

# “Final words:” Ephesians 6:21-24

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost – August 29, 2021

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## Scripture reading – Eph 6:21-24

<sup>21</sup> “Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. <sup>22</sup> I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. <sup>23</sup> Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.”

## Exposition of vv. 21-24

- Structure: vv. 20-22 – personal remarks; vv. 23-24 – concluding benediction
- Personal remarks. **“Tychicus”** (Tu-chee-kos). Paul’s missionary colleague from Asia (Colossae?) mentioned 5x in the NT: Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12. Paul refers to him as a “beloved brother” and “faithful minister in the Lord.”
- Concluding benediction. Common to Paul’s letters (cf: Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:13; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18). Paul would also open his letters with a benediction (e.g., 1:2). Paul is invoking four blessings here: peace, love, faith and grace, all of which have been major themes in this letter.
  1. **“peace to the brothers and sisters.”** Peace, *eirene*, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shalom*: tranquility, harmony, security, safety, prosperity, joy, thriving, flourishing. This is at the heart of the Levitical priestly blessing (Num 6:24-26). It’s a major theme of this letter: Christ is our peace and has made us one with God and each other (2:13-14). It reflects God’s general desire for his people.
  2. **“love... from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”** The love, *agape*, that Paul invokes is sourced in the heart of both the Father and the Son, as Paul makes clear throughout the letter (Father: Eph 1:4; 2:4; 5:1; Son: 3:19; 5:2,25,29). This is consistent with other NT texts, in which the Father is said to love us (e.g., Jn 3:16; 16:26-27) and the Son is said to love us (e.g., Jn 15:9, 13-14). Cf. Eph 3:14-19.

3. **“faith.”** Faith is needed to access these blessings and is itself a blessing, so Paul prays for it to be ours. They began their journey with faith (1:13) and they are to continue growing in faith (4:13-15). Faith, *pistis*, is “believing loyalty:” a posture of trust in God and his Son, Jesus, involving our intellect, volition and emotions. Faith shields us from the enemy’s “flaming arrows” (Eph 6:16). God delights in our faith and encourages us to be immovable and resolute in our confidence in him (Heb 11:6; 1 Cor 15:58).
  
4. **“Grace.”** Grace, *charis*, is God’s unearned friendship, favor and help. This letter started with grace (1:2), ends with grace (6:24) and is saturated with grace throughout (1:6,7;2:5,7,8; 3:2,7,8;4:7). In this respect, it is just like the Christian life (cf. Gal 3:3). Eph 2.8-9 is one of NTs clearest statements about our salvation being based on grace as opposed to works.

## Holy Communion