

1 Corinthians 16:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Analysis

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you—Hē charis tou kyriou Iēsou (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ). Paul's typical closing benediction invokes charis (χάρις, "grace")—God's unmerited favor, the foundation of all Christian existence. After correcting Corinthian pride, factionalism, immorality, and doctrinal error, Paul ends with grace, not condemnation. The letter that exposed sin and demanded repentance concludes by pointing to God's gracious provision in Christ.

Every Pauline letter begins and ends with grace (Romans 1:7, 16:20; 1 Corinthians 1:3, 16:23; 2 Corinthians 1:2, 13:14; etc.). This inclusio frames all theology and ethics within grace. Correcting Corinthian errors wasn't legalistic moralism but calling them back to grace-empowered transformation. The grace of Jesus Christ, not human effort, produces holy living, spiritual maturity, and church unity.

Historical Context

Ancient letters typically ended with "farewell" (errōso). Paul Christianizes the epistolary form, replacing conventional farewell with theological benediction. This benediction became standard in Christian worship liturgy. The consistent grace-emphasis distinguishes Christianity from works-based religion: transformation comes through grace, not human achievement. Even corrective letters drip with grace.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul end a heavily corrective letter with a grace benediction rather than a warning or threat?
2. How does framing everything—theology, ethics, correction—within grace change Christianity's character?
3. What's the relationship between Paul's corrections (chapters 1-15) and his final grace benediction?

Interlinear Text

ἡ	χάρις	τοῦ	κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ	Χριστοῦ	μεθ'	ὑμῶν
G3588	The grace	G3588	of our Lord	G2962	Jesus	Christ	be with
	G5485			G2424		G5547	G5216

Additional Cross-References

Romans 16:20 (Grace): And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Romans 16:23 (Parallel theme): Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.