

Ephesians 6:21-24
Sharing in God's Grace, Together

Main idea: God gives us peace, love, faith, and grace to keep us strong and united as His people.

After the Civil War, our country was still very much divided.

- Both the North and the South carried deep wounds and bitterness toward one another.
- They each needed to learn to show and receive grace to rebuild relationships and communities.
- In the same way, as a church, we are called to share in God's grace together.¹

Read Ephesians 6:21-24

After six chapters of rich teaching and practical challenges, Paul closes his letter.

- In chapter 1, Paul talked about who we are in Christ. [Ephesians 1:3] [Ephesians 1:7]
- In chapters 2 and 3, Paul talked about how Jesus brings us together. [Ephesians 2:19] [Ephesians 3:21]
- Moving to application in chapter 4, Paul challenged us to walk worthy of our calling. [Ephesians 4:2]
- Then in chapters 5 and 6, we were challenged to live out our faith in relationships with others, like our family. [Ephesians 5:21] [Ephesians 6:18]
- So throughout all of Ephesians, we keep being reminded that our faith is to be lived out in community.²
- So as he wraps up his letter, Paul also closes not with cold formality, but with blessings and love to the church.

Paul reminds us that we don't walk this journey alone; we share it together under God's grace. (v. 21-22)

- So Paul sends Tychicus to share news about him and to encourage hearts.
- Paul calls Tychicus faithful; a faithful Christian is going to encourage others in their faith.
- The Christian life needs others in it; we need each other's encouragement. [graph]
- We all need encouragers, and I think we're called to be encouragers. [1 Thessalonians 5:11]
- God uses each of us to lift each other up.³

Then Paul tells us the kinds of things we should encourage each other with. (v. 23)

- Our peace and love comes from God the Father and our Lord Jesus.⁴
- As we rest in Christ, we can have true peace, love, and faith.⁵
 - Jesus calming the storm is a great example of this. [Mark 4:36-40]
 - True peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ.⁶
 - True love comes from faith. [Galatians 5:6]
- Ask yourself: am I a source of God's peace and love to others?
 - God calls us to be peacemakers, showing true love.⁷
 - In a world full of conflict, God gives us peace. [John 14:27]

We have this kind of peace as we rest in the grace of God. (v. 24)

- Grace is the last reminder that Paul left with the Ephesians.
- Grace is given to those who love Jesus with an undying love.⁸

¹ Ephesians 4:7, Philippians 1:7

² Also Ephesians 4:15-16, which shows that it's all about growing into Jesus.

³ Galatians 6:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

⁴ 2 Thessalonians 3:16

⁵ Matthew 11:28-29, Philippians 4:7

⁶ John 16:33

⁷ Matthew 5:9

⁸ John 14:21

- That's how God loves us: He's passionate and persistent in His love, and He never gives up.⁹
- Several years ago, my mom gave us this puzzle. [photo]
 - It took a lot of persistence to put it together. In fact, some of you helped with it.
 - This was also while Trista worked in our home, and sometimes she worked overnight.
 - Even though it seemed like it would never end, we all kept at it, and eventually it serves as a reminder to us of working hard together and never giving up.
- This is how God loves us, and this is how we're also called to love God. [John 14:15]
 - That's kind of scary, because I know how weak my faith is.¹⁰
 - And yet, having an undying love is less about perfection, and more about direction.¹¹
 - As we continue to rest in God's love for us, we continue to love Him. [1 John 4:19]
- No matter how weak we feel, grace is enough to keep us loving Jesus and one another.¹²

⁹ Psalm 136:26, Jeremiah 31:3, Lamentations 3:22-23, Romans 8:38-39

¹⁰ Psalm 73:26, 2 Corinthians 12:9

¹¹ Micah 6:8, Matthew 22:37-38

¹² 2 Corinthians 12:9