

Farewell

Scripture Reading — Ephesians 6:21-24

Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Ephesians 6:24 —

Greetings of hello and goodbye are expressions of -civility in conversation. But our words can often become ordinary. An impersonal greeting can simply be a way of acknowledging another's presence as you walk by.

Expressions that offer a blessing are more meaningful and powerful. Paul began his letter to the Ephesians with "Grace and peace to you ..." and he ends it with "Grace to all who love ..." So Paul doesn't just sign his letter. He brackets it with prayers for grace. Paul desires that the church members in Ephesus experience the reality of God's grace in their lives.

There is a lesson in this for all of us. To wish someone well is more thoughtful when it is for something substantial and meaningful. Only people who know the depths of God's grace in their own lives can meaningfully wish it for someone else. It is a wish to acknowledge that God is sovereign and never absent from us. Having God's grace-filled presence does not mean that we will be perfect in our conduct or that everything will always go our way. But it does mean that we come to realize "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28) so that we can focus on loving "our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love." All of us are encouraged to live life in that awareness.

Grace and peace to all of you!

Prayer

Thank you, dear Lord, for your grace-filled presence in the lives of all who follow your Son, Jesus Christ. Empower us by your Holy Spirit. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

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