

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

This Sunday concludes the observance of Lent...a time for each of us one to spiritually prepare to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection; to personally ponder Jesus' perfect life, his innocent death, his resurrection each. Holy week is this coming week. Followers of Jesus look forward in anticipation to this celebration, even excitement.

Except, this year is different. Anxiety persists. Fear is projected. In this sinful world it would, if it could, own us. "Unless I shelter in place I may die. Unless the economy opens up I may be ruined...and die." But, in faith we seize fear, examine it and declare that fear is never the evidence of God's absence. Rather, God is in all of it saying: "Grace and Peace to you from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Tanner Olson is a Grace and Peace advocate. Tanner is a poet and a speaker. *[Many of our youth know him from LCMS National Youth Gatherings.]* Tanner invites people to inhale Grace and exhale Peace. *So, here we go. Deeply inhale grace...and slowly exhale His peace...again...one more time.*

Brief teaching on Grace and Peace.

Romans 8.1: *'...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.'*  
*'...there is **NOW** [at this present time]*  
***NO** [God-has-shut-the-door] on*  
***CONDEMNATION** [a guilty verdict punishable by death]*  
*for those who are **IN CHRIST JESUS.**'*

**IN CHRIST JESUS** – The Apostle Paul uses 'in Christ' 80+ times in his Epistles, 20+ times in Ephesians One. Here are the first three.

1.3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has 'blessed us in Christ' with every spiritual blessing*

1.4 *For He 'chose us in Him' before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in His presence.*

1.7 *'In Him' we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us.*

2 Corinthians 5.17 has this: *Therefore if anyone is 'in Christ', he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!*

*'In Christ...*

- *The Old has passed away* – God has shut the door on a verdict that says 'guilty' punishable by death.
- *The new has come* – God's verdict is 'not guilty' and His gift is 'life' in Christ.

### Inhaling God's Grace – Exhaling God's Peace

- Grace is God leaning toward us in Christ because He wants to bless us.
  - Through the Means of Grace; God, through Bible, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, leans toward us to forgive sin and restore us to a life of faith/service.
- Peace is God's gift of wholeness that results in quietness and rest.
  - It is not the absence of Covid-19, nor is it a restored economy.
  - It is quietness and rest in knowing the God is present with grace and peace.
- Grace and Peace in the Covenant of Baptism. Luther: *What does baptism mean for daily living? It signifies that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sin and evil lust; and again, a new man daily arise who shall live with God in righteousness and purity forever.*

### Being Grace and Peace people.

- God leads us daily into His Word, and, then, daily into our world to be known by love, to live by faith and be a voice of hope.
- Said another way: daily Inhaling God's Grace and Exhaling God's peace in those places where He has planted us.
- Purposefully engaging baptismal life of putting off sin and putting on Christ.
- Identifying, praying for and reaching out to that one person you know who will most benefit from Inhaling God's grace and Exhaling God's peace. [Print out what I've put into the sermon link on the website. Use Inhaling God's Grace – Exhaling God's peace as your conversational guide.]
- Inhale God's Grace...Exhale His peace.

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### **Announcement of the Day**

P: The lessons this last Sunday of Lent foreshadow Holy Week. The Romans passage declares 'in Christ we are set free from the law of sin and death.' The same Sovereign Lord tells Ezekiel 'I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life,' and assures Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' Holy Week reminds us that nothing bad in life is ever the evidence of God's absence. Instead, into every evil of life God brings Grace and Peace to those who are 'in Christ Jesus,' and through them into the world desperate for Good News. Listen for the Good Friday and Easter Sunday themes from the lessons for this day.