

Hopewell ARP Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, September 30, 2020
Devotional on 2John v3

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Why include this greeting as a “prayer” Scripture, when it is a statement about the future, rather than the expression of a wish?

Because it occupies the place in the letter where Paul, Peter, and Jude all included prayers. Indeed, in 3John, this letter’s same writer will express a prayer in the same location. John is teaching us something about assured prayer—which was the subject of our recent meditations upon 1John 5:13–17.

From what we have learned, we know that those things of which God makes us sure in Scripture are the very things that we should be praying for—and that when we pray for those things, the prayer is part of the Lord’s appointed means by which they come.

So, the apostle now makes an assured declaration in the place of a prayer. It is an apostolic benediction, and those blessings that are pronounced upon us are the very blessings for which we also are to pray.

This particular benediction adds the assurance of theological reasoning to the authority of apostolic pronouncement: the reason that we can be sure of grace, mercy, and peace of God is that God the Father has given Himself to us in the person of the Son.

The “and from” makes clear that grace, mercy, and peace come from the Son every bit as much as they come from the Father. Plainly, the Father and the Son are distinct persons, but the same God, the same Being.

And the Son of the Father is not only the Lord, but also “Jesus,” the Savior of His people. He is not only God, but also “Christ,” the Anointed Man Whom God promised and sent.

One reason why such careful theology is so important is because it strengthens our assurance and forms our prayers.

The apostle has just said, in v1, that he “loves” the church in “truth”—and that all who have known the “truth” also “love” her in “truth.”

From where did such “love in truth” come? From the “truth” which abides in us and will be with us forever. This truth is being described not as a collection of propositions, or even just as a summary of reality, but as a Person. Someone Who dwells in us. Someone Who will be with us forever.

So John is saying that his love for the church comes from Jesus. And that everyone who has come to know Jesus savingly has the same love.

Just as he is sure in v2 that Jesus abides in us and will be with us forever. So also in v3 he is sure that, in addition to love for the church, the other benefits of Jesus will be with us.

Grace. All that God is (righteous, powerful, good) for all that we are (guilty, weak, wicked).

Mercy. The removal of our misery by God’s commitment to doing us good.

Peace. The steady continuance to us of our total wellbeing, from God’s grace and mercy.

We are assured of the fact that these will be ours from Christ because of the fact that there is love for God and His church in us, which love has also come from Christ. It is the same logic as “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28).

This is the will of God for us in Christ Jesus. We are to pray for it, because it is His will. And we can be sure of it because it is His will.

“Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” Amen.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Lords say morning when we come to the pastoral prayer, we're gonna be hearing. Second John verse three. And to get us the context. I'll read the first couple of verses as well.

Second John verse three. Second John verses one to three rather, these are God's words. The elder. To the elect lady and her children. Whom I love in truth. And not only I. But also all those who have known the truth. Because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever.

Grace mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father. In truth and love.

So the verse that we're going to be hearing before the pastoral prayer this morning is that third one grace mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love. Now, why include this greeting or this benediction as a prayer scripture?

When as it reads it is a statement about the future rather than the expression of a wish. The answer to that is because it occupies the place in the letter. Where Paul and Peter and Jude all included prayers and indeed many of you probably recognize it sounds a lot like some of the prayers of Paul in fact a portion of it is identical to the prayers that he makes when he writes pastoral epistles.

Indeed when we get to third John this letter is same writer will express a prayer in the same part of the location the greeting. John has been teaching us about assured prayer these last several weeks and first John 5 verses 13 through 17. And now in the place of a prayer, he makes a shore statement.

From what we have learned over these last weeks, we know that those things of which God makes us sure in Scripture are the things that we should be praying for that we are to ask anything according to His will. And so when He makes a sure statement like this.

He's telling us about something that we should be praying for and that when we pray according to His will that prayer is part of the Lord's appointed means by which they come. Remember. He said we know that we have what we ask. We know that. He hears us and we know that.

He we have what we ask. So now in Second John verse 3, the Apostle makes an assured declaration in the place of a prayer. It's an apostolic benediction. A blessing that is pronounced upon us and as a certain blessing that is also a blessing for which we are to pray.

Now, if you look at this particular benediction Grace mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the son of the Father in truth and love there's some important theology here. And so this particular benediction adds the assurance of theological reasoning to the authority of apostolic pronouncement.

The reason that we can be sure that grace will be with us and that we can be sure that mercy will be with us and that we can be sure that peace will be with us as that God the Father has given himself to us in the person of the Son, When he says grace mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is telling us something about the relationship of the Son and the Father. This grace mercy and peace come from the Son every bit as much as they come from the Father. The Father and the Son are distinct persons. He doesn't just say from God the Father and

from the Lord Jesus Christ, he goes on to relate them to one another as distinct persons.

The son of the Father and yet they are the same God. The same being one being in two and we know that it's three including the Spirit persons. So the Son of the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just the Lord but also Jesus the Savior of his people not just the Lord God, but also Christ the anointed one the man whom God had promised and sent.

One reason why such careful theology and we here have the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation. One reason why such careful theology is so important is because it strengthens our assurance and it forms our prayers. You may know people who think that doctrine confuses or that doctrine divides.

But doctrine assures us. And doctrine directs us to the Lord Jesus. The Apostle has just said in verse 1 that He loves the Church in truth and that all who have known the truth also love her in truth. There are some who think the elect lady here is one particular lady in a household or one particular congregation, but the apostle says all who have known the truth loved this particular lady.

And so this is the church and her elect sister is probably a particular church from which he's writing at the end and verse 13. But he says that he loves her in truth and that all who have known the truth also love her in truth. And then he concludes the verse that we have before us this evening the son of the father in truth and love.

So where did the love in truth come from? Up in verse 1. It came from the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the truth who abides in us and will be with us forever as verse 2 describes it. The truth is being described not as a collection of propositions ideas, or even a summary of reality but as a person.

Someone who dwells with us. Someone who will be with us. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with toward God and the word was God. And now the word who has become flesh, who is the way the truth and the life he dwells in us by his spirit and he will be with us forever.

It's from him that love for the church in truth is formed in our hearts. It's Christ's own love for his church that he forms in the hearts of believers. Therefore if we are united to Jesus and our love for the church has come from Jesus and Jesus dwells in us and Jesus will be with us.

Then we can be sure that we get all the other benefits that Jesus brings. And so in addition to having love for the church and Jesus's presence with us versus one and two we can know we can be sure that grace and mercy and peace will be with us.

From God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love grace will be with us grace is all that God is. Righteous and powerful and good for all that we are by contrast not righteous but guilty and yet his grace makes us righteous in the place of our guilt.

We are not powerful but weak. But his grace invests us with his power so that his strength is made perfect in our weakness. We are not good in ourselves but wicked but his grace provides that goodness in us out of which we do good so grace will be with us and mercy will be with us namely the removal of our misery by God's commitment to doing us good and peace will be with us the steady continuing the steady persistence to us of our total well-being as he will say in the next letter in health and, in spirit body and soul by God's grace and mercy.

Now we are assured of the fact that these three will be ours from Christ because we can already see that we have from Christ love for God and for his church in us. It's the same logic as Romans 8:28. If God has made you to love him. It's because he's called you

according to his purpose that's the only way love for him ever gets produced in a sinner's art and if he has called you according to his purpose and produced love for him inside you then he's making all things work together for your good.

Similarly here in second John verses 1 through 3 if he has called you in truth and joined you to Jesus and worked in you Jesus's love for his church in your heart, then you know that grace will be with you forever and mercy will be with you forever and peace will be with you forever.

So this is the will of God for us in Christ Jesus and we are to pray for it because it is his will. And we can be sure of it because it is his will. There's one of these assured prayers that we've been learning about that we desire to pray and that we can pray.