

Call to Worship: Psalm 29:2

Scripture Reading: Psalm 29

Sermon: "Peace to the Brethren" Ephesians 6:23

Benediction: Numbers 6:24-26

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this letter, we were greeted by the Lord's apostle with, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." That was no surprise, as the Lord Jesus, when he was risen from the dead, greeted His disciples with, "Peace be with you," then showed them His hands and His side. So, it is no surprise that here at the end of the letter, we hear a parting word, "Peace to the brethren."

Let's study into this together, and see what is meant by that, and how to respond to it.

TEXT

Ephesians 6:23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

BODY

I. The Nature of This Statement

- A. This is an expression of what the Lord's apostle wants for the church, for the Christians; so this is what we are to want for the church, for ourselves
- B. This is a summary of all he has written; this is the conclusion of the matter
- C. This is a description what the Lord Jesus already has worked in us; but that the apostle wants the Lord to work in us more and more, carrying it on to completion until He returns
- D. To put it in one word, this statement is a prayer.
 1. in it, the apostle is praying what he expresses here
 2. in it, he is telling us, "This is what I pray for you."
 3. in it, he is teaching us again what we are to pray for

II. The Thing Prayed For: Peace

What is meant by peace? Simply: the absence of what is bad and the presence of what is good

A. Absence of things that are bad

1. turmoil or disturbance or adversity 2 Chronicles 15:5-6 And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. (6) So

nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity.

- a) specifically the turmoil of people destroying each other
 2. malice, mischief, evil intent Psalm 28:3 Do not take me away with the wicked And with the workers of iniquity, Who speak peace to their neighbors, But evil is in their hearts.
 3. devising of deceitful things against good people Psalm 35:20 For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful matters Against the quiet ones in the land.
 4. stumbling Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.
 5. the sword of the Lord Jeremiah 12:12 The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights in the wilderness, For the sword of the LORD shall devour From one end of the land to the other end of the land; No flesh shall have peace.
 6. harm or hurt or ruin Jeremiah 38:4 Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."
 7. threat from dangerous wild beasts Ezekiel 34:25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.
 8. fear Daniel 10:19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."
 9. people being enemies to their neighbors Zechariah 8:10b There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.
 10. confusion in the worship of God 1 Corinthians 14:33a For God is not the author of confusion but of peace . . .
 11. fighting among brothers; brothers wronging one another Acts 7:26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to ~~reconcile them~~ [lit. set them at **peace**], saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'
 12. separation from other people by having different laws Ephesians 2:14-15
- B. Presence things that are good
1. strength Psalm 29:11 The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.
 2. lovingkindness and mercy from the Lord Jeremiah 16:5b I have taken away My peace from this people," says the LORD, "lovingkindness and mercies.

3. future and hope Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for ~~welfare~~ [peace] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
4. note that in each of the three examples above, the peace is made up of things from the Lord
 - a) the LORD will give strength to His people
 - b) lovingkindness and mercy from the Lord
 - c) the LORD plans to give you a future and a hope

III. The People Who May Enjoy This Peace: The Brethren

A. Understood

1. Eph 6:23 Peace to the brethren, the brothers
 - a) adopted by God the Father in His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus
 - b) brothers with Christ
 - c) brothers with one another in Christ
2. Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.
3. Eph 1:1-2 To the saints . . . peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. As an appeal to the sinner

1. here is what you will have
 - a) turmoil or disturbance or adversity 2 Chronicles 15:5-6 And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. (6) So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity.
 - (1) specifically the turmoil of people destroying each other
 - b) malice, mischief, evil intent Psalm 28:3 Do not take me away with the wicked And with the workers of iniquity, Who speak peace to their neighbors, But evil is in their hearts.
 - c) devising of deceitful things against good people Psalm 35:20 For they do not speak peace, But they devise deceitful matters Against the quiet ones in the land.
 - d) stumbling Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.
 - e) the sword of the Lord Jeremiah 12:12 The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights in the wilderness, For the sword of the LORD shall devour From one end of the land to the other end of the land; No flesh shall have peace.
 - f) harm or hurt or ruin Jeremiah 38:4 Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."

- g) threat from dangerous wild beasts Ezekiel 34:25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.
 - h) fear Daniel 10:19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."
 - i) people being enemies to their neighbors Zechariah 8:10b There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.
 - j) confusion in the worship of God 1 Corinthians 14:33a For God is not the author of confusion but of peace . . .
 - k) fighting among brothers; brothers wronging one another Acts 7:26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to ~~reconcile them~~ [lit. set them at **peace**], saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'
 - l) separation from other people by having different laws Ephesians 2:14-15
2. instead, turn from your sins; trust in Jesus Christ; have peace
 - a) strength
 - b) lovingkindness and mercy from the Lord
 - c) future and hope

IV. The Other Good Things That Accompany Peace: Love with Faith

- A. It is relatively easy to understand what he means here: faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and love toward all the saints
 1. Ephesians 1:15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,
 2. Colossians 1:4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints;
 3. Philemon 1:4-5 I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, (5) hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,
- B. Love and faith go with peace
 1. 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, **faith, love, peace** with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- C. Love and faith go with peace not incidentally
 1. how does God cause a sinner, a rebel against him, to be at peace with him? By His Spirit, he causes that sinner to have faith in Jesus Christ, and the sinner is reconciled to God through faith in Christ
 2. how does God cause a sinner, who hates his fellow men, to be at peace with the brothers? He loves that sinner. He demonstrates His love for that sinner in this: while that sinner was still a sinner, Christ died for

him. He causes that sinner so to love the God who loves him, that he loves also all the other sinners who are so beloved of God.

D. So, the apostle, as he prays for peace for the Christians, also prays for increase of love with faith

V. The Source of Peace: God

A. God the Father

1. when He taught us to pray, the Lord Jesus said we should pray, "Our Father which art in heaven . . ."
2. Near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus said, (Matthew 7:7-11) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (9) Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? (10) Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!
3. ultimately, everything good, everything that makes up peace, comes from God James 1:17-18a Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (18) Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth . . .

B. The Lord Jesus Christ

1. How does peace come to us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - a) God gives us peace by giving us Christ Isaiah 9:6 says "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given"
 - b) the Lord Jesus took the wrath of God that we deserved upon Himself; there is no longer any reason for God to be angry at those who are in Christ, because Christ took all the punishment we deserved; God now looks on us not in wrath, but in pleasure, in joy, in satisfaction
 - (1) Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.
 - (2) in this very letter, the apostle teaches us that, saying that Christ Himself is our peace
 - (a) Ephesians 2:13-14a But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He Himself is our peace

c) God the Father has now exalted Christ to the throne of heaven, and He is seated there as Prince of Peace, sending peace all over the world

(1) Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

2. How does peace come to us from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ? also in this letter, the apostle teaches us that Christ came and preached to us the peace that He had gained for us by His blood

a) Ephesians 2:17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

C. Where is the Holy Spirit in all this?

1. God is three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As God graciously, lovingly gives good things to man, those good things are said to be sent to us by Jesus Christ from the Father. And the Holy Spirit is not the sender, but He is what is sent, to bring the good things.

John 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

2. We know from what was said a few moments ago that one of the good things that makes up peace is strength. See that prayed for, and how it is to be granted

Ephesians 3:14-16 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

CONCLUSION

This statement part of the conclusion of this letter from the Lord's apostle to the church, is an expression of his holy desire for the disciples of Jesus Christ. It is a prayer for God's people. The apostle prays that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will grant you peace, with love and faith. Let that be what we also desire, what we strive for, and what we pray for: peace, and love with faith.

These three words used together three places in Paul's letters

Ephesians 6:23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:19-23 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, (21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness [KJV faith]**, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, **faith, love, peace** with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Order of these three words
love, peace, faith Gal 5
faith, love, peace 2 Tim 2
peace, love, faith Eph 6:23

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Galatians 6:11-18 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! (12) As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. (13) For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. (14) But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (15) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. (16) And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. (17) From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. (18) Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Philippians 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

2 John 1:3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

John 20:19-21 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." (20) When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. (21) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

to the brethren

Ferguson:

peace, love, and faith are the sum of all which he hath been presently instructing them in, and pressing upon them, and here he seeketh all from God by prayer

Ministers, who would have their pains attended with success towards the Lord's people, ought to beg that from God by prayer to be wrought in them, which by their preachingn they endeavour to inculcate on them

those who were already regenerated among the Ephesians had faith, love, and peace, wrought in them at the first, and Paul wisheth here a further degree of, and growth in, those from God to them

a truly Christian and peaceable frame of spirit, together with love, which is not a mere moral virtue, but qa saving grace flowing from the root of faith, is only to be found among true believers,a nd should be sought after by such especially; coldrifeness of affection, and unpeaceable walking, being more unbecoming them than any others

There cannot be a peaceable frame of spirit in any towards others, nor yet an harmonious walking with them . . . but where the grace of love is, whereby the heart is armed against all irritations arising fromt he infirmities of others to break the bond of peace (Eph 4:2-3); for he conjoineth these two in his wish, "peace," whereof one branch is a peaceable frame of h eart and harmonious walking, and "love"

As the graces of faith and love are different . . . so they are always conjoined; where one is, there the other must be also; for he speaketh of them as two different graces, whereof the one doth necessarily follow upon the other

Wesley:

This verse recapitulates the whole epistle.

MacLaren:

Paul's highest and best wish for his friends. He has no earthly prosperity to wish for them. His ambition soars higher than that; he desires for them peace, love, faith. Now, will you take the lesson?

I take it that the Apostle is here tracking the stream to its fountain; that he is beginning with effects and working backwards and downwards to causes; so that to get the order of nature and of time we must reverse the order here, and begin where he ends and end where he begins. The Christian life in its higher vigour and excellence is rooted in faith. That faith associates to itself, and is inseparably connected with love, and the faith and love together issue in a deep restful tranquillity which nothing can break.

peace G1515 eirene

Calvin:

He wishes the Ephesians to be peaceable and quiet among themselves; and this, he presently adds, may be obtained by brotherly love and by agreement in faith

Trapp:

The wicked are like the troubled sea, Isa_57:20, which may seem sometimes still, but is never so; no more are they. The peace of prosperity they may have, but not of tranquillity

Poole:

He prays for their continuance and increase in these graces, which already were begun in them.

Ferguson:

peace with God, with their own conscience, one with another, and all sort of prosperity

Gill:

meaning all prosperity outward and inward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; especially peace of conscience under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and a view of peace made with God by that blood:

Clarke:

All prosperity, and continual union with God and among yourselves

Hodge:

not concord, but all the fruits of grace

Eadie:

not concord, as some suppose, and it cannot be so in a parting salutation. The word in such a relation has not a special theological sense, but means, in a Christian mouth, "all that was good for them here and hereafter."

Ellicott:

love with faith making perfect (Gal 5:6) the faith which Paul takes for granted as being in them.

For peace is first with God, in the thankful receiving of His mercy; from this naturally arises love with faith towards Him; and out of this, again, peace and love towards men, in the conviction that, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

JRY:

Peace is what will result from God's work in you, which will be a work of strengthening faith and producing from it love.

What does he mean by "peace"?

1 Corinthians 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Ephesians 2:12-15 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off

have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He Himself is our **peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (15) having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making **peace**,

Ephesians 2:17-18 And He came and preached **peace** to you who were afar off and to those who were near. (18) For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Matthew 10:34-36 "Do not think that I came to bring **peace** on earth. I did not come to bring **peace** but a sword. (35) For I have come to 'SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW'; (36) and 'A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.'

Luke 12:51-53 Do you suppose that I came to give **peace** on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. (52) For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. (53) Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Luke 11:21-22 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in **peace**. (22) But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

Luke 14:31-32 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of **peace**.

Acts 7:26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them [lit. set them at **peace**], saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'

Acts 12:20 Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for **peace**, because their country was supplied with food by the king's country.

- D. Seen as parting expression in some of the letters
 - 1. the God of peace be with you

- a) 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- b) Philippians 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.
- 2. the God of peace sanctify you
 - a) 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3. peace to those who meet certain conditions
 - a) Galatians 6:15-16 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. (16) And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
- 4. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

love G26 *agape* with faith G4102 *pistis*

see Galatians 5:6

Ferguson:

Mutual love among themselves; for God's love to them is comprehended under "grace" in the following verse

The grace of faith, the fountain of the former (1 Tim 1:5)

Gill:

that is, an increase of these graces, and of the exercise of them, is wished for; for otherwise these brethren had both these graces, faith and love; see Eph_1:15; which go together; faith works by love, and love discovers faith, and both are imperfect; faith has something lacking in it, and love is apt to grow cold, and need reviving and increasing;

Clarke:

love to God and man, the principle of all obedience and union
faith, continually increasing, and growing stronger and stronger

JFB:

Faith is presupposed as theirs; he prays that love may accompany it

Hodge:

This does not mean "love together with faith," but rather love united with faith. Faith they had; Paul's prayer was that love might be connected with it. The love intended must be brotherly love.

Eadie:

that is, love in union with faith. "Love" is not God's love to us, but our love to one another; or as the apostle has already called it, "love unto all the saints." And that love is "with faith," as its accompaniment, for "faith worketh by love." The apostle wishes them

a more fervent love along with a more powerful faith. He had heard that they possessed these already, but he wished them a larger inheritance of the twin graces.

RWP:

Love of the brotherhood accompanied by faith in Christ and as an expression of it.

from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Calvin:

From this prayer we learn that faith and love, as well as peace itself, are gifts of God bestowed upon us through Christ

Ferguson:

from Jesus Christ, the Mediator, through virtue of whose merit and intercession all saving benefits are conveyed unto the elect

Gill:

these, and the increase of them, are from God the Father, who is the God of all grace, and from Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness of grace is

and these things are equally desired from the one as from the other, and shows a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and the equality of Christ with the Father

and such a wish expresses the apostle's great love and affection for the brethren, and points out the things they stand in need of; and which, being asked for such, might be expected to be enjoyed

Clarke:

from God the Father, as the fountain of all our mercies, and the Lord Jesus Christ, through whose sacrifice and mediation they all come.

JRY:

Think how ready God the Father is to grant our request for such things!