

# Paul's Letter, Address, Benediction and Gratitude

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[ 0 : 00 ] Speaking to rely upon the Lord's reading, let us look again at the portion of scripture read, the first epistle of all the apostles to the Thessalonians, chapter 1 at the beginning of the chapter.

Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, grace be unto you and peace.

From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

And we shall seek to consider these words. First of all, the kind of letter we have here.

And secondly, the kind of address to which the apostle sends it.

[ 1 : 34 ] Thirdly, the kind of benediction he bestows upon these people. And fourthly, the kind of gratitude he evinces for them.

The kind of letter, the kind of address, the kind of benediction, and the kind of gratitude.

The New Testament was written at a time in the world's history when the art of letter writing was at its most developed.

In all probability at its most developed state anyway. And the New Testament writers availed themselves of this art of letter writing.

As we all know, a great part of the New Testament was written in letter four.

[ 3 : 01 ] It is interesting to realize that there was no organized post. No national post at that time.

If you wanted to send it by the hand of a messenger.

If you were rich and if you were affluent enough, you sent it by the hand of a slave. And the usual procedure was that that slave waited on the person to whom the letter had been sent.

Until that person replied. And in that way, you were fairly sure of an answer.

Many people write letters and the recipients are very slow and slothful to answer. There are many kinds of letters as we all know.

[ 4 : 09 ] Business letters and so on and so on. But there is a special kind of letter. Which is called a love letter.

We all know something of the input of that. The lover is addressing the beloved in terms of affection.

And no matter what other things he or she may dwell on. In the letter, the pervading tone of the letter must be in terms of affection or it cannot be a love letter.

The letters of St. Paul to the churches can be termed love letters of the most eminent sort.

The great saint. He loved all God's children. And he loved all men.

[ 5 : 32 ] This did not mean that he did not castigate them.

Even boat items of all people. Music Too much of grace The golden point of awe and love.

As someone has said of love. Love can discover the least progress When the other graces cannot discern it And yet Love demands the most. There are two sides.

man the most that is of the nature of love he had to castigate them for their aberrations for their faults in terms of the faith he had to put right their errors in theology and in practice and we must remember that this is a fact if there are errors in theology they will show themselves in practice you would think the way some people some people think that they think that if their practice is all right their theology need not exist errors in theology show themselves in practice he had to chastise them for their over strictness and for their lack of strictness for even as he blamed them as he found fault with them he loved them with a great fervent love this is what he means he's talking in terms of love when he tells the church at corinth for i was jealous over you with godly jealousy what is godly jealousy it is love at its uttermost that is what godly jealousy is love at its uttermost the uttermost intensity of love jealousy is love we have this set before us in the song of songs for love is strong as death jealousy that is intense as love many people think wrongly of that they think of jealousy as something bad jealousy is jealousy is wondrous in spiritual terms jealousy is unfruitful in unspiritual terms jealousy is unfruitful in unspiritual terms love as strong as death jealousy is cruel as the grave jealousy is unfruitful in unspiritual terms of love and the cause of love and the cause of fire which have our most vehement flame we must remember we must seek to know what these words mean the church spoke them to our sovereign lord what was her request she was speaking in the spirit of prophecy and no doubt she was not realizing except in very small measure what she was saying she was saying this set me as a seal upon thy heart as a seal upon thine arm she was saying to her sovereign god she was saying to her sovereign lord come and fulfill your promises

come into my nature and die for me that's what she was asking you can't put a seal on the arm of god unless he becomes what he is not no impression can be put on god in terms of suffering or feeling as we know it god is infinitely above these things and we must never think that when we do not find things in god which are in us that that makes god in any wise the less he is infinitely and eternally above all these things and what was the main reason for paul's remonstrations to the corinthian church what was wrong why was he jealous over them with godly jealousy well if you read the context there it's very interesting they had relegated love they had relegated love they had relegated love they had sent it into the second division or the third division they had relegated it the greatest of the graces to a subordinate position they had put knowledge in place of it and as a result their principles and their practice their principles and their practices were out of joint at this very time that the apostle was wrestling for them before god and remonstrating with them for their malpractices they were putting the emphasis on show on emptiness that's what shows emptiness they were putting the emphasis on show on appearances on vain glory they were following not the simplicity which is in christ jesus but the duplicity which is in men and let us remember this this desire for vainglory is coupled with something terrible it is never alone desire for vainglory is never alone it has certain companions be not desirers of vainglory provoking one another envying one another provocation in all its worst senses and envy in all its worst senses are the constant companions of vainglory this letter to the thessalonians

[ 14:13 ] is in a special sense a love letter the first letter paul wrote the very first and we see the great heart of the great apostle laid open the great heart and we see fragrance is suing from that great heart just as we see fragrance is suing from mary's wondrous deed in haste mary broke the box of ointment she did it in haste the ointment the ointment would come naturally through the small orifice the box but that was not enough for mary she broke it in a profusion of anointing she broke the box of ointment over his head who is the reservoir of all fragrance the ointment how little her deed was understood waste said judas the traitor and waste they got those who were around and it was one of the most glorious deeds ever performed the rest the reservoir of all fragrance himself the mountain of mary and the hill of frankincense that's what your lord is he is a mountain of mary he is a hill of frankincense and these are only poor symbols he is an infinite mountain of mary and an infinite hill of frankincense and paul here he pulls out the affections of his holy soul towards an assembly of christians who were themselves preeminent for their exercise of faith and love and i doubt that their preeminence made his efforts his spiritual efforts all the more wondrous they were eminent for their faith and for their love and for their hope secondly then very very briefly the kind of address that he sends this letter to the we notice we notice that paul really addresses this letter with a very special address these believers they were situated in thessalonica that's where they were staying but that was not their real address and the question for me and for you is where is our own real address

our homes that's not a real address address and if we do not have this address we have no address where is their real address then where does this love letter find them it's very plainly said before you here in god the father and in the lord jesus christ what an address in spiritual places in christ jesus and let no one think that there is any kind of flattery in this usage this is the magnificent language of god the holy spirit's inspiration this is an address of union this is an address of communion and this very union and communion was by the agency of the holy spirit he uplifts the church what an uplifting in spiritual places in christ jesus that's where they are found in spiritual places in christ jesus and this description contains also the spiritual union of these members one with another when they were brought to this nearness of relationship the church to god in christ they were in him compacted together i'm using the words of scripture they were compacted together what is the church the church the church the church is a society of men and women selected and separated from all others by holy causes for spiritual and i shall see that again i shall see that again what is the church it is a society of men and women selected and separated from all others by holy causes for spiritual and thirdly then the kind of benediction that he bequeaths on these believers in this church these thessalonians they were needy people they were poor people people with great spiritual needs they were a people

broken in heart with a real sense of unworthiness of the least of god's mercies oh that god would view this company of ours as such a people broken in heart with a real sense of our unworthiness of the least of god's mercy are you wondering that god is not coming nearer to you get rid of all your own worthiness and he will come nearer to you are you wondering that for years there seems to be such a distance between him and you and you rid yourself of what is separating the gospel of jesus christ bids you come empty open your hand open your hand and release whatever is a keeping you away from the utmost of god's mercy the apostle met this real sense of need with this great benediction grace be unto you and peace from god our father and the lord jesus christ nothing else can meet our needs but grace and peace what does what does grace have for us it has all spiritual mercies for us all spiritual mercies as these originate in the love of god and besides us they are stamped god's mercies are stamped with infinite condescension have you seen the stamp on god's mercies they are stamped with infinite condescension and they are bestowed liberally on everyone who is in real need and on everyone who is really unworthy and peace peace points us not only to blessing but to the sum total of all blessing blessing which has its center in reconciliation in reconciliation with god and blessing which has its center in another place reconciliation reconciliation with god and in the

conscience this note has largely gone out of preaching in our day preaching on conscience the blood must speak there speaking with reverence it must speak there with the same force as it speaks at the right hand of the majesty in the conscience and there are vast treasures of spiritual good comprehended under these terms and I shall just mention a few of them there are vast treasures to be understood under these two headings grace and peace from god the father and from the lord jesus christ first of all there is divine unction of teaching thou has taught us that thee theologian that is thou thyself thou has taught us that if thou thyself do not teach us we shall forever be without knowledge without real knowledge we shall be untaught divine unction we have an unction from the holy one and we know all things the spirit of god is the unction he is the teacher divine teaching fresh discoveries of god how wonderful this is fresh discovery discoveries of the almighty in his nature and in his perfection grace and peace imply clearer views of the love of god and of the mysteries of redemption grace and peace they imply or they carry with them clearer clearer views of the love of god as we have said and clearer views of the work of god in believers own souls would you not like this clearer views of the work of god in your own soul clearer views of the dispensations of providence how marvelously his providence affects us when we are rightly inclined toward him we

can read him in the utmost adversity when we are properly inclined to him we can read his mercy when the rod is most upon us clearer views of his providence and something else clearer views of the paths of duty there is no way of coming by these but by good grace and peace of day they imply stronger impressions of pardoning mercy they imply victory over temptation we can never win but as grace and peace take hold of us victory over temptation ability and success in

[ 31 : 41 ] Christian endeavors how often we fail because we apply an arm of flesh where we should apply the arm of the spirit ability and success in endeavors to glorify God and to win other souls strength for suffering in the cause of Christ and joy and consolation in the prospect of eternity would be a fool who would not desire these things such then were the blessings which God's servant wished on God's children that they would receive these in ever increasing abundance from the Father and the

Son through the operation of the Spirit us to God's we must remember this that the God head as subsisting in the person of the Father is the original spring of all these blessings The Father is the fountain of divinity The mediation of God's Son in our nature Is the channel through which these blessings reach us And they are wrought in us by the Holy Spirit Remember this, do you want to view The mysterious distinction of persons in the Godhead?

Do you want to view it? Do you really want to view it? Well, it is more deeply engraved on the plan of redemption Than on any other divine work You will see the mystery of the Trinity Engraved on the work of redemption As you will not see it on any other divine work This is no wonder And yet it is all wonder For the work of redemption Is the triune God's masterpiece God has a masterpiece The work of redemption is his masterpiece Fourthly then The kind of gratitude

He bestows On these saints In verses 2 and 3 The apostle hastens To open his heart still further to this church In order to confirm their faith To arouse their gratitude to God And to secure their obedience Everything with a purpose To confirm their faith To arouse their gratitude And to secure their obedience We notice The sincerity And the constancy Of Christian love Wildly men They congratulate each other With more or less flattery But what would such congratulations avail

What will they avail at the tribunal of God Worldly men's congratulations Of each other What will they avail at God's tribunal They are just the froth of worldly vanity How different love How different that love is Which God has set in his church It flows From the eternal fountain of divine love And there is a permanency And there is a stability Stamped Upon the holy exercises of love Thoughts of love Words of love Deeds of love

[ 36 : 38 ] Must flow from a renewed soul From A person who is in Christ Jesus Old things Old things are passed away Behold All things are become new New With the newness Of eternal love And thus Spiritual friendships Are subject Neither to the stroke of time Nor even of death Do you know anything about a friendship Which is Neither subject to the stroke of time Nor the stroke of death But the best affections Of the worldly wise Are worth

Very very little In the day of his death His thoughts of friendship Perish forever Oh What can we do Unless we know The friendship of God Oh friends That we would embrace it We notice We notice also How In his ecstasy Of affection Paul Passes over The things of this world In silence He doesn't even mention them This silence Condemns All the pride Of worldly glory And it confounds All the reasoning Of carnal men

Paul was certainly Not lacking in thanks To God And men For temporal favors He knew how to thank He knew how to appeal For a collection It was in the midst Of an appeal For a collection That this great verse Was written For ye know The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ Though he was rich Yet for your sakes He became poor That ye through his poverty Might be rich He knew how to make A spiritual appeal For temporal things He was not lacking

In gratitude To God Or to men But his mind Was too full Of more excellent things And that crowded out Thoughts on the Transient things Of time Alas for us How we have to confess That we are far too much Taken up with the Passing things of life And far too little With what is really Permanent What is eternal Far too little With the things Which should really Engross them And we must remember That all Every single thing That related to The temporal circumstances Of these Thessalonians Is long since

Past Is long since past And buried in oblivion But these spiritual engagements They are eternally fresh And green And imbued with a fragrance Which will last forever And finally In our word We notice The emphasis The apostles On the work of grace In believers You will hear Eminent men In our day Disclaiming The resurrection Of the Lord In personal In personal terms They say Oh that's not What it has to do With at all It's got a Cosmic significance Whatever they mean By that But they would do away

[ 41 : 43 ] With the personal element Or it doesn't have to do With salvation as such Your own personal salvation No the emphasis is wrong They say If it's placed there It must be placed In other In cosmic situations And so on How wrong they are It is wrong To denigrate The work of grace At any time If we really value The Christ of God We will value him Equally In his work in believers As we value him In the sovereign decrees of God This was Paul's view Of the gospel He found it A source of constant rejoicing And thanksgiving

Whenever he saw Or heard of signs Of God's grace And progress in God's grace In any people And in times of revival This has been proved Those who have been Taken up with suspicion And keeping at arm's length They have lost Even God's people Who have entertained Notions like that They have lost Whenever he saw Or heard signs Of God's grace And progress in God's grace In any people He rejoiced And prayed all the more When he witnessed These spiritual effects Experienced in their souls And made manifest In their conduct

At some other time We might find Time to speak on the third verse Work of faith And the labor of love And the patience of hope Amen Let us pray O Lord Help us to humble ourselves Help us to worship For eternal riches Eternal provision Wrought mightily Wondrously In terms of redemption By God in our nature Help us to worship

For his name Say amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen