



**“THE WAY OF GRACE + PEACE”**

**SPEAKER: ALEX LESSLER**

**DATE: MARCH 19, 2023**

**Discussion Questions**

*These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.*

**BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:**

**Phil 1:1-2, Matt 20:25-27, 1 Cor 15:1-11, Hab 2:14, Is 43:18, Rev 21:5, John 1:14**

The Apostle Paul often paired the concepts of grace and peace in his greetings as he wrote to the churches of the Ancient Roman World. The pairing was an important one for Paul because it combined God’s inclination and affection for his people with their welfare and they way in which they would experience the wholeness and rightness of his Kingdom. Pastor Alex teases out the implications of Paul’s greeting for us and offers some practical ways that we can be conduits of God’s grace and peace to others.

**LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Where is the place that you feel most peaceful?
2. Do you think Grace is a popular name and why or why not?
3. When you write an email or a text — or even an OG letter — what’s your favorite greeting and why?”
4. What’s one thing about the message that stood out to you?
5. How did you put a past week’s teaching into practice since our group last met?

**LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.***

1. In Philippians 1:1-2 how do the writers primarily identify themselves and the people to whom they are writing? Why might that be important?
2. What do you observe about Jesus critique of leadership in Matthew 20:25-27?
3. 1 Cor 15:1-11 is a long passage. What are some if its major features? What aspects of grace, or *charis*, did Alex highlight? Do you notice anything else about how Paul develops the theme of grace?”
4. In Habakkuk 2:14, Isaiah 43:18, and Revelation 21:5, Alex points to a significant unifying theme. What is that and how does it relate to his message? Where did he first see that idea in the Philippians greeting and what is the tie?
5. John 1:4 introduces another idea related to grace. What is that and what is the nature of the relationship? What are the implications of this new relationship for grace and peace?

**LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.***

1. Where do you see some semblance of grace or its lack in our culture?

2. Where do you see some semblance of peace or its lack in our culture?
3. Do you see anything in our contemporary world, or at least in your experience of it, that mirrors the biblical concept of a grace-and-peace concept the way Paul formulated it, and why or why not?
4. How do most people pursue an experience of grace and peace? In what ways might they characterize that pursuit? Lot's of money? Seclusion and security? What else?
5. If biblical peace is shalom then where do you see that wholeness and rightness evident in broader culture, if at all?
6. Do you think most people see grace and truth as related in the way John 1:14 depicts and why or why not?

**LOOK IN:** *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Where do you need grace?
2. How does your soul long for peace?
3. How do you hope to experience both?
4. In what ways does Jesus need to reframe for you how grace and peace intrelated so that you may deeply experience God's Presence?
5. When the idea of grace and truth dwelling in union within Jesus becomes part of the mix, how does it encourage or hinder your spirituality? Does it effect you at all and why or why not?
6. When you think about the peace-grace-truth tripod, what feelings, hopes, or fears come to mind concerning your spiritual journey?

**LIVE IT OUT:** *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. At least one time this week, intentionally greet someone with grace and peace. You don't need to use those exact words, but think of yourself as their servant and seek to impart to them God's favor and his shalom.
2. Pray and ask God two questions: "Who do you want me to be a conduit to, and in what practical ways can I show them your grace and peace?" Then, do what he tells you to do.
3. Text, DM, whatever...someone this week and intentionally use the phrase "grace and peace." Explain why. You don't have to go all Bible nerd on them. Just tell them that you want them to be blessed and have favor and that you want them to experience a deep sense of wholeness and rightness, and that you're praying that God will bless them. Depending on who you reach out to, that might be a stretch for them. That's okay. Pray first. Ask God who to message, and trust that it's in his hands when you send it.