



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 15, 2023

The Lord be with you.

I have something very wonderful for you today, and it's all wrapped up in a little verse of scripture, 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 2. Here it is "May grace and peace, be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of our Lord, Jesus Christ, grace and peace." Well, you probably recognize that as a usual greeting in the New Testament, Grace and peace to you. In fact, 18 times we hear this greeting or a variation of it. Paul begins all of his letters with grace and peace. So does Peter and the Apostle John begins a little book of Second John with it, as well as the Book of the Revelation. For you see, The New Testament wants grace and peace to be the air that we breathe, to be the atmosphere that we live in, grace and peace. But notice here that from Peter is not only grace and peace, rather his greeting is, may grace and peace be yours in abundance. In abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. As we know more and more of God as our Father and the Lord Jesus, we will have grace and peace overflowing. It will. It will change our lives.

Now, what is grace? Well, I don't think I can improve on the old definition of grace as God's un-merited favor for you and me. Grace comes from the loving heart of God, such that grace is undeserved, it's unearned, it's unearnable. Grace cannot be bought or deserved, if it could, it would not be grace. God shows you and me His favor without any strings attached. Grace is totally antithetical to earning or deserving. I love the amazing words of the Apostle Paul in Romans Chapter 5:20, where he says, Where sin increased grace abounded all the more. Someone has said that grace is like water, that it seeks the lowest point, and that's why we sing Amazing Grace. So here, Peter, prays for his readers, may make grace and peace be yours in abundance. Now, he said a little bit about grace. Let's look for a moment at peace, and I wonder here as Peter says, peace and abundance. I wonder if Peter is remembering that first Easter evening when, after having denied his Lord Jesus three times, he and other disciples, it says, they're huddled for fear. Let me read John Chapter 20, "when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. After he said this, he showed him his hands on his side, then the disciples rejoice when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you." Jesus doesn't say, shame on you guys were bailing out on me, but rather twice Jesus says, Peace, be with you. That is peace, that soothes a guilty conscience. Peace that comforts a broken heart. Jesus did say that He gives Peace, not as the world gives. This is peace with God through Jesus Christ. It is a piece of conscience, peace of mind, as you



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cast all your cares on to Jesus, Paul says that as you cast all your cares on to Jesus in Philippians 4:7. He says, The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

As we take our burdens to Jesus, we can have a peace that is beyond human ability to understand, as Jesus guard it says He guards our hearts and mind. Then in Colossians 3:15, Paul says, Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Wherever you are in your life today, whatever is happening, let the peace of Christ rule your heart. God wants you to live in the joy of God's favor for you. And the peace that then flows from that, I love how Peter begins his little letter with these words, may grace and peace be yours in abundance. In the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. The early Christians loved to greet one another with the words, grace and peace be yours through our Lord, Jesus Christ. And that is my prayer for you today. Make grace and peace be yours in abundance.

So I close with that wondrous benediction that God commanded be spoken over his people in Deuteronomy chapter 6, as in the midst of the wilderness wanderings of Israel, God commanded to these words, be spoken over his people. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.