

## GRACE FROM THE PRISON

By Pastor Paulus Budiono  
Lemah Putro, Sunday, July 28, 2019

Shalom,

Is the Word of God really a wonder? Or is it pleasant only when it suits us? For example: Jesus created a miracle when He fed 5.000 men only (women and children were not included in the number) from 5 barley loaves of bread and 2 small fish. They tried to find Him the next day but when He said, *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst”*, they whined and even some of His disciples no longer followed Him (John 6:1-66). How far do we respect the Word of God and have faith in its wonder? Man often ruin their personal life and marriage by violating His flawless Word. Ironically, there are churches that agree to bless same-sex marriages (homosexual, lesbian) that are clearly against God’s plan!

What kind of miracles can we find in the letter of the Apostle Paul (old) and Timothy (young) in Philippians 1:1-2? *“Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with **the bishops and deacons. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**”*

The letter of Paul that was addressed to all the congregation (the saints), elder and the deacons was filled with grace and peace from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ, and it would be with them and us who read it now.

We have to believe that grace and peace will always be with us not only when we are in church (which is only a few hours) but also outside the church - at home, school or at work. The problem is how far do we know Jesus and His Word? Illustration: if we know someone so well, we won’t hesitate to help if we see him or her in need and we’ll do it willingly. On the contrary, we will be ignorant and reluctant to help someone that we don’t know well. How well do we know Jesus - the Word of God Himself? And do we willingly sacrifice for the work of the Lord? Our willingness depends on how well our relationship with His Word. If our faith grows 100%, we will love reading His Word that gives us grace and peace. We know that the letter of Paul (including the Letter of Philippians) always began and ended with grace and peace from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ who is always with us (Romans 1:4, 16:24; 1 Corinthians 1:3, 16:23; 2 Corinthians 1:2, 13:11; Galatians 1:3, 6:18; Ephesians 1:2, 6:23; Philippians 1:2, 4:23 etc.). In other words, we are always surrounded by grace and peace from God

Trinity.

We can't deny that every country seeks peace but strangely they keep competing with each other by multiplying and advancing or improving their weapons and even with their war training. Is this the kind of peace that they are looking for? That is why Jesus emphasized that His peace given to us is not as the world gives (John 14:27). Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal. If we hold peace from God Trinity, we may face any struggles, but our hearts will stay peaceful and not easily offended, angered, disappointed and hopeless. For example: almost all the writing of the Apostle Paul was written when he was suffering in prison and even ended with his being executed but he still preached that peace and grace from God Trinity is always by our side.

Introspection: we are facing a stumbling and chaotic world and even the churches are being threatened and destroyed by the false teachings that defile the purity of the Word of God. Will the grace and peace of God stay pure and uncontaminated?

**Where** do we get God's grace **from**? Hebrews 4: 14-16 wrote, "Seeing then that we have a great **High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace** that we may obtain mercy and find grace **to help in time of need.**"

It is proven that grace is not something we could get randomly but it comes from the **throne** - the highest position - with Jesus as the King. Clearly, Jesus is the King as well as the High Priest who can help us just in time. In the teaching of the Tabernacle, the high priest held an atonement service by sprinkling the bull's blood in front of the atonement cover (*Mercy Seat* = grace) in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:14, 32). It is important to know that the Ark of Covenant consists of two parts: the Ark (bottom part) and the Atonement Cover or Mercy Seat on top of the Ark (Exodus 26:21).

Application: We don't need to wait once a year to see Jesus Christ, but we can do it everyday. If He has forgiven our sins with His blood, we are then overwhelmed by His grace and peace and there shall be no more anger, hatred, gossip and so forth against each other.

As long as we are still inhabiting the earth, we can't avoid *unexpected* struggles; that is why we need the help from the Lord. We should not get used to looking around for help from others, calling our pastor to ask for advice. We forget that peace and grace are in

our hearts! Our faith must keep growing despite the lack of fellowship with one another; there are times the false teaching and preaching attack us to rattle our faith while we are alone. The experience of the Apostle Paul being imprisoned for Christ proved that his faith was unshakeable and that his heart was filled with peace and belief of salvation and Jesus' calling upon him. He even had a motto *"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"* (Philippians 1:21).

The Apostle Paul was very eager to put grace and peace in his every letter because he knew all the issues in Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians and so forth. He had to handle them with grace and peace even if his writing said nothing like it. The congregation needs to understand that the tasks of the pastor, the deacons and the church council are not easy though they always stay calm when facing their struggles.

During his suffering, the Apostle Paul still gave thanks to God and remained joyful when he knew that the Philippians loved to gather and spread the Gospel until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:3-6).

Introspection: Do we love to have fellowship with other churches or instead we feel exclusive because we think that our church is the purest of them all? Have we spread the Gospel as well as supported the work of Gospel that needs huge funding? Haven't we received grace and peace freely? Jesus had sacrificed His body, so do we still think and calculate in doing sacrifice for Him? What we need to pay attention is that we need to do our ministry joyfully without conflict to one another that can cause peace to dissipate just like Euodia and Syntyche so that Paul asked his true companion to help them (Philippians 4:2-3).

The Apostle Paul saw that the Philippians supported the preaching of Gospel from the beginning, even though there were conflicts happening in their midst that had to be solved. The same occurred for the Galatians who began with the peace and grace but as time went by, they quickly deserted Jesus Christ and turned to a different gospel which was really no gospel at all (Galatians 1:1-8).

Be careful, we shall not take care of our personal and marriage issues without the peace from the Lord. Churches must not focus on adding the number of people in their church without talking about the cross of Christ because it will make a church as nothing more than a stage. On the contrary, we need to take advantage of His grace by steadfastly preaching and spreading Gospel until His second coming. Let's begin to do these good deeds and remain faithful so that the Lord will be for us because His grace is too great to be wasted. Amen.