

As Paul closes his second inspired letter to the Thessalonians, his final words, which include another prayer to God for them, bring together the entire letter and highlight the essential truths which they need to remember to follow Jesus Christ worthily and victoriously. He reminds them that they need the Lord's peace, the Lord's Word, and the Lord's grace.

I. It is essential in our walk with Jesus for the believer to have the Lord's peace.

1. *What did Paul say here?* Paul expresses here his prayer to God that the Lord Himself would give them peace whenever and wherever they are.

The Lord Jesus is the only source of true peace in our relationship to God, in our relationship to one another, and within us (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14–17; Galatians 5:22–24; Romans 14:17–19; Philippians 4:6–9). He mediates that peace by His very presence (2 Thessalonians 3:16b; Philippians 4:9), and can provide that peace whenever and wherever it is needed.

2. *Why did Paul say this at the close of his letter?*

Because they needed God's peace in light of the persecution (ch. 1), the disturbance of false teaching (ch. 2), and the tensions accompanying correction within the church (ch. 3).

3. *What are the implications for us?*

The same challenges—persecution, anxieties, correcting and being corrected, etc.—all place us in need of the Lord's peace.

II. It is essential in our walk with Jesus for the believer to have the Lord's Word.

1. *What did Paul say here?* With his own handwritten closing he authenticates this letter and all his letters as being from him.

The importance of authenticity implies their divine authority as substantiated in other passages (Colossians 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:2; Philippians 4:9; 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Timothy 5:18 with Luke 10:7). Paul was entrusting the Word of God to them.

2. *Why did Paul say this here?*

There was the special problem of forgeries and the need to hold to his teachings (2:2, 15). But also in chapter 1 the Word of God was their source of knowing God and having hope (cf. 1 Thess 2:13), and in chapter 3 it is the basis for correcting one another.

3. *What are the implications for us?*

Similarly a saving knowledge of God is only possible through the Word of God; doctrinal stability comes by the Lord's Word, and our interaction with one another is defined by the Lord's Word. His Word will even reveal our motives (Hebrews 4:12). A life pleasing to the Lord requires having and following His Word.

III. It is essential in our walk with Jesus for the believer to have the Lord's grace.

1. *What did Paul say?* Paul desires that all of them (even the disorderly idle) experience the Lord's grace, not just for salvation (Ephesians 2:8–9) but also to stand in for daily living (Romans 5:2).

2. *Why did Paul say this here?*

God's grace was needed to live triumphantly through persecution (ch. 1), something they had already demonstrated. God's grace was needed to discern and withstand false doctrine (chapter 2), especially since they had slipped and needed to recover. And God's grace was needed to correct and to be corrected (chapter 3), something which they could not do right without a God-changed heart and God-given wisdom.

3. *What are the implications for us?*

We only stand firm against opposition by God's grace. Only by grace do we stand in the truth. Only by God's grace can we receive correction humbly and offer correction accurately and lovingly (Galatians 6:1–5).

Reading Paul's closing would have been a fresh experience to the Thessalonians, bringing out these important truths for their walk with the Lord Jesus. We need to embrace these truths as well, beginning with the peace with God which the Lord of peace has made possible through His death on the cross, made known through His Word, and offered by His grace. Then we turn to Him and live by these truths daily.

Questions for review and reflection:

Consider the implications for each truth—the Lord's peace, Word, and grace—in light of the challenges which you face in your life. How did these truths affect the Thessalonian believers? How should they affect you? Where do you see your greatest need? What will you do to see this need met?