

Readings

Scripture

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:
² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 1:1-2 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

In *The Cry of the Soul*, Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III describe why it is so important to listen to, and deal with, emotions:

Ignoring our emotions is turning our back on reality; listening to our emotions ushers us into reality. And reality is where we meet God... *Emotions are the language of the soul.* They are the cry that gives the heart a voice... However, we often turn a deaf ear—through emotional denial, distortion, or disengagement. We strain out anything disturbing in order to gain tenuous control of our inner world. We are frightened and ashamed of what leaks into our consciousness. *In neglecting our intense emotions, we are false to ourselves and lose a wonderful opportunity to know God.* We forget that change comes through brutal honesty and vulnerability before God. [emphases added]

- *Emotionally Healthy Church* by Peter Scazzero, p. 55

In the rich language of George MacDonald he says,

“The soul in harmony with his Maker has more life, a larger being, than the soul consumed with cares. The sage has a larger life than the clown. The poet is more alive than the man whose life flows out that money may come in. The man who loves his fellow is infinitely more alive than he whose endeavor is to exalt himself above his neighbor. The man who strives to be better in his being is more alive than he who longs for the praise of many.

But the man to whom God is all in all, who feels his life roots hid with Christ in God, who knows himself the inheritor of all wealth and worlds and ages, yes, of power essential and in itself, that man has begun to be alive indeed.”

– George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God*

Sermon Outline

Grace and Peace to You
Ephesians 1:1-2

The Theology of Tears
Matt Uldrich

The Author

- Apostle
- By the will of God

The Recipients

- Saints
- In Ephesus
- Faithful
- In Christ

Grace and Peace

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What are some of the greatest benefits of God’s grace to you?
- How does the reality of his grace make a difference in how you see yourself?
- In Christ you are a saint. When, and how, does this truth get lived out in your everyday life? When in your day, or week, are you most tempted to forget this?
- Share an example of when you experienced the peace of Christ Jesus.