

2 John 1:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Analysis

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. John offers a triadic blessing: "grace, mercy, and peace"—divine gifts that encompass the fullness of Christian experience. Grace (Greek *charis*, χάρις) is God's unmerited favor, the foundation of salvation and source of spiritual enablement. Mercy (Greek *eleos*, ἔλεος) is God's compassionate withholding of deserved judgment and provision of undeserved kindness. Peace (Greek *eirēnē*, εἰρήνη) translates Hebrew *shalom*, signifying wholeness, reconciliation with God, and spiritual well-being.

These blessings flow "from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ"—a clear affirmation of Christ's deity. The coordinate structure places Father and Son on equal footing as the single source of divine blessing. John then adds the remarkable phrase "the Son of the Father" (Greek *tou huiou tou patros*, τοῦ νιοῦ τοῦ πατρός), unique in the New Testament. This emphasizes Christ's eternal relationship with the Father, grounding His identity not in earthly ministry but in eternal sonship.

The phrase "in truth and love" (Greek *en alētheia kai agapē*, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ) defines the sphere or atmosphere in which these divine blessings operate. Grace, mercy, and peace are not abstract concepts but realities experienced within the framework of revealed truth and divine love. This prepositional phrase also introduces the epistle's major theme: authentic Christianity cannot separate

doctrinal truth from loving practice—both are essential, both must coexist. The order is significant: truth precedes love, providing the foundation and boundaries for genuine Christian affection.

Historical Context

First-century Greco-Roman correspondence typically began with a brief greeting (*chairein*, "greetings"). Jewish letters often invoked peace (*shalom*). Christian epistles transformed this convention into theological affirmations, declaring the source and nature of true blessing. Paul's letters typically include grace and peace; John adds mercy, perhaps reflecting his pastoral concern for struggling believers facing deception and persecution.

The explicit identification of Jesus as "the Son of the Father" directly counters early Christological heresies. Gnostic teachers denied either Christ's full deity (Ebionism) or His genuine humanity (Docetism). John's formula affirms both: Christ is fully God (equal source of divine blessing with the Father) and distinct from the Father (the Son). This was crucial as the church formulated Trinitarian orthodoxy against various heretical reductions.

The linking of "truth and love" addresses a specific first-century crisis. Some Christians, opposing heresy, became harsh and censorious, sacrificing love for doctrinal purity. Others, emphasizing love and unity, compromised with false teaching. John insists both must coexist—truth without love produces cold orthodoxy; love without truth enables destructive error. His greeting sets the epistle's agenda: defining faithful Christianity as simultaneously committed to apostolic truth and genuine love.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does understanding Christ as the eternal Son of the Father shape our experience of grace, mercy, and peace?
2. What practical steps can churches take to maintain both doctrinal fidelity and genuine love in their community life?
3. In what ways might we reduce grace, mercy, and peace to therapeutic benefits rather than receiving them as divine gifts?

Interlinear Text

ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν χάρις ἔλεος εἰρήνη παρὰ Θεοῦ
be with you Grace mercy and peace from God
G2071 G3326 G5216 G5485 G1656 G1515 G3844 G2316

πατρός, καὶ παρὰ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ νιοῦ
of the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son
G3962 G2532 G3844 G2962 G2424 G5547 G3588 G5207

τοῦ πατρός, ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ
of the Father in truth and love
G3588 G3962 G1722 G225 G2532 G26

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:10 (Love): Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 1:7 (Grace): To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:14 (Grace): And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:2 (Grace): Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Galatians 5:6 (Love): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

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