

LG NOTES - 1 Corinthians #5 – BLESSING

Preparation

- Flick through the letters Paul wrote to the church – can you spot the grace and peace introduction being repeated?
- What are your thoughts on the openings to his letters?

Discussion:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 together.

1. Share responses to the preparation question.

(A) Grace

Grace = 'Charis' – from the word Chairō – to rejoice.

Often letter began with the greeting Charin, so this would have been a play on that.

Grace = 'A favour done without any expectation of return.'

Grace is Christianity's unique contribution among world religions. It doesn't exist anywhere else. And why would it? It's a mad idea. (C.S.Lewis)

There is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and there is nothing we can do to make God love us less. (Philip Yancey)

If mercy is not getting what you deserve, grace is getting what you don't deserve!

Grace is a way of life, a state of the mind and of the heart. 'The absolutely free expression of the love of God'.

Question:

You can't serve what you ain't cooking – how does grace enable us to live the Christian life?

(B) Peace

Peace has two parts which don't make an either or, but a both and.

- Reconciliation

'By reconciliation I mean the act and/or process of putting things right between two alienated parties in order to restore relationship, justice, and harmony. This is done by removing the "enmity" or causes of division, and by restoring a "togetherness" of forgiveness, trust and mutual respect.' (Alexander Venter).

Question:

God is the author of reconciliation. And Christ is the agent of reconciliation. What difference does this understanding make to our lives?

- Shalom

With roots in the peace enjoyed by the state of Israel under Solomon, it means well-being, wholeness or completeness – so much more than the absence of warfare or strife. The root of the word is also used for the word 'whole' and 'paid'. Interestingly Shulam means 'it was paid for' and you can have a play on words to say Shulam Shalom – the peace came with a price.

Question:

In saying Shalom you are wishing the very best of everything on somebody. What a great way to start a letter – what a great way to live your life. Do you think you can live that way towards other people? What will help you to do so?