity again, you might be ready to walk out. You know, I've repeated some of these things and it's because they're in the passages that we've been studying, but also because there's some important things that we need to take away from this book, this letter to the Philippians.

Right? So repetition is helpful. It's a helpful teaching tool. The second thing is that finding a way to connect the beginning of a letter or a story to the end of a letter or a story makes it a very compelling letter or story.

Right? Kind of showing that the author had the end in mind throughout the entire writing of the story or the letter. And I did not know prior to the children's message that Amy was going to reference the 1994 masterpiece known as The Lion King.

[4 : 08] But this connecting the beginning and the end in the storytelling world is a cyclical, I'm going to read it so I would say it correctly, a cyclical narrative structure and The Lion King is actually a really good example of this.

If you remember the beginning of The Lion King, what happens at the beginning? You have the Circle of Life song, right? You have all these colors, the sunrise, and then Simba is presented at Pride Rock.

Right? And then, you know how the story goes. I could tell you, I could probably quote it because we've watched it with Jack a few times. I'm not going to. I might sing Hakuna Matata later. Anyway, at the end of the movie, after Simba reclaims the throne, his rightful place, what do you have? You have him on Pride Rock with the sunrise, the majestic music going, and he presents his son, kind of showing the continuation of the Circle of Life. So it's just an example of, it's compelling, right?

You watch The Lion King at the end of the movie, you're like, yeah, man, go Simba. He made it. That's awesome. You know, you're excited for him. And by opening and closing his letters with the mention of grace, Paul consistently emphasized the significance of the grace of God in the life of believers.

[5 : 26] And like I said, Philippians is interesting because grace isn't the only thing mentioned at the beginning and the end. This word saints is also mentioned at the beginning and the end.

And again, Philippians 1.1, Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi. And that brings us to the first of our two main ideas that I want to talk about with you today.

The fellowship of the saints. The fellowship of the saints. As Paul closed out his letter, he put a personal, a bow on his personal relationship with the church.

It's unknown if Paul ever made contact with the Philippian church again. We don't know if he visited them again when he got released from prison. We don't know if he wrote another letter to them or anything like that. But what is known and what is made abundantly clear is Paul's love and affection for this church.

And we see that here through this simple greeting at the end of the letter. So there's some things that we can learn about the fellowship of the saints as we look at Philippians 21 and 22.

[6 : 32] So the first is that saints care for other saints. Saints care for other saints. Saints. The idea of greeting at the end of a letter, this is Greco-Roman style letters, okay?

There's a greeting at the beginning. There's a generally, especially in the biblical letters, you have a thanksgiving, except for in Galatians where he just called them stupid. He didn't actually say that word, but kind of.

Anyways, and then you also go from the thanksgiving to the body of the letter where he gets the main point out. And then there's a conclusion statement and then a farewell greeting, so a final greeting.

It's a very, very typical structure for a Greco-Roman letter. And that word greeting is basically the idea of loving recognition, hospitable recognition.

All right? Paul gave his well wishes to the saints in Philippi. He told someone to greet every saint. And probably he told the overseers and the deacons, the ones he addressed the letter to, to greet every saint.

[7 : 34] And the message is basically that I want you to make sure that every believer in Philippi knows that I'm thinking of them and that I love them. I want you to make that clear to them. All right? Paul's, this is a personal thing, right?

It's not like, we think of greetings in a different way, I think, because when we see each other, sometimes it's just a really quick, hey, how are you? Or sometimes just like a head nod and then we walk on by.

And, you know, that's what we, we're like, yeah, I greeted them. Of course I did, right? Well, not really. This word greeting, it emphasizes the personal touch, right? This is a loving recognition of not only their existence, but also of the fact that Paul was thinking of them and Paul cared for them deeply.

And it's a profound thing to know that someone cares for you, isn't it? Not just that they care for you, but when you're hurting or experiencing pain in some way, but just that people are thinking about you in general and care for you.

One of the best expressions of care is a handwritten letter. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, and he wanted them to know that he cares about each of them personally. And I know we're in a technical age, and so we don't write handwritten letters, you know, as much as maybe some of y'all did growing up.

[8 : 46] But we definitely need to get back to that in some ways, because handwritten letters are just so important to show how much you care for someone, all right? And, you know, when Audrey and I were dating, one thing that I think helped convince her to marry me was that I wrote her a lot of letters.

I mean, I'm a romantic, you know? I wrote a lot of letters. And it wasn't just because I thought she'd like them. It was also because I liked her, and I wanted her to know that, right? I cared about her. So I wrote genuine notes about the things that I liked about her and all those things, you know? Like I said, I'm a romantic. And so, you know, this is, but it's a personal thing, right?

It's an endearing thing to receive a letter from someone that you know cares about you, and that's what happened here with the church in Philippi. And so Paul personally cared for the saints in Philippi.

The other thing, or the next thing that we see as we keep looking through these passages is that the fellowship of the saints, saints are people who have been made holy by Christ.

[9 : 52] So when we read this word saint here, it's important to understand the word in the Greek is literally, it just means holy ones, okay? Holy ones. So this is a really important reminder.

The office of saint or the title of saint is not limited to a select group of especially holy people, okay? The title saint is the title for anyone who has been made holy by Jesus Christ.

So if you believe in Jesus, then you are a saint, okay? If you have been made righteous and clean by the blood of Jesus Christ, then his holiness has been given to you.

You are a saint. I know sometimes what we'll do is whenever we mess up or we sin or we say something we shouldn't say, you know? Like sometimes the words that come out of our mouth sound a lot more like when we didn't know Jesus than when we do know Jesus, you know?

And so whenever that happens, what do people say? Well, you know, I'm no saint, so you'll have to, you know, you caught me. I just want you to know I'm no saint.

[11 : 00] It is what it is. I'm no saint. And it's like, yeah, yeah, you are though. You are a saint. You are a saint. And God has called you to holy living. He's made you holy in Christ Jesus. There was a president of a well-known evangelical college who got exposed for his involvement in a life of illicit sin.

This was relatively recently. His brother is a pastor of a large church, and this president of this university was a lawyer by trade and then eventually became the president of the school.

And when he got caught in his life of sin, do you know what his response was? I always said that my brother was the pastor. I'm a lawyer. Okay.

So it's interesting, right? You hear things like, I'm no saint, so, you know, excuse what I did because I'm not perfect. I'm not a saint. Or my brother's a pastor.

I'm just a lawyer. Well, you've claimed to be a Christian this whole time, so something's not adding up there, right? As Christians, we have been made holy by Jesus Christ.

[12 : 03] And God's word says that we should be holy because he is holy. This is in the Old Testament. It's also echoed in the New Testament in the book of 1 Peter.

But Leviticus 11, 44 and 45 says, For I am the Lord your God, so you must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. Do not defile yourselves by any swarming creature that crawls on the ground, for I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God.

So you must be holy because I am holy. In Ephesians, Paul tells the Christians in Ephesus that they need to be imitators of God.

This is just really, it's subtle, right? Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. And sometimes we get to the end of books and we just kind of gloss over these things and we just read right past them and get into the next book or say my quiet time is done for the day.

I'll pick up somewhere else the next day. And we don't pause and think about what these things, these little words, what they mean for us. But this is an important reminder. Every saint in Christ Jesus, every person who's in Christ Jesus is a saint.

[13 : 13] And it's by, very much by being in Christ Jesus that you're able to follow the command from Leviticus 11 that was echoed in the New Testament and be holy because God is holy.

Because God has made you holy, we are holy. We are saints. So if you believe in Jesus Christ, you've been made holy, you are a saint, and live your life as a reflection of the holiness of God.

There's another aspect of the fellowship of the saints that's important. And that is that saints share a common faith. You keep reading here, after Paul says, greet every saint in Christ Jesus, he says,

There's another neat aspect about the fellowship of the saints that we should consider. Paul wasn't the only person who cared enough about the church in Philippi to offer them this loving well wishes at the end of the letter. He was joined in this greeting by his brothers who were in Rome, and also a fairly surprising group, actually, as we'll look at this.

But who were the brothers who also greeted the church in Philippi? Well, we know from his other letters that there was a handful of people who spent some time with Paul while he was in Roman prison. Timothy and Epaphroditus were obviously there.

[14 : 34] We've talked about them. But there was others as well. Luke was with Paul. In fact, during Paul's Roman imprisonment, his first Roman imprisonment, was probably when Luke and Paul sat down and recorded the book of Acts because it ends there during Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

There was also Tychicus who wrote a couple of letters for Paul. He wrote Ephesians. I think he wrote Romans as well. He penned them for Paul. Aristarchus, Mark, Justice, Epaphras, and Demas.

These were just a few of the brothers in Christ, the leaders in the church who were there with Paul, some of his co-workers who were there with him. Many of them had been to Philippi and known the church. Luke, for example, in Acts chapter 16, was with Paul whenever he made way to Philippi, and then he wasn't with Paul whenever he left Philippi.

Luke probably stayed and pastored at the church in Philippi for a couple of years there. So Luke would have known them very well. Timothy had obviously been known by them as well. And so you have a few people who were connected to them, but then there was others who had no prior relationship with this church in the middle of Macedonia in Philippi.

And yet they cared deeply for the church because they heard Paul's prayers for the church. They heard the testimony of how God had used the church. They were moved because of Paul's affection for the church in Philippi to also express affection to them as well.

[15 : 59] And it wasn't just those fellow co-workers who loved this church. It was also all of the Christians in Rome, including actually and especially those who belonged to Caesar's household.

So we don't know who the people in Caesar's household were, but it might have been the imperial guard. If you remember in Philippians 1, Paul says that he had the opportunity to preach the gospel to the entire imperial guard.

And so it may have been members of the guard who had come to know Christ who also shared this sentiment of grace and greetings with the Philippian church. It could have been household slaves of the emperor, Nero.

But whoever it was, it's a really interesting note because it shows us a couple things. One, it kind of helps us place Paul when he wrote this letter. He was, I think, he was in Rome when he wrote this letter.

He was in his Roman imprisonment, actually in Rome. But then also it shows us that the gospel was spreading in Rome, right? The gospel was going out. It wasn't being inhibited.

[16 : 59] Even though he was in chains, remember the gospel was still going out and producing fruit. People were growing in Christ. So much so that they shared this sentiment of grace and greetings with Paul to the church in Philippi as well.

And it's always fun for us to connect over commonalities, right? That's just something that, as humans, we love to connect over similar interests or similar hobbies. It's like, okay, you played that sport.

I played that sport so we can be friends. I'll tell you a funny one. It's not really that funny, but like kind of. So when I was 17 years old, I had a heart issue. I had it my whole life.

I didn't really know that it was an issue. And when I was 17, I had this issue where I was like, I'd warm it up for a baseball game one day. I jumped, I landed, my heart started racing really, really fast. And it didn't stop.

Normally, whenever it happened, it would happen for a few minutes and then it would stop. That day, it did not. And so I started getting to the point where I was about to black out. I was, you know, really lightheaded.

[17 : 59] Finally got to the hospital. My heart rate was like, I have the EKG. I can't remember. My heart rate was way higher than it should have been. Okay? It was dangerous.

They gave me this medicine to stop my heart. And then it restarted itself. So that was good. They had the panels in there ready to, you know, shock me back to life if it didn't. But it did. We were good. And so, anyways, the doctors at that little hospital that I went to were going to let me go. And then another doctor from Vanderbilt happened to see my EKG. And he said, hey, don't let that guy go. Send him to me. So I went to Vanderbilt Children's. I was diagnosed with this thing called WPW, which is Wolf-Parkinson-White Syndrome. Basically, I don't want to get technical because it's boring.

I had extra electrical pathways in my heart. So whenever I had like a little heart flutter, it would make my entire heart beat at a faster rate. Okay? So I had to get it fixed with this little ablation. [18:59] No big deal. A couple weeks later, I was playing baseball again. And I wasn't very good, but I was playing. And so, anyways, I thought, you look at Wolf-Parkinson-White Syndrome, and it's, you know, on Google or WebMD.

It's one of those things that's like rare, you know, like not super common. Well, I was in Idaho. This was just a couple years ago on a mission trip with my youth group. And I was talking with a pastor up there at the church plant that we were helping. His name is Dave. He's a friend of mine now. And so Dave was talking, and he was describing how he was working out one time and how he recently had to go to the hospital and get his heart fixed. And I was like, man, that sounds really familiar to something that happened to me. I had this thing called Wolf-Parkinson-White, though, so I doubt that's what. He goes, you had WPW, too? I was like, yeah.

This is the first person I've ever met in the wild who had it. Yeah. But it's cool, right? We connected over that. We had a similar, a shared experience, and we connect over those things. That's how humans connect.

[20:00] That's how we build relationships is over similarities and commonalities. And these Christians in Rome who didn't previously know the people in Philippi and maybe never even met them on this side of heaven, they shared a concern.

They shared a sentiment of grace. They wished them well. They genuinely loved them because of their shared faith. That's an incredible thing that we have as Christ followers is this fellowship of the saints.

So there's a few things. I just want to take a quick takeaways from these two verses about the fellowship of the saints. One, anyone who believes in Jesus Christ is a saint. So, you ready? Live like you're a saint.

Okay? Live like you're a saint. Live like you've been made holy by the Holy One. Number two, showing people that you care, that matters. Showing people that you genuinely care about them, that you love them, that you're interested in their well-being, that goes a really long way. You know, I've been really impressed since I've been here at First Baptist, just the amount of people who are genuinely concerned for other people who are experiencing health conditions or, you know, whatever other issues that you might think of.

[21:13] There's a need. I mean, you can't have a need without having 30 people at your doorstep ready to make you a meal and help you out. It's amazing. It's amazing, right? There's a genuine care among the brothers and sisters in Christ here in this church, and that's very encouraging.

But showing people that you care, it matters greatly. And then number three, we have a great fellowship with all who share our hope in Jesus Christ. So don't let denominational ties or distance or anything else keep you from sharing a great fellowship with all who believe in Jesus Christ. You'll celebrate with everybody in heaven, So why not celebrate and share and care for them now here on earth? And the second way that Paul tied the end of this letter to the beginning of this letter was with the specific mention of grace, specifically the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. And as I mentioned before, Paul used grace to open and close every single one of his letters, and he did this literally in every single one.

If you don't believe me, you can go check, but here's a few examples. We have Romans 1, 7, says, To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[22:28] Romans 16, 20, right before he finishes the letter with the doxology, he says, The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. 1 Corinthians 1, 3, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 16, 23, The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. Galatians 1, 3, Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

And Galatians 6, 18, Brothers and sisters, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. And of course, Philippians 1, 2, he says, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

So why did he always open his letters and close his letters with this mention of grace? Grace. No answer?

I'm just kidding. Because grace matters that much for Christians. Grace is that important that it's worth mentioning as often as you can.

[23 : 36] It's an encouragement. It's helpful. Grace means unmerited favor. We don't do anything to deserve or earn God's favor or his kindness.

If we did anything to earn his favor, then the gift of salvation wouldn't be a gift of grace. Romans 11, 5 and 6 says it this way, In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace.

Now, if by grace, then it is not by works. Otherwise, grace ceases to be grace. When we do something to earn something, what we receive is not grace.

Right? If we work and we get a paycheck, then we earned the paycheck. I didn't earn gifts from my parents in childhood or their love or anything like that.

Right? My parents loved me, and so they gave me gifts. That was an act of grace. I didn't deserve it. I didn't do anything to earn it. But they gave it to me. God has shown unbelievable grace to humanity.

[24 : 38] We're sinful by nature. Enemies of God, the Bible says. We're enemies of God. We deserve separation and punishment. We deserve death. But God has such an incomprehensible love for us that he offers grace.

So there's three main things that I want us to understand about the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Number one, grace is unearned and undeserved. Number two, God's grace is what saves us. And number three, God's grace empowers us to live the life of holiness that he has called us to. So let's break these three things down.

And I want us to see the significance of these realities for the Christian. And in doing so, I want you to understand why Paul mentioned grace so frequently at the beginning of the end of his letters. And even specifically, why he did that here in Philippians.

How does grace apply to this book where the primary message seems to be rejoicing or joy? And then the, you know, second primary, secondary things or issues that he wants to emphasize are humility and unity.

[25 : 42] So where does grace fall into that? So let's look at these three things about grace.

Number one, grace is unearned and undeserved. If you want a basic understanding of the doctrine of original sin and the depravity of humanity, I encourage you to read the book of Romans.

Romans 1 through, well, basically Romans 1.18 through the end of chapter 2 present humanity as completely in need of salvation. It doesn't matter what background you come from, what your ethnicity is, if you were raised Jewish, if you weren't raised Jewish.

We are all sinners in need of a Savior. Romans 3, 10 through 12 says, So, we need to understand, none of us, myself included, none of us are even kind of good.

Right? None of us are even kind of good. And so I asked Carol before I said this, but, so I've got this joke that I make. It's a dumb joke. So just know that before I say it out loud.

But I'm a dad now, so I can make dumb jokes. So, so I'll ask, I'll go up to people and I'll ask, hey, how are you doing? And if they say good, then, you know, almost like an impulse, I spout back.

[27 : 07] The Bible says no one does good, you know. So, are you a liar? What's going on? Just mess with people. Well, when I first came here to First Baptist, I asked Carol how she was doing, and she said good.

And without taking a moment to think about what the pastor of a church might say, I spouted back, well, the Bible says no one's good. So, what's going on? And she has not let me forget that.

In the best way. You know, every Wednesday or Sunday, she'll come up and say, hey, how are you doing? And then she'll say, I'm doing well. It's great. It's great. We're having fun with it.

But anyways, back to grace. You need to understand what is said in Romans 1 through 3 is massively important. In Romans chapter 5, verse 6, we're told that because of our sin, we're

hopeless.

We are so lost and so separated from God because of our sin, because of our depravity, because of our fallen nature, that we are without hope.

[28 : 09] I mean, it doesn't matter if you're a really, really good person. It doesn't matter if you are a really strict adherent to another religion. If you don't have faith in Jesus Christ, you're without hope.

But Romans 5, verse 6 doesn't leave us without hope. It doesn't drop the statement after this notion of hopelessness.

It emphasizes the grace of God. It goes on. It says, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. We're ungodly by nature. We're evil. We're enemies of God.

We're sinful. And I know that's like not a really like, if you went to a seminar on how to grow a church, they might tell you don't preach about how we're naturally evil and sinful.

But that's not what the Bible says. We are evil and sinful. And we are in need of a Savior. And Romans 5, 7, and 8 goes on to explain how unbelievable this concept really is.

[29 : 07] It says, for rarely will someone die for a just person. Rarely will someone die for a good person. Though for a good person, perhaps someone might even dare to die. But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Grace, God's grace is undeserved and unearned. We did not deserve the God of all creation to enter time and space in a moment in human history to live a perfect life and die on the cross for our sins.

But that's exactly what he did because of his love for us. God's grace is rooted in his unquenchable love.

And the final thing I want you to understand about grace is that grace is what saves us. Wait, I meant to say, that's the second thing that I want you to understand, not the final.

Don't pack up your bags just yet, class. God's grace is what saves us. Building off that verse from Romans 5, Romans 6, 23, very familiar verse, says, For the wages of sin is death, what we earn for our sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

[30 : 29] That gift is that unearned favor, the gift of God's grace. We don't deserve it. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 says, For you are saved by grace through faith. And this is not from yourselves.

It is God's gift, not from works, so that no one can boast. The only way that we're saved is by putting faith in Jesus Christ and trusting the grace of God to forgive our sins, cleanse us of all unrighteousness, and give us his eternal life.

This reality in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 is emphasized with four qualifiers. So we're saved by grace through faith. And number one, this is not from yourself. Number two, it is God's gift.

Number three, it's not from works. Number four, you have nothing to brag about. I think there's four reminders because we have a tendency to take credit for the grace of God.

We have a tendency to think we made ourselves appealing to God so he offered us salvation. I cleaned my life up. I got my life right. And then that's how I know I'm saved. I cleaned my life up.

[31 : 30] I got better. I'm right with God now. If we think we do anything to assist in salvation, we are sorely mistaken. And Paul came from a very strict religious background.

He followed every law. He knew the books of the Old Testament. He had many of them memorized. He was zealous for the Jewish faith. But when he was saved by God's grace, everything changed.

Grace became Paul's favorite topic. There's no amount of law keeping or good doing that we can do to earn salvation. And Paul, more religious than all of us, understood that amazingly.

Because he wasn't saved by his life in Judaism. He was saved by the grace of God, by putting faith in Jesus Christ. We have to humbly recognize that God's grace is what saves us. And once we recognize that, we need to remember it daily.

Grace is that important. That's why it's always brought up in the New Testament in these letters.

And now the final thing that I want you to see about the grace of God is that it empowers us. The final reason that I think Paul opened and closed each letter with a reminder about the grace of God is because God's grace is how we live and breathe.

[32 : 46] We need God's grace every single day. If we want to serve in the church, we need to understand that God's grace is how we receive spiritual gifts. In Ephesians 4, verse 7, it says, Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

And it goes on and it describes how some were given to be preachers and teachers, and some were apostles, and some were evangelists. Spiritual gifts are gifts of grace. Romans 12, 6,

According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts.

If prophecy, use it according to the proportion of one's faith. If hospitality, so on and so forth. So, the spiritual gifts, the very ability that we have to serve in the church and to encourage and build up the saints, the gifts that we've been given that are helpful here are God's grace on display.

More than that, the grace of God is what keeps the earth from being completely annihilated by the wrath of God. In 2 Peter 3, it says that God is not patient as we understand patient.

He's not delaying as we, or he does not delay as we understand delay, but he's patient hoping that everyone would have come to faith in Jesus Christ. There's this general grace that keeps this earth going.

[34 : 03] That literally gives us air to breathe. That's the grace of God. The importance of the grace of God can't be understated. By God's grace, believers are gifted to do whatever he's called us to do.

And when the apostle Paul wrote these letters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he knew to emphasize God's grace. I don't know if you guys know this, but if you read the Bible, God asks a lot of us, a lot from us.

Right? He asks us to do quite a bit. There's a long list of things that we're called to do as believers. And again, this is not so that we are made right by God, but it's because we're made right by God that he wants us to live a certain way.

Remember in Leviticus, he made it very clear, God's always wanted his people to look like him. Be holy because I am holy. The only way that we can do what God has called us to do and be who God has called us to be is if we are empowered and enabled by the grace of God within us.

So let's just recap the book of Philippians because we're at the end here, so it's a good thing to go back and do a little recap journey, right? How are we supposed to rejoice? That's a major theme of Philippians.

[35 : 20] What do we rejoice in? Well, we rejoice that God's shown us grace. We rejoice that God continues to show people grace. We rejoice that God's grace is what keeps us going, is what keeps the unity of the church together.

How is God going to complete his good work in us? By his grace. How do we get to a point where death and life are equally enticing options?

Remember in Philippians 121, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain? Paul was there in prison, and he literally didn't know if they were going to come take him from the jail cell to get his head chopped off, or if he was going to be freed.

He had no idea. And his words in that moment of uncertainty were, for me to live is Christ and for me to die is gain. Like, it doesn't matter if I live or if I die, because I know whether here or there, I'm with Christ.

I'm in Christ. So how do we get to that point? Well, by the grace of Jesus. By understanding the grace of Jesus and trusting the grace of Jesus in salvation.

[36 : 21] How do we live humble lives? By the grace of Jesus. By following his gracious example that he showed us by living on this earth perfectly. Everything that we're called to is only possible by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the question is, as we wrap up this book, as we finish this beautiful short letter, and it ends with this notion of grace, and so it brings us to this point that's really, really important, because everybody has to answer this question.

Now or later, everyone is going to have to answer this question. Do you know the grace of God? Do you know the grace of God?

We're saved by grace through faith. Have you put faith in Jesus Christ and trusted God to save you from your sin and give you eternal life with him?