

Amen. Well, good morning. Open your Bibles with me, beloved, to the glorious book of Titus. To his genuine child according to our common faith. Indeed. What wonderful music. Our sincerest thanks to Brady and Diana and Sean for leading us in worship to God our King. As we ascribe to Him glory, as we lift our voices to God, as we delight in Him, as we lavish adoration upon Him in song? Have you ever pondered how is it that we can do that? More specifically, what is it about doxology, meaning an expression of praise to God, what is it about worship that produces its intended effect? Could not the lost sing and mouth the same words? There are no doubt lost with us here this morning who sang the very words that the saved next to them did. And yet, Scripture tells us that God found no pleasure in the singing of the lost, nor was that person renewed or refreshed or strengthened by their singing of such truths either. So like a chemist, what must be added to doxology to praise, to accomplish that, for which it was intended? What must we have? What is mixed with doxology? Well, the answer is theology. Or better yet, better said, the very outworking of theology is doxology. What flows out of theology is doxology. Theology is what, beloved? It's the study of God, right? Your theology is going to produce your doxology. Meaning, what you know and believe about God is going to inform how you praise and worship Him. In fact, it's right there in the word. Worship. That comes from the old English term, worth-ship. Meaning, literally, to give worth to. Everyone has a doxology. The lost have a doxology. They have something they worship. Something they give worth to. An idea of God they have. Perhaps an idol. Perhaps self. They may reserve their doxology for their favorite sports team. The list can be a mile long. Endless possibilities. Endless small g gods that our hearts can produce. And how do they get that? What produces their doxology? It's their theology, isn't it? What we believe about God, what we know about God determines our worship of Him. It determines our worth that we ascribe to Him. So beloved, if we're hunched over our chair in worship with our hands in our pockets with as much joy as a possum, that's your theology talking. This is what you think about God. Show me your doxology and I can tell you something of your theology. Indeed tell me your theology and I could probably tell you something of your doxology. So brother I'm just not into all that theology stuff. I just want to worship the Lord. Really? Who is it that you're worshipping? And how will you know? Not doing theology, beloved, is not an option for anyone in this sanctuary. Of course, as R.C. Sproul famously said, quote, we are all theologians. The only question is whether you're a good one or a bad one, close quote. No person ever born, who has ever been born, did not mold and shape a theology. We all have one. And what flows from that? Our doxology. Spend a day with someone, anyone, who's never darkened the door of a church. Watch and listen. You will observe their doxology, what they worship. Their worship and their praise will come gushing out. You will observe their doxology. And thus you'll know a great deal of their theology. For the beloved of God here this

morning, for the saved and the redeemed, what is one way that we develop and inform our theology? That we might worship in spirit and in truth. Well, you're doing it right now. It's through preaching, isn't it? The eminent Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, when he was asked to define preaching, he said, preaching is theology. It's theology set on fire. So as we worship each Lord's Day, what is occurring in us, internally and externally, and more importantly, the pleasure that the Lord takes from our worth-ship, our doxology flows from our theology. The outflowing of information should be adoration. Right? Our information determines our adoration. So, beloved, let us be richly informed that we might richly adore. Amen? Amen. Well, last week we continued our rocket-booster opener of Paul to Titus, an opening salutation like Well, really only Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, could write. Positively loaded and condensed and compressed with enormous truths. And as we said, like a rocket, it's just raw power in the beginning to really get this ship off the ground. Doctrinal mountaintops in our first three verses that we saw. Designed to raise our affection and to harness the power and to direct and to guide us for the work ahead. That of putting in order the churches of Crete. Putting in order a church in Lanesville. Having looked at the who, what, when, where, and why, last week we explored the often-forgot. How? How? How will God, through Paul and Titus, how will they accomplish this task? That's beyond human ability. We saw that the how, well, it really began with a who, didn't it? That who was God. In verse 3, and this God juxtaposed, contrary to the Cretans, was a God who cannot lie. And that this God who cannot lie, from before the foundation of the world in eternity passed within the Trinitarian council of the Godhead, He made a promise. The God who cannot lie made a promise. A promise of proclamation. That at the proper time, He's going to manifest His word in preaching and in proclamation. And it is in that message, in that word, in that proclamation that He has sunk His power. It is in that word that God can be known. That salvation can be laid hold of. And we know there is salvation outside. No salvation outside of its pages. Of course, general knowledge, general revelation, meaning to know that God exists easily can be known by the sun or the moon or the stars, trees, birds. But simply knowing that there is a creator because there is a creation cannot save us. We need a manifested word, Paul declares, given to us in scripture and proclaimed in our hearing today. That is how we are to accomplish all that God has for us personally and according to that word, how we are to conduct and how we are to order his church, his bride for which he died. As we're now five messages into our new series of faith and practice in Titus, it was really my sincere hope to give you a respite and a little bit of a breathing room for what's been, I know, one deluge after another. It sort of reminds me of special forces training in the pool, right, where they hold you underwater until you start to flail, and then they bring your head up to allow you to catch your breath for a moment, and then back down you go again. I know we have kept you submerged these last four messages. So thankfully today is somewhat a chance to breathe a little bit. But breathe

deeply because I tell you I have read and read and re-read Titus again countless times and after today I'm not entirely sure when we're coming up for air again. Today we aim to finish Paul's salutation to Titus. And it is a pleasant verse. And while it still contains doctrinal

gems to be mined, it is a verse that I hope we can all take something of a breath under before we plunge back under the water in verse 5. So with that, let us look to our text today, beloved. Titus 1, verse 4. Titus 1, verse 4. To Titus. My genuine child, according to our common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Savior. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the balm and the salve that your word is to our hearts. Lord, to minds that have been rattled and pressed against this week, Lord, we come as a respite this morning. to be refilled, renewed, refreshed, under the counsel of your word, that we might grow. Lord, that we might walk out of these double doors different than we came in. That is our desire, and we know that only your Holy Spirit can accomplish this, and so we pray that your Holy Spirit would go before us, Lord, that we might see, that we might grasp, that we might apply the wonderful truths before us. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, have you ever read something, maybe an email or a letter that may have been addressed to you or maybe to your group, maybe at work, maybe a management memo perhaps, but that you were not actually the main audience or the purpose for its writing? Or how about when you're talking to someone, someone's saying something directly to you, but they're actually saying it for the benefit of or towards someone else who's in earshot. You ever done that? I bet you have. Some might call it like telegraphing, right? Like a CEO who's being interviewed on Bloomberg, and he's speaking to the interviewer, right? But that interviewer is not the audience. The audience is the shareholders and the workers that are watching. He's speaking to the interviewer, but the interviewer is not who really needs to hear this. We have just such an occasion here in our pleasant greeting today. Paul is indeed addressing Titus. He's speaking. He's writing to Titus. But is that all? Often a text has a subtext, doesn't it? A speech or a message has both the words that are spoken and the undercurrent that's behind them. Now we'll get back to that, so first let's look to our text on the surface, as wonderful as it is, then we're going to explore Paul's subtext. We're going to come back to that. Who else does he want to hear this salutation? Our text opens first to Titus. Now in our opening message titled Faith and Practice, we already did a really deep dive into the person of Titus, so we won't rehash that. However, that's really entirely the first point. that Paul is writing to a person. Paul is writing to a brother in arms, which lays bare a biblical truth. What is God's plan for you, beloved? It's the local church. And who are your co-laborers and your support? Who are the instruments of that plan? Most of them are sitting to your right and to your left. That person in front of you and behind you, they are God's vessel in varying ways to see you through to the finish line. But do we look at our brothers and our sisters that way? Do we think that way when we shake their hands and when we hug their neck? They're much more than a person passing in the night. Scripture shows that

they are an intricate part of God's plan to grow you, to keep you, and to stabilize you, and to teach you, and to challenge you, even to annoy you sometimes. Paul is not writing into space. He is not only writing to a person, as we will see, But Paul is writing to a person that he has invested his life into. That he has disciplined. Beloved, there is no magic of ministry or body life. It's all people. It's all people. Now I know that sounds like a simple observation from this text. But saints, often the simple bring the most challenge, don't they? How many of us have those Lone Ranger tendencies? How many of us are the quiet, standoff, independent type? How many of us are just natural introverts? What then? Well, that's just the way I am. That's just my personality. Well, you know my husband. He's never been much of a people person. And yet, Scripture does not call the Christian to what comes naturally to us. Scripture does not tell us that we are captive to our personality traits that keep us from laying hold of God's tools and God's plans for us. Truth must overpower and overwhelm those tendencies in the child of God. You know, one of the best examples I can think of is my wonderful wife, not to embarrass her. I gave her a heads up that I was going to embarrass her. She is an introvert's introvert. If the Lord would allow her the rest of her life in a cave with a book, she just might take it. Of course, the Lord had a sense of humor and made her a pastor's wife. And yet, what is true? What's true? God's plan for her, God's desire for her best, overcomes what may come naturally. And she is one of the most kind, loving, hospitable, People I've ever known, if you're blessed enough to call her friend, you'll never have a more loyal one. So who's your Titus? Who's your Paul? To whom will you write? There must be a person on the other end of that line. Or we can say with all the authority of Scripture that you're outside of God's perfect plan for your life. There are no islands in the body of Christ. There's no special program out there to grow in Christ because you're the strong silent type. Or you're the shy type. There are no private understandings with God. They don't exist. He's no respecter of persons. If you're in Christ, this is the program. That preacher up there, my spouse, that person to my right and to my left, behind me and in front of me, that's the big plan. That's the only plan. To Titus. To Titus. I had a meeting this week with five other local pastors. We meet once a month or so for prayer and for fellowship, encouragement, accountability. And a brother there was sharing about another close pastor friend of his that said he never got close to people because he was tired of being hurt. That sounds a little crazy for a pastor to say, until you realize that there are actually denominations out there, Methodists first come to mind, that purposely rotate their pastors out of their churches, so they don't get too close to their people. Personal relationships are discouraged in that regard. It's true. But with respect, that's insanity. Have they read this book? Look with me very quickly. Pick up your Bibles, beloved. Turn to Paul's letter to Romans. Turn with me to the end of that letter. Let's look at Romans 16 very quickly. And tell me, as we're looking through Romans 16 here, was Paul intimately involved in the lives

of people? Romans 16, beginning at verse 1. I'm going to race through this. Look, now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant. Verse 2, she helped me so much, such a benefactor. Verse 3, greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers. Verse 4 says they risked their necks for mine. Verse 5, greet Eponidas, my beloved. He was the first convert to Christ from Asia. Verse 6, greet Mary. Verse 7, greet Adronicus and Junia. Who are they? They're my kinsmen, my fellow prisoners. Verse 8, greet Ampelitus, my beloved in the Lord. Verse 9, greet Urbanus and Stachys. Verse 10, greet Apellas, approved of Christ. Oh, and by the way, the whole household of Aristobulus. It goes on, greet Herodian, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of narcissists who are in the Lord. Greet Typhanian, Trephosa. laborers in the Lord, greet Persis the beloved, greet Rufus, greet Esantrichus, Phlegon, Hermes, Petrobus, Hermes and the brothers with them, greet Philogius and Julia, Nero and his sisters, on and on. There's 27 names here. And we could pore over Paul's other epistles and find scores of other names. Is the Christian life designed to be walked alone? Even as Paul was in prison, he spent his time writing to others, praying for others, people, people, people. Now we don't belabor the point, but we all know someone in our lives, maybe it's our own self, whose growth has been stunted because we've walked it alone. That's not the design, that's not the plan. God's plan is sitting all around you right now. Even in our letter to Titus, many other places in scripture, the model is what? The more mature men mentoring the younger in Christ. That's the plan. Now can we go so far as to say that it's sin to isolate oneself, to be a Lone Ranger? Well, scripture tells us, Proverbs 18.1, that the man or woman who isolates themselves seeks their own desire, seeks their own way, that they rage against all sound wisdom. They pursue selfish desires. In other words, the heart of isolating oneself, the heart of being that strong, silent, independent type of being a loner is rebellion. Color it however we like. The heart is that we don't want anyone telling us what to do. We don't want to be accountable. Say, no, brother, I've just been hurt. That's why I'm closed off. Beloved, God has revealed his plan to us, and it involves people. If we say no to that, the reason does not matter, right? Doesn't matter. The aim of Titus is to set in order the churches of Crete. That's our aim of Harrison Hills. But the truth is that we can get our church government and our structure right all day long. But if the body is unhealthy, it won't matter. There'll be nothing to govern. So beloved, if any of those traits happen to describe you, repent of that today quickly. Plug into community and body life, no matter if it comes naturally or not, and you will be richly rewarded, and you'll grow like a strong oak planted behind pleasant streams. Share your life, share your love, open your home, bring others in. Back to our text now. Paul from a, A deep place of relationship, of love, tells Titus who he is. To Titus, my genuine child. Now pause there for a moment. Some translations say my true child. We have to separate those terms. While individually, of course,

they carry great weight, together they magnify all the more. So what does it mean, first, that Paul calls Titus true? Now bring your mind back around to the beginning of our message, if you will. Remember that conversation that someone was having with you, but the words are actually meant for someone else in earshot when you're talking? That is what's happening here in part. Paul is talking to all those who would read this on Crete. Paul calls Titus first true, genuine. Our word here literally means lawfully begotten. In other words, listen up, Cretans. Boy, that sounds rough to say that, right? Sorry, if you're from Crete, you're a Cretan. Listen up, Titus is the real deal. How true? I gave spiritual birth to this child. Through my preaching and teaching and mentorship, the Lord brought Titus to faith. And it's real. And I've walked with this man for a long time. And Titus is the genuine article. Now, what does that sound like to you? Here we have Paul saying, hey, look at Titus. He's the real deal. He's my true child. What does that sound like? We should be hearing echoes of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, shouldn't we? Recall that they were there to determine what it means to be a Gentile and a Christian, or Jewish and a Christian. And some Jews said, no, any Gentile that comes to faith has to be circumcised, and if not, they're not of the faith. And Paul shows up with who? With Barnabas and Titus, saying, hey, check out Titus. Exhibit A, he's a Greek, he's a Gentile, no circumcision, and he's the real deal. Now who do we have in Crete? We have a lot of Gentiles, yes, but what else do we have? A lot of Jews. So why is Paul addressing Titus this way? Saying, listen up Cretans, this is Titus. He's the real deal, he's my spiritual son. Listen to him, trust him. He's authenticated, he's authorized and deputized. Do what he says. All right, Paul needs to lend Titus some gravitas. Because guess what? When you set about putting a church in order, people's kingdoms get rained on. Toes get stepped on, traditions get exposed. And while Titus would certainly plant churches from scratch, some of these churches in some fashion or another already exist in Crete. And here comes Titus. How many are gonna ask, who does this Titus guy think he is? Coming from another country even. Doesn't he know how we've always done things? You're gonna appoint elders, are you? There were Jews on Crete that were there all the way back at Pentecost when Peter preached. Saved right there, we know from Acts 2. Been here at this church in Crete in this pew from the beginning. Who's this scrappy young fella? Gonna appoint elders, are ya? Set our church in order, are ya? To Titus, my genuine child. If you listen to me, listen to him. Paul's saying we share the same heart. We have the same passion. Our heart beats the same. Or as our text says, according to our common faith. Meaning it was the revealed gospel that not only saved Titus, but it is by that revealed word, it is by these professed truths that we share this faith in common. And it is in that that Titus comes to you. Paul is saying that Titus' doctrine is sound. Not only are they sound, but by using that word common, see that word? Paul is leveling the ground between he and Titus. He's saying, look, false teachers

were everywhere. They are everywhere. Judaizers were and are everywhere. Those that Paul says in Galatians were false brothers secretly brought in who sneaked in to spy out the freedom which we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us. And we're wise to that. Paul says Titus is wise to that. Titus is my spiritual son. Genuine, true. There's no daylight

between us. If you'll listen to me, listen to him. He's a Gentile. I'm an apostle to the Gentiles. We fought together for the faith. We contended together for the faith. This is a brother who would walk 800 miles for me just to deliver a letter. We sat in chains together. We ministered together in Corinth. He survived the church in Corinth. He got the t-shirt. Titus has battle scars. We were in the trenches together. He's battle-tested and worthy of your consideration. We have the tie that binds. That is our common faith. And when it comes down to it,

if one is a Christian, that which binds them to another Christian should be far greater than what separates them. If indeed we possess a common faith, then we possess all we need to live in blessed unity and in peaceable body life. Now back to our text. It's Paul finally. closes out

his salutation as the rocket ship of Titus finally clears the tower. Paul repeats a creed, a greeting, very common in Paul's epistles. In fact, he uses it in all 13 of Paul's letters. And thus, it was a very common salutation even amongst the early church. And on the surface, it can be just that, used as a blessed greeting to another of the faith.

But we're remiss if we do not consider the chosen words, grace and peace. Paul could have said, mercy and blessing be upon you. May love and comfort be yours in Christ. Pick your word. But instead, in every letter, Paul consistently used, even today as the title of our message, grace and peace. Two common words that we dare not gloss over. Much like Paul's usage of the word genuine and child, true and child. Both, yes, they stand on their own, but when coupled together with one another, bring even more power. And so it is with grace and peace.

Paul's not simply throwing out spiritual nouns together. These are intentional. And Paul is really speaking to the whole of the Christian life from rebirth to eternity. Right? Grace is that which ushers us

into the Christian life and peace is that which flows out of the Christian life. Meaning this is all encompassing.

And we throw around the word grace in common vernacular. But have we considered the theology of grace recently? What it means? What is it? If Paul's gonna lead

this greeting with this in every letter, if it is by grace that we're even saved, ought we to have its truths at the forefront of our mind and heart? It ought to be the drumbeat of our lives. Well, grace very simply is what? It's the unearned. It's the undeserved favor of God. Some may remember that acronym

from their Sunday school days, right? Grace, G-R-A-C-E, stands for God's riches at Christ's expense. Remember that, kids?

But there are many facets to grace. Many of you will remember and recall during our time in Mark, We would refer to the other Gospels as the Puritans did. As a four-sided diamond. And as you turn that diamond, each Gospel contains their own reflection and beauty. Each throws light in a different

way upon the wall. Each refracts in different colors. All the same diamond, all the same glorious truths, but with varying emphasis, right? Different eyewitness perspectives. So it is with grace. Grace is a multi-faceted diamond. In fact, 131 uses of the word grace in Scripture. But guess what? Out of those 131, 86 of those are from Paul. This is a dominant theme with Paul. Now the cut of the diamond that most focus on, that you probably think of when I say grace, is what we'll call the beautiful side of grace. That revealed grace that causes our heart to sing as we dance in the fields of undeserved favor from our Father. That grace is a gift, that glory of an electing grace to save. That grace is the inclination within God to save sinners. But then we rotate that diamond of grace and we see that grace is not just pardon for our sins, but that grace is power for our lives. Meaning grace is not just that active flowing forgiveness, right, both from our past and moving forward. Grace is not just the vessel of forgiveness for sin, but grace is the power of God in the life of the believer to not sin in the first place. The grace of God is not only a forgiving grace, it is an enabling grace. The grace of God is all-encompassing. It's not just there to catch us when we fall. Heavenly grace is the great enabler of a holy life. I may treat others better than they deserve because I have been treated better. been treated better than I deserve. That's the beautiful marriage of the pardon of grace and the power of grace. Redeeming grace is both the rock on which you stand and it's the wind by which you fly. But we cannot stay on that beautiful cut as much as we'd like to stay there. We gotta keep rotating. When we rotate that diamond of grace again, And these angles are much more difficult to ponder. And they're harder to consider. We look into this angle of grace and the refracted light from this angle insults our senses. Because if we were God, we would save the most worthy. God does exactly the opposite and he saves the least worthy. He joys in saving the worst of the worst. God starts at prostitutes and works His way down. His grace takes someone who killed Christians, Paul, and has him write the majority of the New Testament. God's grace leaves the religious leaders in their pomposity, and He saves the tax collector, and He saves the murderer. We would pick the opposite of who God usually picks. The raw reality of grace is hard to believe and hard to receive. Because it costs nothing to the receiver and everything from the giver. That recipient of grace, he never once got in line to present their credentials and worthiness of such a gift, not once. And even after they've been given it, often will squander it or set it on the shelf. If the true grace of God has never been positively perplexing in your senses, have we really looked at the whole diamond? That no one can outsin the rescuing grace of God? I've seen some horrible crimes on the news. We all know what humans are capable of, and yet the depth, that depravity, is no match for sovereign grace. That's unthinkable to our mind. God's grace moves in a direction that is so polar opposite to every inclination and every sense of justice that we have as humans. To be sure, beloved, I find no intellectual satisfaction in grace, none. With grace, two plus two does not equal four. Because two plus two sends the



entire world to hell. With God, with his grace, two plus two, all of a sudden, becomes five. And I can't figure it out. Our intellect does not ask, why

did God hate Esau? That's easy. We wonder, why did God love Jacob? Why? It makes no sense. Until we put on the lens of heaven. But no one ever saw a two-sided diamond. Let's rotate it again.

And that view is just as challenging. Because here comes grace now.

It has both refinement and it's judgment. What do you mean? Let the lost and the saved gaze directly into this side of the diamond.

What does the reality of grace mean to both of these? It means that grace is heavenly dynamite to pride. If the saved person carries a lingering pride, it is grace that will refine it away. The ever-present truth that stands

before us immovable, that our works can do nothing to save us. The ever-present truth that salvation is not of you, that it is of God, that the saving grace of God is positively devastating to any lingering pride. Isn't it? Grace, undeserved,

unmerited favor is a fire of God that refines out the impurity of pride in the believer. It refines it out. And for the

unbeliever, should they come and look into this diamond, the grace of God is the judgment of God. The grace of God stands immovable as the only way to come to Christ. For by grace you've been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one may boast. You desire another way? You cannot.

Only by grace. Will you offer your works as

a bribe? You cannot. It's only of grace. Is there

a workaround? Is there a way to hop the fence? No! If the grace of God is real, then it is all-consuming and all-exclusive. If the grace of

God is real, then no other way exists. And on this facet of the diamond, the grace of God stands as the judgment of God. It stands as the

refinement of

God. No pride, no works can stand

in the presence of grace. None. Grace is the most wonderful,

most challenging of diamonds, isn't it? Can we see why Paul

used it more than anyone? Of course, all of Christendom

sings Amazing Grace. Even the lost could hum along

with that tune. But this Amazing Grace that saved

a wretch like me? Do you believe that? How many American evangelicals

believe that? Whether a wretch, when he saved

them, or compared to God's holiness, wretches still, I'll give you

one in a hundred that believe that. and yet we'll all sing

it. What is it that makes grace amazing

anyhow? As we come back around once again

to the first side of the diamond, that side that makes our hearts

sing and our spirits soar, if we were willing to look into

all four sides with honesty, we can now sing truthfully with

John Newton. How precious did that grace appear

the hour I first believed. Our beloved Paul doesn't leave

us with grace, though I think we'd all be satisfied with that.

It says grace and peace. Again,

this is meant to be all-encompassing of our lives. That grace which

ushers us into salvation, and now peace which is the outworking

and the outflowing from that salvation. We talk of peace. Peace is a very friendly word

to the world, isn't it? All are seeking after a kind

of peace, whatever that means to a person. Could take on a

hundred different forms for the world, but what is it here? Jesus said in John 14,

peace

I leave you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives. So Paul's peace here is the New Testament equivalent of shalom. But like grace is all-consuming, John Kitchen in his commentary defines the peace of Scripture, listen to the saints, as quote, the reordering of the chaos that sin has left behind. Close quote. I'll read that again. Peace of Scripture is the reordering of the chaos that sin has left behind. And we see that the reality of that peace, that it fills both the temporary and it fills the eternal. That there's both an objective and a subjective reality that comes to this peace. The objective reality, the observable fact of this peace, Paul tells us in Romans 5.1, is that we have peace with God the Father through Christ. That is the objective state of our relationship with God, that we are at peace with God because of Christ. But the peace Paul highlights to Titus that's shown to us is not merely an objective theological truth that's somehow cold and distant out there. It's also deeply personal and subjective. Paul tells us Philippians 4 verse 7, and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This is glorious. What do we observe about this peace that Paul declares to Titus? Well, we see both objectively and subjectively that through Christ, we have both peace with God and we have the peace of God. We can offer no greater news to the lost this morning that peace with God is possible. We can offer no more stabilizing truth to the saint this morning that we possess the peace of God in all trials, all circumstances, all hardships. But the challenge with the peace that Paul speaks of is the nature of it. It's the source of it. The requirements of it. And that most will leave the world without it. The whole world wants peace. That's not a dirty word to this culture. But beloved, they desire peace without righteousness. One cannot come without the other. Hebrews 12 gives us the pathway of true peace, and it is difficult. This is not the peace that the world desires. Beginning at verse 9, furthermore, We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much rather be subject to the father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time, as seemed best to them. But he disciplines us for our benefit, so that we may share his holiness. And all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, but to those who have been trained by it. Afterwards, it yields the peaceful, peaceable fruit of righteousness. The writer of Hebrews tells us that peace cannot come apart from righteousness. That if we are to share in the fruit of peace, we must be partakers of His holiness. They are joined at the hip. And most of us come to that biblical peace through some very hard yards. Ask a seasoned saint. Look for some of the gray hair out there. Talk to them. Through the discipline of the Father, who promises to sanctify His children, and when He has done so, true peace will bloom on that vine. We know the world is seeking peace at such a fever pitch, right? Beloved, that's one of the reasons for the anger and for the strife that we see around us. It's because peace eludes them. They run after peace like chasing the wind to no avail because they desire peace without

righteousness. It will never come. And indeed, it's that way with every fruit of the Spirit. Consider it. Go down the list, and the world wants all of them. Love? Yep. Joy? Good. Yes. Peace and patience? Kindness? Yes. All of those. Please. Gentleness? Oh, absolutely. Put it on a t-shirt. Give us all of those. We just don't want the God who comes with it. Just like everyone wants to go to heaven, they just don't want the God of the Bible to greet them when they get there. There can be no peace without righteousness. And the giver of that peace, the only source of this peace, has declared them forever joined at the hip. And who is that source? Last part of our verse. The close of our salutation. from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. So from what fountain does this grace and peace dispense? It is from the God, from God the Father and God the Son, yes. And what a glory that is. As we've only begun to consider some facets of grace and peace, the unsearchable riches of the grace of God, of having peace with God, of having the peace of God given to us, Paul demonstrates that the Trinitarian Godhead is completely united in this and in all things. Paul's wording here is so purposefully interwoven we beheld in our text last week, verse 3, what did we see? Paul saying, God our Savior. And here today, God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Savior. Later on, chapter 3, verse 6, Paul says, Jesus Christ, our Savior. All intentional, all telegraphing to the Jew and the Gentile alike on Creed that God the Father, Christ the Son are equal in the Godhead. Now to you and I, that seems like an afterthought. Like, yeah, Pastor, we know that. But we live with the benefit of 2,000 years of battling out in councils and hammering out creeds and loads of scholarship and teaching. It was not so for these churches that were on Crete and that would be planted on Crete. You had Jews. who were monotheists, of course, that needed to understand. You had Gentiles who were pagans who worshipped so many gods all over the place that they needed to wrap their heads around this Trinitarian truth. Beloved, what difference a word can make. Notice Paul does not say, Christ Jesus, the Savior, which He is. There is no other. But to Titus, speaking to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, Paul very pastorally says, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, our Savior. Right? This is the source and the rock of our unity and love for one another, for our common faith, Christ Jesus, our Savior. Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, For the faith of God's elect, and the full knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which the God who cannot lie promised from all eternity, but at the proper time manifested his word in preaching, with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior to Titus. My genuine child, according to our common faith, grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. Beloved, I pray that we are ready for a few hard yards at Harrison Hills. That we're ready to lace up our boots. We have been greeted by Paul. reminded of monumental truths, instructed in doctrine, and encouraged in one another. By God's grace, may we set in order that which remains to the glory of God. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for your grace, We thank you for every facet

of grace. And Lord, we thank you that as we walk in that grace, freely dispensed to us, that we may walk in peace. Lord, not peace as the world gives, but peace as you give. Lord, we thank you for this salutation that Paul has given to Titus. I know that we've not done it justice from this pulpit, but Lord, I pray that we may see just a glimmer of the beauty contained therein. Lord, I pray for each one of the precious sheep that are here today, that as they go out to their workplaces, to their homes, as they labor to do all things unto the Lord, unto you and not unto man, that you would keep them, that you would cause them to walk uprightly, Lord, that we may find ourselves together next week in great joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.