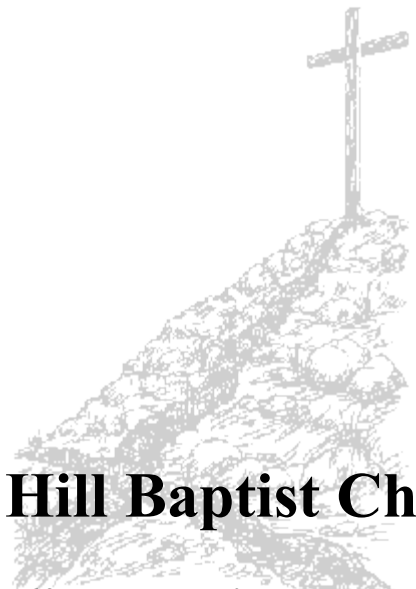


Grace, Mercy, and Peace

2 John 3-6



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FOCAL Read Responsively 2 John 3-6 KJV¹ Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. {4} **I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.** {5} And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. {6} **And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.**

As we mentioned in our last study, this letter is addressed to the *chosen of God*, those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. You are all **brethren Beloved of the Lord** if you have accepted Christ as Savior. The Scripture says:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 **God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:** {14} Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God chose you. God called you. You answered, not our of merit, but *out of need* - and for this reason you are in the Family of God.

1. Grace, Mercy, and Peace Come To The

¹ all texts are King James Version, unless otherwise noted

Believer Through Truth And Love

Having begun this letter as one addressed to the *chosen of God*, the Apostle now salutes the believers by saying:

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

In most of the New Testament introductions we see **grace** and **peace** referred to, such as in the Pauline epistles:

1 Corinthians 1:3 **Grace be unto you, and peace,** from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:2 **Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Grace² is the *unmerited favor* of God, given to creatures who had no cause for hope apart from His great love. **Peace**³ is the *natural byproduct* of **grace**.

2 G5485, χάρις, charis, *khar'-ece*, From G5463; *graciousness* (as *gratifying*), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including *gratitude*): - acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace (-ious), joy liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy)., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

3 G1515, εἰρήνη, eirēnē, *i-rah'-nay*, Probably from a primary verb εἰρω eirō (to *join*); *peace* (literally or figuratively); by implication *prosperity*: - one, peace, quietness,

Because of the unmerited or unearned favor we have with God, we have the

Philippians 4:7^{HCSB} ... peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Once you have a proper understanding of Grace, then the **peace of God** or the **peace which comes from God** will come into your life. We have the **peace of God** because we have **peace with God**. The Apostle says:

Romans 5:1 **Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

If you have been saved by faith in Christ, you are no longer at war with God. Why? Because of that word in the middle that we have yet to look at - *word* in our salutation:

FOCAL 2 John 3 **Grace be with you, mercy⁴, and peace,** from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Mercy can be defined as God *stooping or bending*.

rest, + set at one again., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)
HCSB Holman Christian Standard Bible

4 G1656, ἔλεος, eleos, *el'-eh-os*, Of uncertain affinity; *compassion* (human or divine, especially active): - (+ tender) mercy., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

down to us.

God bent down, lowering Himself from glory to come and die a terrible and shameful death for us. Man could not look on God's face and live (**Exodus 33:20**), and yet we could look on the Face of the Crucified Savior and mock (**Matthew 27:29**). In **Mercy**, God offered salvation to all who would believe, for it is written:

Ephesians 2:4-5^{NIV} But because of his great love for us, **God, who is rich in mercy, {5} made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions** - it is by grace you have been saved.

Illustrate: We who are saved were not like *race cars on a NASCAR track*, cruising along at hundreds of miles an hour. We were not even like the old faithful *family car* which, experiencing a flat tire, there happened to be a spare in the trunk. We who are saved *were dead in sin*. We were *separated from God*, without any hope whatsoever. The Psalmist wrote:

Psalms 14:2-3 **The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. {3} They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there**

is none that doeth good, no, not one.

How true is this statement? Like all Scripture, it is absolutely true. Yet God wants us to understand this principle, so He repeats Himself in:

Psalms 53:2-3 **God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. {3} Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

God's judgment - twice repeated in the Psalms - is that - the best you can do apart from Him is **be filthy**.

That may hurt our feelings, because we as humans like to hold up those who appear good. Yet Jesus said:

Matthew 19:17 ... there is none good but one, that is, God

Can we be good enough? Absolutely not! God is the Fountain of Good, the only stream from which runs righteousness. Until I understand this truth, until I realize my goodness apart from Christ is futile, I will not have peace. But once I realize that **God bent down in mercy, and, spreading out His hands, captured all my sin on**

that Tree of Calvary. God chose to love me, and chose to call me to salvation - a call I accepted. He chose to stoop down for both you and I, to pay the penalty we should have paid. If you have believed on Christ, then:

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Illustrate: It is God Who made you acceptable **in the Beloved.** Because of God the Son, God the Holy Spirit has made you acceptable to God the Father. This is the *hiding place* of the Christian, the **Grace, Mercy, and Peace** of God. You are **accepted in the Beloved** if you have believed in Him.

Grace, the *unmerited favor* of God, was bestowed on you because He acted on that Grace. Mercy, the action of Grace, has made us accepted in the Beloved.

We have Peace with God because

Romans 5:5 ... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Consider the fawn, the youngest deer in the field. I have seen it hide, oh so still, in a flat grassy meadow. If it lay still in the grass or in the wheat, the dappling of its young coat will make her invisible to the eye of the

hunter. If it moves the lion or the wolf can and will get it. The fawn's only defense is the spotted marking of the coat. Stay still, little fawn, or become prey to the hunter.

Likewise the Christian, saved by the *unmerited favor* of God, needs to stand in this present age trusting to that same favor. We have no natural defenses against Satan and the world. In our daily walks we will *always fall short* of perfection. Perfectionism is one of the lies of the devil, the belief that we can walk without error, without any sin whatsoever, in our own power. How foolish a doctrine is this! People who misunderstand **Grace, Mercy, and Peace** always confuse themselves with God - an arrogant pride! It is **God alone Who is good**, not us. He must make us into what He wants us to be. As we go deeper into the Scripture we discover that the Child of God is *supposed to walk in love, in the power of God's Holy Spirit.* You are **accepted in the Beloved**, accepted in the Family of God because of the Grace of God. There is no ritual left for you to maintain to stay in His Family. Grace brought you to the Family *through the mercy of Calvary.* You are His. You were **begun in the Spirit**, born again by believing on Jesus - shall a ritual now be necessary to *keep you saved?*

If your works were not good enough to save you, shall your works be good enough to *keep you saved?*

No, a thousand times no! The Apostle writes:

Galatians 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth,

before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? {2} This only would I learn of you, **Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? {3} Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**

Illustrate: By faith, and not by feeling do we receive salvation. And, if saved, we **obey the Truth by obeying our Master**. Grace, Mercy, and Peace come to the believer like a river, but the twin *banks of that river is called Love and Truth*.⁵ We have all seen the Tennessee River overflow it's banks, destroying homes and property. If the river does not stay within it's banks, it ceases to be a blessing and becomes a curse. It can no longer be used and enjoyed while it is outside it's natural boundaries. So it is with Grace, Mercy, and Peace. These flow from God, but the banks of the river are love and truth. **Zane C. Hodges**⁶ states:

"When divorced from truth, love is little more than sentimentality or humanism. If I truly care about my brothers, then I will want them to know, and live according to God's truth."

Christians are people who have experienced that river of Grace, Mercy, and Peace. This river - a river from God Himself, an unmerited river - not only saved us, but

5 (Alexander McClaren, Expositions of the Scripture, 2 John) **Truth and love are, as it were, the space within which the river flows, if I may so say, the banks of the stream.**

6 *The Epistles of John*, page 255

placed us in the Family of God. We now *walk in that river*, staying in the *boundaries* that both *love and truth* have established.

2. The Believer Lives By Walking In That River

FOCAL 2 John 1:4-5 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children **walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.** {5} And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but **that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.**

Fire gives birth to fire, and water normally seeks it's own level. Fire and water cannot kiss one another, without the one destroying the other.

If the Christian *walks in untruth*, obeying the so called truths of the unsaved world, he has taken fire to his breast.

As the Bible says:

Proverbs 6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

If you are saved, then you are saved to **walk in truth** and to **love one another**. You cannot do the one without doing the other. We have received a **commandment**

from the Father. Not a Book of Commandments, but **a commandment**. Not the *ten commandments*, but **a commandment from the Father**. What is the singular commandment that we who are saved have received from the Father? The Apostle writes:

FOCAL 2 John 1:5 ... that we love one another.

I want to focus on this for a minute - **that we love one another**. This **love** must be the love that is **bound with truth**. Again going back to our analogy of the river, one bank of the river always runs in parallel to the other bank. Love apart from truth is not the Love of God. How do we, as Christians, **love one another**?

1 Christians are to speak the Truth in Love, knowing that it will cause spiritual growth in both *ourselves* as well as the Body of Christ.

We read:

Ephesians 4:15-16 **But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: {16} From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the**

edifying of itself in love.

The Body of Christ is *edified* or *built up* as we **speak the truth in love**. As Christians we are *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit, also called:

John 16:13 ... **the Spirit of truth** ...

Whose job it is to "guide you into all truth". We also possess the **Word of Truth**, God's Holy Word, that we are to:

2 Timothy 2:15 **Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

We speak the **Word of Truth** through the power of the **Spirit of Truth** to our brothers in Christ. We *live our lives* according to the Truth and according to Love.

2 Christians are to *obey God's Truth* through the *power of the Holy Spirit*.

The Bible says:

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in **obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned [non-hypocritical] love of the**

brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Illustrate: If you know Christ, you are called to **love one another in truth and through the Spirit**. I heard of a parlor game called *Scruples* that hit the market back in the '90s. For about \$30.00 you could buy a game that would test whether you had *scruples* or not - that is, whether you were moral or immoral at heart. One advertisement I found for this game said:

Scruples is the game of moral dilemmas, where players answer questions like, "You've sold your house. Before you move out, the roof starts to leak. Do you have it fixed?"⁷

If you are a Christian the question is moot! Of course you fix the leak, or you don't sell the house. The Spirit of God within us is grieved when we walk contrary to love and truth. The closer we draw to Christ and behave like He leads us to do, the more peace will flood into our souls. Bible teacher **Oliver B. Greene⁸** writes:

It is an alarming fact that too many Christians mind earthly things. Many live in anxiety, worry, and fear. They are concerned about their own little group, their own little circle of fellowship. There is much majoring on the minor and too little majoring on the things that are spiritual and eternal. ... We must come to our senses and fall upon our knees before God. We

need the life giving power that only God can give overcoming power that can come only from on high. We must speedily come to the place where Christ - He Who died that He might give life - will again become the reality of our souls. We must allow Him to take possession of all that we are, all that we have, and let Him lead us in all that we do."

I read an article just the other day written by an atheist. The article, though it said shocking things, did not shock me. You see, the Lord has taught me that the unbeliever will be a dog. Why worry about the dogs? Witness to them, love them to the best that God will empower you to do, and move on with your lives. But then I read an article by a supposed minister of the Gospel, a man who should have been **walking in the truth in love**. His words did not edify, nor did they point me back to Christ. Though my mouth had no bitterness in it from tasting of the godless fare, the supposed Godly man's diatribe turned my stomach. My Beloved, remember that it was the Roman unbeliever who jammed the gall soaked (**John 19:29**) sponge into Christ's mouth, while the Apostle Whom He loved looked on. The unbeliever does not know the Truth, for he has not accepted the call to salvation through the Spirit of Truth. The unbeliever bends the knee only to the flesh, to satisfying himself. The believer is to bend the knee to God because, as a recipient of Grace, he loves God. Let the unbeliever thrust the sponge in Christ's face - let us be like the *Apostle Whom Jesus loved*. Let us **lay on the Master's chest (John 13:23)** whether we eat or sleep, whether we rise up or lay down.

⁷ <http://boardgames.about.com/od/partygame1/>

⁸ *Man and His Relationship To God*, pgs 83-84, copyright 1969, The Gospel Hour

3 When we who are believers *walk in truth and love*, then we have fulfilled the *whole* of God's Law.

The Apostle says:

Romans 13:8-10 Owe no man any thing, but **to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** {9} For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** {10} **Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**

The power of the Body of Christ is that we *love one another in truth*. Those who will not walk in truth are *aberrations*, strange deformed creatures indeed. **Love never seeks to harm its neighbor**, and walking in truth and love means that we will not seek to harm our neighbor. It is a terrible charge to level against a Christian that he or she does not love. It is a far *more terrible* charge to level against a Christian that he or she *practices back biting, lying, or any other form of evil* that is a work of the flesh and not a work of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16-26**).

4 Christians do not get off on side issues when we love, but stay within the boundaries of "chapter and verse".

FOCAL 2 John 1:5-6 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that **we love one another.** {6} **And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.** This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

We love one another just as God loved us - through the Spirit of Truth and according to the Word of Truth. The governor for our behavior is always Scripture and Spirit. When our Lord Jesus sent seventy disciples out into the world He told them:

Luke 10:4 **Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.**

They were to be totally reliant upon God, focusing on Him as they did what they were told to do. These seventy later came back to Jesus excited and full of joy. They said:

Luke 10:17 ... Lord, even the devils are

subject unto us through thy name.

Our Lord replied,

Luke 10:20 ... in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

We who are Christians rejoice because **our names are written in Heaven**. We do not see this, but we know it, for God lives in us. Walk in love and in truth, Beloved of God. Continue to focus on Christ Jesus, your Savior. If you have believed in Him, trust Him still. Read His Word, pray to Him, glorify His name. He is our Peace! May God touch your hearts with these words.

