



Grace To You

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Philippians 1:1-2](#)

After affirming his place as a bondservant (or *slave*) of Christ, which we learned is closely linked to the call of apostleship, our brother Paul begins the letter to the church in Philippi with a greeting to its readers and hearers. He begins by addressing ***the saints in Christ Jesus*** who are of this local church body.

In our study of Ephesians we touched on how *saint* (Greek: [hagios](#)) simply means 'holy one'. Did you ever consider that as a Christian you are a saint? This title is not reserved only for apostles, martyrs, or great leaders in the faith. Each believer who has put their full trust and hope for salvation in Christ alone is a saint, and Paul used it widely in the opening and closing of his letters. Let this encourage us that even when we stumble in our walk, we are still saints saved by grace!

The word grace is used over 100 times in the New Testament. It is translated from the Greek [charis](#), which means blessing, favor, credit, and even a gift. It is used widely throughout Scripture to communicate God's affection for believers and is often synonymous with the salvation granted to us. God's grace is an unmerited and undeserved gift and is not something we can earn or purchase; it is offered from the Father through Christ to those who simply believe through faith (cf: [Eph 2:8](#)).

The apostle Paul's signature opening phrase, "***grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,***" is used, in some fashion, in every one of his epistles. It is a beautiful and joyous commencement, setting the stage for exhortation, blessing, and even correction in the text that followed. Paul understood the gift and blessing of grace and it was his custom to remind believers of this marvelous gift and favor from God that has been obtained through the sacrifice of Christ.

But Paul's opening is not just a simple blessing. Through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, it contains remarkable truths. If you read carefully, you will notice that this opening statement includes support for the doctrine of the Trinity, or God in three persons. While the word "trinity" does



not appear in the Bible, Paul blessing readers with ***grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*** separately identifies two Persons of the divine godhead. While we can establish from many other scripture references that Christ subjects Himself to the sovereign will of God the Father ([John 4:34](#), [Matt 7:21](#), [Luke 22:42](#), [Phil 2:6-7](#)), we are clearly called to worship and follow the Lord Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:36](#), [Eph 1:22](#), [Phil 2:10-11](#)). God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all involved in our salvation and deserve our full adoration and praise (cf: [John 14:26](#), [1 Thes 1:5](#), [Heb 3:7](#)).

Next time, as we dive into [verse 3](#), we'll begin to see the overarching themes of joy and thanksgiving that make the letter to the Philippians such an encouraging passage of Scripture.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece