

Galatians 6:16-18 – A Beautiful Benediction

TSK, GreekLexicon, Rienecker, Gaebelien, Poole, Trapp, Robertson, PNT, Henry, Rienecker, Handfuls, JFB, Clarke, Geneva, Barnes, Calvin, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The word **“benediction” literally means “good words.”** But when it is used in the Bible, it means “blessing.” God blessed Adam and Eve when he put them in the Garden of Eden, but they lost that blessing. Instead of enjoying God’s blessing, they had pain, sickness, hunger, and death. As God was graciously restoring man to himself, he knew man needed his blessing again. **So God commanded his priests (before) and preachers (now) to pronounce a benediction on his people.** You see that at the end of a worship service after God’s people meet with him. **The minister raises his hands, as if to cover the people, and pronounces God’s blessing on them.**

As we conclude Apostle Paul’s letter to the Galatians, **he did what was God commanded: He pronounced God’s benediction** (blessing) on his people. **What is most notable here was that he pronounced his blessing on people who were imperfect.** He called them deceived, immature, and abusive. Yet, in God’s eyes, they were perfect, because God was seeing them through Christ’s blood.

Our headings are:

I bless you with Peace

I bless you with Mercy

I bless you with Grace

Our goals are: **That you will appreciate the peace, mercy, and grace of the Lord Jesus, and you will then focus on the work you have been called to do, the same work he gave to Adam.**

I Bless You with Peace

16 And as many as **walk according to this rule, peace and mercy** be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

1. Apostle Paul blessed those who were children of God!

All God’s children hold to the Gospel, the means of giving peace.

Those who held to their outward circumcision for their salvation were not the true children of God!

Romans 2:28 For **he is not a Jew who is one outwardly**, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart**, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

Galatians 3:29 And **if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

Philippians 3:3 **For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit**, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

Those who held to the Gospel, the only means of their peace, walked according to God’s rule!

Which rule? This was not referring specifically to the 10 commands, but those who held to the **“law of salvation,”** that salvation was by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. God’s children believed it and had to live by it.

2. Apostle Paul blessed God’s children with peace.

This peace was with God. The one who is truly saved is guaranteed peace with God, peace in his own heart, and peace with each other! Apostle Paul was echoing the Psalmist.

Psalm 125: 5 **As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways**, The LORD shall lead them away With the workers of iniquity. **Peace be upon Israel!**

Isn’t this the greatest joy of any father, mother, elder, or pastor...that their children have true peace?

Psalm 128: 6 Yes, may you see your children’s children. **Peace be upon Israel!**

Good parents would accept their children having little...even being sick...**but if they know those children have true peace in their hearts**, they can sleep better at nights. **God’s peace means everything!**

3. Lessons:

a. Don’t miss the benediction every Sunday - twice. It is not the same if you are home and watching on TV. When the minister raises his hand **after you meet with God**, he is passing on God’s blessings to you. This is another reason you are not to keep your children out of church. The benediction is for God’s special children. If you don’t have your children here, **you are denying them what is theirs**. Worse, **if you do some other non-essential things – like sports, you are teaching them those other things bring greater benefits than benediction.** They will have a warped sense of what is important.

b. Not all men will be blessed with peace. Only those who walk with Yahweh, the God of the Bible, can know peace. In short, know Christ, know peace! Know Christ, show peace!

c. There will never be peace on earth until there is peace with God. The politicians can try all they want but they will fail.

d. There will never be peace on earth until men hear the canon – the Gospel of Jesus Christ – and receive it and live

with the help of the Holy Spirit.

e. Peace is a blessing that clears the conscience. Guilt is knowingly removed! This is what happens to Christians.

f. Real Christians walk by the rule of God. They will never try a “work-around.”

I Bless you with Mercy

1. Apostle Paul blessed God’s children with mercy.

Like peace, the Gospel is the channel of God’s mercy. **Once you have received the Gospel and believe it, God does not do to you what you deserved because his anger against you subsides.**

17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

2. Apostle Paul then told the Galatian Christians and Judaizers not to bother him anymore.

How is this related to the benediction he was pronouncing? **He had just confirmed salvation was not through circumcision but by grace alone, and for that he was beaten, insulted, and abused.** Consider some of the things he experienced for preaching salvation by grace alone and not by circumcision.

2 Corinthians 6:4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

It was as if he took a brand on his body as slaves or cattle were branded in order to show the doctrine of salvation by grace! Apostle Paul no doubt had scars on his body from the suffering he faced. He had love for Jesus! It is like doing something good for someone and sustaining an injury...and being proud of that injury! “I took this for love.” **So because he proved and suffered for this doctrine, he didn’t want the Galatian Christians to bother him anymore.**

3. Lessons:

a. You are not punished as you ought to be punished because Christ obeyed and suffered in your nature and in your place. Hallelujah!

b. Since the Gospel is the channel of God’s mercy, don’t stop preaching it, sharing it, and giving it. No man can know of God’s mercy unless he reads the Gospel or someone shares it with him.

c. Be ready to suffer for Christ – for holding on to the doctrines of truth.

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; **nor do I count my life dear to myself,** so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, **to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.**

Apostle Paul was in prison when he wrote this...being falsely accused by both Christians and Judaizers.

d. Glory in the fact that you have received God’s mercy! The Judaizers gloried in their circumcision as some glory in their church, or their pastor, or their denomination, but like Apostle Paul, glory in the fact that you received what you did not have – God’s mercy.

I Bless You with Grace

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

1. Apostle Paul blessed those who were God’s true children with grace.

2. What is the difference between mercy and grace?

Mercy, as above, is when God does not punish the sinner as he deserves.

Grace is God giving a sinner good things he does not deserve.

3. What are the different kinds of graces Christians have?

Christians have **saving grace (when you become a Christian)** and **sanctifying grace (after you become a Christian)**; both are free gifts.

4. Grace came to you as a result or receiving what Jesus did in his life and on the cross.

Your sins are not only forgiven, but you are given eternal life!

5. This grace, saving grace and sanctifying grace, was not an esoteric thing.

This grace had to guide the Galatians' words, thoughts, and actions.

They had to use this grace **when they talked to the miserable, ever-threatening Jews.**

They had to use this grace **when they dealt with the Roman centurions.**

They had to use this grace **when their bosses abused them or didn't pay them.**

They had to use this grace **when they were raising their disobedient children.**

They had to use this grace **when they were caring for the sick and destitute.**

6. This grace did not come on their bodies, which would only make it temporal, but it is grace upon their spirits, something that would last forever.

7. This grace gave right of access to heaven for eternity – now by prayer and later, in person!

8. This grace came to “brethren,” showing the unity of the faith and the humility of Apostle Paul.

9. Lessons:

a. Always pray for blessings – peace, mercy, grace - of Almighty God, blessings you have received, and blessings you must pass on to your children. Don't let a day go by without doing so.

b. Always remember, you received your eternal salvation -grace which you did not deserve.

c. Don't expect God's grace on you if you are not God's child.

d. There is no hierarchy in Christianity. We are all brothers and sisters.

Conclusion:

Apostle Paul blessed God's people with peace—peace that came after God blessed them with his mercy and grace. This was eternal peace. They did not earn it. It was simply given to them by God through the work of Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

1. What rich blessings you have in Jesus. But it is the condition of the receiver that made these gifts so meaningful – so remarkable. You were enemies of Christ...and lovers of the world, the Devil, and your own lusts. It was in this condition that God made you blessed by giving you grace, and showing you mercy, and giving you the resulting peace.

2. Let those rich blessings you have received in Jesus now equip you for service. You have a new condition. **Let it change how you worship** – with more knowledge and zeal. **Let it change the dynamic of your marriage** – knowing your marriage is first about the glory of God. **Let it change your parenting** – knowing those children belong to the Lord. **Let it change how you work** -working as if you were working directly for the Lord. **Let it change how you care for the needy** – being ready to sacrifice for them. **Let it change how you view non-believers** – and be ready to share the active and passive obedience of Christ with them.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you have no grace, you receive no mercy, and you have no peace. You are poor. But you can be rich (And why wouldn't you want to be rich?) if you ask God for his grace, mercy, and peace. Jesus paid for them all!