

03. 1 Timothy 1:1-2



1 Timothy 1:1

Paul, an apostle of the Messiah Jesus

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: ‘in the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, every one of God’s promises is a “Yes”’ (2 Corinthians 1:20). For thirty years Paul has given his all to proclaim Jesus to all and sundry, to Jew and Gentile, in Asia Minor and Greece. It has been his assurance of the love of Jesus for him that has sustained him, and now, as the time of full communion approaches, he looks forward to the promise of life that is ‘in the Messiah Jesus’. It is this life that has been the subject of all his preaching and writing, for the gift of the Spirit is to draw us into the communion of love with God which Jesus himself is experiencing. There is no other life worthy of the name. In this letter to Timothy he speaks of it as ‘a promise for both the present life and the life to come’ (1 Timothy 4:8). Paul has lived ‘in the Messiah Jesus’. He looks forward to the fullness of the promise in ‘the life to come’.

1 Timothy 1:1

by the command of God our Saviour and of the Messiah Jesus our hope

Salvation is to be a major theme of the letter. There is a close connection between salvation and hope. Jesus is our hope. It is he who revealed to us God's will to draw us all into full communion of love in a life that transcends death, a communion which he himself is now enjoying. Furthermore, the communion which we now have with him is a pledge that we will one day join him in glory. We recall Paul's words to the Colossians: 'God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is the Messiah in you, the hope of glory' (1:27).

1 Timothy 1:2

To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith.
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father
and the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

The customary Greek greeting was χαίρειν (see Acts 15:23; 23:26). Paul uses a similar sounding word, χάρις (**grace**) – a greeting that reminds the Christian assembly of God’s action in their lives in drawing them to share the life of the risen Jesus – a life of communion in love with his Father through the shared bond of the Holy Spirit. Paul’s prayer for Timothy is that he will continue to experience the graciousness of God pouring out his love upon him.

Mercy: ἐλεος is used to translate three different Hebrew words.

1. ḥanan, which speaks of God's gracious care and all the ways in which God looks after us:

‘Gracious is the Lord, and righteous’ (Psalm 116:5). ‘The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace’ (Numbers 6:24-26).

2. raḥam, which speaks of the tenderness of God's love:

‘I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us, and the great favour to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his covenant love’ (Isaiah 63:7). ‘The covenant love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning’ (Lamentations 3:22-23).

3. **hesed**. There are innumerable texts in which ἐλεος translates **hesed** which places the focus on God's faithfulness to the commitment of love which he has made to us:

‘I will not take my steadfast love from David’ (2 Samuel 7:15).

‘I the Lord your God show steadfast love to the thousandth generation’ (Exodus 20:6).

‘With everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer ... my steadfast love shall not depart from you’ (Isaiah 54:8,10).

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father
and the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

The customary Jewish greeting was shalom (‘**peace**’ εἰρήνη). Paul repeats this greeting here, for his prayer is that Timothy will experience the peace that is the fruit of grace: the fullness of life that happens when we contribute our gifts to others in harmonious communion.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father

1. The father is the source of life

Jesus calls God 'Abba' (as in Mark 14:36), for knows that everything he is and everything he does has its source in God.

'Just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself' (John 5:26).

'For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist' (1 Corinthians 8:6).

'God gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Romans 4:17).

1 John 1:1-4

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of **life** – this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our **communion** is **with the Father** and with his Son Jesus the Messiah. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Father-Mother

Jesus wants each of us to know that God is the source of all we are and all we do. In his culture this is beautifully expressed in acknowledging God as 'Father.' In the ancient world, and in the medieval world, indeed right through to the beginning of the modern era, the role of the woman in conception was unknown. The father was thought to be the sole source of human life. It was the mother's role to nurture this life. It was not realised that she contributes to it.

Knowing this it is insufficient for us today to acknowledge God as 'Father'. We now know that the mother has a complementary and essential role in procreation. In fidelity to what Jesus revealed about God we acknowledge God as 'Father-Mother.'

2. The father acknowledges his children

‘I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me’ (2 Samuel 7:14).

‘You are my son; today I have begotten you’ (Psalm 2:7)

‘Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation’ (Psalm 68:5).

Jesus' Baptism

‘A voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11).

Jesus revealed God as everyone's Father. He wanted his disciples to love their enemies, and so ‘to be children of **your Father** in heaven’ (Matthew 5:45).

The Risen Jesus commissioned Mary of Magdala to ‘go to my brothers and say to them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’ (John 20:17).

3. Children are to submit to the father's authority

‘Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart’ (Deuteronomy 6:4-6).

‘Let my son go that he may worship me’ (Exodus 4:23).

‘Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work’ (John 4:34).

‘Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing’ (John 5:19-20).

‘I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me’ (John 5:30).

‘I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him’ (John 8:28-29).

4. The father educates his children

‘Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so your God disciplines you’ (Deuteronomy 8:5).

‘Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for GOD has spoken: I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me’ (Isaiah 1:2).

‘My teaching is not mine but his who sent me’ (John 7:16-17).

‘I declare to the world what I have heard from him’ (John 8:26).

‘I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence’ (John 8:38).

‘What I speak I speak just as the Father has told me’ (John 12:50).

‘The word that you hear is not mine. It is from the Father who sent me’ (John 14:24).

5. The father's feelings for his children

‘As a father has compassion for his children, so GOD has compassion for us who revere God. GOD does not fail to remember that we are but dust’ (Psalm 103:13-14).

‘How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? ... My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender’ (Hosea 11:8).

‘I thought you would call me, “My Father” (אָבִי), and would not turn from following me. Return, O faithless children, I will heal your faithlessness’ (Jeremiah 3:19, 22).

‘Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he the child I delight in? As often as I speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore I am deeply moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says GOD’ (Jeremiah 31:20).

Be gracious [ḥanan] to me, O God,
according to your covenant love [ḥesed].
According to your tender compassion [raḥamim]
blot out my transgressions' (Psalm 51:1).

'GOD, tenderly compassionate [raḥamim] and gracious [ḥanan],
long suffering (slow to anger),
and abounding in covenant love [ḥesed]
and faithfulness' (Exodus 34:6).

Jesus wants us to 'be compassionate as **your Father** is compassionate'
(Luke 6:36).

6. We are all called to share the intimate communion with our Father that Jesus knew.

‘The Father knows me and I know the Father’ (John 10:15).

Jesus wanted all of us to be able to say, with him: ‘The Father and I are one’ (John 10:30);

He enjoyed such intimate communion with God that he could say: ‘The Father is in me and I am in the Father’ (John 10:38; see also John 14:11).

‘Jesus cried aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me” (John 12:44-45).

When he taught his disciples to pray he taught them to open their prayer with an acknowledgement that God is ‘Father’ (Luke 11:2).

Paul witnesses to the practice in the early Christian communities of addressing God as Jesus addressed God: 'Abba! Father!' (Romans 8:15).

'Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6).

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes: 'The one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters' (Hebrews 2:11).

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father
and the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

‘**Lord**’ translates the Greek Κύριος which translates the Hebrew Adonay – the word sounded when יהוה (YHWH) was found in the Hebrew text. It is the ‘Name’ (HaShem) revealed by God to Moses in the scene of the burning bush (see Exodus 3:15).

Exodus 3:1-7

The angel of YHWH (the LORD) appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush ...

YHWH (the LORD) said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians

Exodus 3:13-15

Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses,

“I AM WHO I AM.”

'EHYEH 'asher 'EHYEH

'EHYEH 'immak I will be with you

God said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM [’EHYEH] has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘YHWH (the LORD), the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’”

To Moses: “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:11).

’EHYEH ’immak

To Isaac: ‘I will be with you, and will bless you’ (Genesis 26:3).

To Jacob: ‘I will be with you’ (Genesis 31:3).

To Joshua: ‘I will be with you’ (Deuteronomy 31:23).

To Gideon: ‘I will be with you’ (Judges 6:16).

Isaiah 7:14

The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanu el. [with-us God]

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

‘God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to **redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “**Abba! Father!**” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God’ (Galatians 4:4-7).

‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself’ (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might **redeem** us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds’ (Titus 2:14).

In calling Jesus 'Κύριος' Paul is witnessing to a Christian practice that goes right back to the beginnings of the Christian movement. Christian Jews never wavered from strict monotheism, but their experience of Jesus during his life and after his resurrection meant that their understanding of God expanded to include Jesus.

The early Christian practice of calling Jesus 'Lord' witnesses to the fact that they were not content to admire the human Jesus, while failing to see him as the revelation of God: failing to listen to or watch God being revealed in and through him. The essence of Christianity is that in listening to Jesus and watching him, and in experiencing something of the intimacy of his prayer-communion, we are truly being drawn into communion with God.

Matthew 1:23

They will name him Immanuel,” which means,
“God is with us”. [see Isaiah 7:14]

Matthew 28:20

I am with you always, to the end of the age.

’ ‘It was not I, but the grace of God that is with me’ (1Corinthians 15:10)

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John 1:18

‘No one has ever seen God.
It is God’s only Son, who is
in the bosom of the Father,
who has made Him known.’

John 10:30

The Father and I are one

John 10:38

Believe what I do, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

John 14:10-11

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

John 10:30

The Father and I are one.

John 17:11

Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

John 17:22

Father, the glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me.

I Timothy 1:1-2

Paul, an apostle of the Messiah Jesus by the command of God our Saviour and of the Messiah Jesus our hope. To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Messiah Jesus our Lord.