



## “Grace & Peace” (II Thessalonians 3:16-18)

Danny Hodges – NT3500

Intro: Whitney Phipps video

Secular history concentrates its attention on kings, queens, presidents, politicians and generals, in fact on VIPs. The Bible concentrates rather on a group it calls ‘the saints,’ often little people, insignificant people, unimportant people, who are however at the same time God's people, and for that reason are both ‘unknown (to the world) and yet well-known (to God).’ Secular history concentrates on wars, battles and peace-treaties, followed by yet more wars, battles and peace-treaties. The Bible concentrates rather on the war between good and evil, on the decisive victory won by Jesus Christ over the power of darkness, on the peace treaty ratified by his blood, and on the sovereign proclamation of an amnesty for all rebels who will repent and believe. Again, secular history concentrates on the changing map of the world, as one nation defeats another and annexes its territory, and on the rise and fall of empires. The Bible concentrates rather on a multi-national community called ‘the church,’ which has no territorial frontiers, which claims nothing less than the whole world for Christ, and whose empire will never come to an end. The living God is the God of all the nations of the world, yet within the universal human community there exists a ‘covenant community,’ his own new society, the beginning of his new creation. It is to this people only that he has pledged himself with the everlasting promise: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Stott, pp.127-128)

As Paul closes this second letter to the Thessalonian church, he addresses them as the unique covenant community that they are. Read the text, then go to II Thess.1:1-2; I Thess.1:1; 5:28; Col.1:2, 4:18; Phil.1:1-2, 4:23; Eph.1:1-2, 6:23; Gal.1:1-3, 6:18; II Cor.1:1-2, 13:14; I Cor.1:2-3, 16:23; I Tim.1:2, 6:21b; II Tim.1:2, 4:22; Titus 1:4, 3:15; Philemon 1:1-3, 25; I Peter 1:2b.

Paul’s desire is that the church experience peace “at all times and in very way.” Wouldn’t you like that? Is it possible? See Philipians 4:11b-13, 4-7.

This kind of peace is not possible apart from the grace of God. See Titus 2:11; God has given every single person enough grace to lead him to salvation. That is where peace mentioned in Phil.4 begins.

First of all, God's grace is revealed through his creation (see Rom.1:18-20; Matthew 5:45; James 1:17).

Have everyone take a breath together. That breath is a gift of God's amazing grace!

God pours out grace 'in general' in order that we might experience his grace in salvation (See Rom.2:4; II Peter 3:8-9). II Cor.6:1-2 encourages us not to receive God's grace in vain.

Back to James 1:18; Eph.2:1-9. In salvation, as a result of God's amazing grace, I can have PEACE WITH GOD. (Rom.5:1)

As a result of salvation, I can have PEACE FROM GOD, "at all times and in every way."

Paul prayed 3 times for God to remove a painful thorn in his flesh, and God's answer was "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor.12:9) Paul experienced pain in the will of God, yet he also experienced peace in spite of the pain.

You can grieve, and yet have peace. When my mother passed away, I was praying in my apt (Peppertree Village). "Lord, if you are going to take her to be with you, fill her with peace, and fill me with that same peace as you take her." I was kneeling beside the couch, and just as I said those words, an unbelievable heavenly peace rushed through my being, and then the phone rang...my mother had just slipped into glory.

You may fail to understand why everything around you is falling apart. and yet have peace. You can be in the midst of turmoil and conflict, and yet have peace...see John 20:19.

Note: This peace is supernatural (Phil.4:7).

## CONCLUSION

\* John 14:27; 16:33

\* As a result of God's amazing grace, He makes it possible for us to experience peace, "at all times and in every way."