



Lesson 13 — Godliness with Contentment

Philippians 4:9-23

- Salutation — customarily grace and peace
(Ephesians 1:2)
- Benediction — often grace; Ephesians grace and peace; Galatians grace; Colossians grace

Peace. The usual Hebrew form of greeting was *shalom*, “peace,” or *shalom leka*, “peace to you” (Daniel 10:19). Jesus so greeted His assembled disciples after the resurrection (John 20:19, 26).

Grace in the Old Testament (*ḥānan*) means to grant a favor, The verb *ḥānan* depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need. It describes an action from a superior to an inferior who has no real claim for gracious treatment. (*TWOT*)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8)

The life, death, and resurrection of Christ brought new meaning to Paul to the familiar terms of grace and peace.

Grace now carried the concept of the redeeming love of God in Christ (2 Timothy 1:9). Peace was now peace with God through redemption (Romans 5:1). Grace and peace became Paul's customary greeting in all his epistles. Peter and John also used similar greetings (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3; Revelation 1:4).

Rejoice

➤ Philippians 1:18, 2:16, 2:17, 2:18, 2:28, 3:1, 3:3, 4:4

Rejoicing

➤ Philippians 1:26

Joy

➤ Philippians 1:4, 1:25, 2:2, 2:17, 2:28, 4:1

Law

- Philippians — 3 times and Ephesians 1 time
- Romans — 50+ times — Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. (v. 31)
- Galatians — 25 times — Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (v. 24)

Christ

- For to me to live *is* Christ . . . (Philippians 2:21)
- Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (2:5)
- For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (3:20)

➤ Press toward the mark, stand fast, we can do all things through Christ, be followers of me and walk as I walk, he who have begun a good work will perform it, God will supply all your need, esteem the other better...

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by
prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let
your requests be made known unto God.

(Philippians 4:6)

There are **certain conditions** upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit’s influence, or God’s blessing cannot be received. (*SC 95.1*)

If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance. (*SC 95.3*)

Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be “instant in prayer,” to “continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be “sober, and watch unto prayer.” 1 Peter 4:7. . . . Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. (*SC 97.2*)

There is necessity for **diligence** in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the **prayer meeting**, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven. (*SC 98.1*)

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.

(SC 100.1)

There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of

His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. (*SC* 100.1)

But to **pray in the name of Jesus** is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. (*SC* 100.2)

Prayer and faith are closely allied, and they need to be studied together. In the prayer of faith **there is a divine science**; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” **Mark 11:24**. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to **God’s will**; we must ask for the things that He has **promised**, and whatever we **receive must be used in doing His will**. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal. (*Ed 257.7*)

➤ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or **ministry** [service, work that is done to benefit another], *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that **teacheth**, on teaching; Or he that **exhorteth** [encourage, console, urge, implore], on exhortation: he that **giveth** [or shares], *let him do it* with simplicity [straightforward, upright, generosity, liberality]; he that **ruleth** [leads, guides], with diligence; he that sheweth **mercy**, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:6–8)

➤ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of **wisdom**; to another the word of **knowledge** by the same Spirit; To another **faith** by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of **healing** by the same Spirit; To another the working of **miracles**; to another **prophecy**; to another **discerning** of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of **tongues**; to another the **interpretation** of tongues: (1 Corinthians 12:7–10)

➤ And he gave some, **apostles** [an envoy of Jesus invested with the authority to speak on his behalf, a delegate, special messenger, ambassador]; and some, **prophets**; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors and teachers**; (Ephesians 4:11)

➤ **Prophets.** Prophets were expounders and explainers of the will of God that had been made known to them by supernatural means. They are mentioned along with apostles in Eph. 2:20; 3:5. The idea of foretelling is not essential to the meaning of the word, and the spirit of prophecy is the appointed guide of the remnant church (Rev. 19:10). (*SDA BC*)

Let us wait. These words have been supplied, and apparently correctly so. The Greek of the first part of this verse reads literally, “**Or ministry, in our ministering.**” The evident meaning is that those of us who have been called to this kind of service should devote ourselves wholeheartedly to it. The work of attending to the more temporal business of the church is not to be lightly regarded. It is as much a gift of God’s grace as is prophecy. The spiritual significance of such service is emphasized by the fact that in the days of the apostles only men who were “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” were to be set over “the daily ministration” of alms (Acts 6:1, 3). (*SDA BC*)

- 1. Asking must be according to God's will.
- 2. We must ask for the things he has promised.
- 3. Whatever we receive must be used in doing his will.

- For example: "For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any **gift** He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received" (*Ed 258.1*).

We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most. (*Ed 258.2*)

To live thus by the word of God means the surrender to Him of the whole life. There will be felt a continual sense of need and dependence, a drawing out of the heart after God. Prayer is a necessity; for it is the life of the soul. Family prayer, public prayer, have their place; but it is secret communion with God that sustains the soul life. (*Ed 258.3*)

It was in hours of solitary prayer that Jesus in
His earth life received wisdom and power.

(Education, p. 259.1)

Peace

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. (Matthew 26:63)

Silence, quiet

Think not that I am come to send peace on
earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

(Matthew 10:34)

Harmony, tranquility

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:
not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not
your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(John 14:27)

Harmony, tranquility

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

(Romans 5:1)

Harmony, tranquility

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace,
and come out of him. (Mark 1:25)

To put to silence, command

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said
unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind
ceased, and there was a great calm. (Mark 4:39)

To put to silence, command

Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright:
For the end of *that* man *is* peace. (Psalm 37:37)

Shalom — peace; completeness; welfare; health

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose* mind
is stayed on thee: Because he trusteth in thee.

(Isaiah 26:3)

Shalom

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
And the government shall be upon his shoulder:
And his name shall be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting
Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Shalom

They that trust in the Lord *shall be* as mount Zion, *Which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever. *As* the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, So the Lord *is* round about his people From henceforth even for ever. (Psalm 125:1–2)

Trust—hope, secure

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; And lean
not unto thine own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

Trust—faith

There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.
(Isaiah 48:22)

Shalom

Christ said of Himself, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34. The Prince of Peace, He was yet the cause of division. He who came to proclaim glad tidings and to create hope and joy in the hearts of the children of men, opened a controversy that burns deep and arouses intense passion in the human heart. And He warns His followers, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” “They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.” “Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.” John 16:33; Luke 21:12, 16. (AA 84.2)

This prophecy has been fulfilled in a marked manner. Every indignity, reproach, and cruelty that Satan could instigate human hearts to devise, has been visited upon the followers of Jesus. And **it will be again fulfilled in a marked manner**; for the carnal heart is still at enmity with the law of God, and will not be subject to its commands. The world is no more in harmony with the principles of Christ today than it was in the days of the apostles. The same hatred that prompted the cry, “Crucify Him! crucify Him!” the same hatred that led to the persecution of the disciples, still works in the children of disobedience. (AA 84.3)

The coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. (*PK 717.1*)

The same spirit which in the Dark Ages consigned men and women to prison, to exile, and to death, which conceived the exquisite torture of the Inquisition, which planned and executed the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and which kindled the fires of Smithfield, is still at work with malignant energy in unregenerate hearts. The history of truth has ever been the record of a struggle between right and wrong. The proclamation of the gospel has ever been carried forward in this world in the face of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. (AA 84.3)

What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered persecution for Christ's sake? **It was union with God**, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. Reproach and persecution have separated many from earthly friends, but never from the love of Christ. Never is the tempest-trying soul more dearly loved by his Saviour than when he is suffering reproach for the truth's sake. "I will love him," Christ said, "and will manifest Myself to him." John 14:21. When for the truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, **Christ stands by his side.** (AA 85.1)

When he is confined within prison walls, **Christ manifests Himself to him** and cheers his heart with His love. When he suffers death for Christ's sake, the Saviour says to him, They may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, **I will help thee;** yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." John 16:33; Isaiah 41:10. (AA 85.1)

The peace that Christ gave to His disciples, and for which we pray, is the peace that is born of truth, a peace that is not to be quenched because of division. Without may be wars and fightings, jealousies, envies, hatred, strife; but the peace of Christ is not that which the world giveth or taketh away. It could endure amid the hunting of spies and the fiercest opposition of His enemies.... Christ did not for an instant seek to purchase peace by a betrayal of sacred trusts. Peace could not be made by a compromise of principles. . . .

(ML 77.3; RH July 24, 1894, par. 4)

It is a grave mistake on the part of those who are children of God to seek to bridge the gulf that separates the children of light from the children of darkness by yielding principle, by compromising the truth. It would be surrendering the peace of Christ in order to make peace or fraternize with the world. The sacrifice is too costly to be made by the children of God to make peace with the world by giving up the principles of truth.... Then let the followers of Christ settle it in their minds that they will never compromise truth, never yield one iota of principle for the favor of the world. Let them hold to the peace of Christ. (*ML* 77.3; *RH* July 24, 1894, par. 4)

And now abideth faith, hope, charity,
these three; but the greatest of these
is charity. (1 Corinthians 13:13)