

Hello?

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 1:2 (NIV)

Language is the tool of my trade. Words are what I give out to communicate the grace of God to my listeners. Hence I listen carefully to the speech of others and I seek to choose my words carefully as I speak on behalf of God.

One of the more amusing aspects of speaking in the English language in our culture are the silly words of greeting and farewell. For example we say “Hello” when we greet someone. We say, “Good bye” when we depart from someone. Most people have not a clue from where these words came or what they originally meant.

In Jesus’ time when you came into a home you would not say, “Hello” you would say something like, “Peace be upon your house.” (Luke 10:5-6). A response might be, “And peace be on you.”

There was a richness of expression in the words

of Jewish people that we Gentiles lack completely. So long was the greeting of someone that Jesus had to forbid the disciples from greeting people as they travelled, such was the urgency of spreading the message (Luke 10:4).

As we read the greeting of Paul to the Philippian church we see something of this rich greeting. Paul desires that the readers have “grace and peace from God”. What a prayer is to be seen in this greeting. What is important to Paul is that people experience the grace of God in their everyday life.

In all of Paul’s greetings these words are found. And as we consider that Paul designates the source of grace and peace as coming from the Father and the Son, we certainly concur.

All the grace we need in life ultimately comes from God Himself. The word “grace” refers to unmerited favour

from God. Grace addresses us as needy.

Paul puts grace first and does so wisely. As we experience the grace of God, peace like a river floods our hearts and minds. In order to have peace we must first have the grace of God in our lives.

We know that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

It might be embarrassing for us to greet people in the way it was done in Bible times but imagine the impact on those who took the time to get beyond the “foreign” sounding greeting and realized exactly what you said? Your friends do not have a clue what the word hello means so why not greet them with something much more meaningful?