

# From Corinth With Love (1 Cor 16:21-24)

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Date: 01 October 2023

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[ 0 : 00 ]     So verse 21. I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed. Come, Lord.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.  
Good afternoon, everyone.

Yes, my voice is an octave lower. I went on a road trip. It was fun. Talked to too many people. And now I'm paying the price. So pray for my voice. Great verse to finish the book of Corinthians.

Very short and sweet. So it's your lucky day. It's a very short and sweet sermon as well. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that in your kindness you have brought us to the end of this book.

Help us to keep reflect even on what we heard from Pastor Nathan last week. The joy of holy habits. Where we put our money. Who we look to as mentors. Who is ministering to others.

[ 1 : 01 ]     And who we are ministering to. Lord, we thank you that we are not just PCBC English. We are part of a greater body of Christ. And so we lean on your wisdom even now in these last few words. In Jesus' name.

Amen. So the verses you just heard read. Very short. Paul's final greeting after 16 long chapters, right?

To the church of God in Corinth. That's how it started. Chapter 1, verse 2. These were people sanctified in Christ Jesus. And called to be holy.

Together. Not just with the people in Corinth. But everyone. Everywhere. Who believes and says, Jesus is Lord. And so look. Paul's, you know.

Jesus is not just their Lord in Corinth. He's our Lord here at PCBC English too. And that's a wonderful thing, isn't it? And so here on the 1st of October, he is our Lord too.

[ 1 : 57 ]     And notice in our passage, it's in Christ Jesus, right? Look at that last verse. In Christ Jesus that Paul sends his final greetings. He does this by his own hand, right?

Verse 21. This was a dictator letter. So he got someone to write it down as he talked it out. And here he says, hang on. Give me the pen. This is my own hand saying, greetings to you.

Greetings to you. Now, I don't know about you. We resort to all kinds of greetings at the end of our emails or texts, right? Okay. XOX or ng mihi nui if you're a formal at work.

Look. Whatever it is. Paul's sign-off, every sign-off, tells you a little bit about what motivates you, right? Who you're talking to. And what's his final sign-off?

Two things. Firstly, he says, final sign-off one. To those with no affection for the Lord, let them be accursed. Come, Lord.

[ 2 : 56 ]     That's a pretty strong sign-off at the end of any letter. And yet, we need to understand the context. The word accursed here has appeared before. It's actually what we have said to the Lord.

Unbelief. Chapter 12, verse 3. There are some who say Jesus is accursed. All right? And they are not Christians. And so, if you've sat through this letter, all 16 chapters, can I appeal to you?

If you have no affection for the Lord, you are not under grace, but you are under the curse of sin and death. As we heard in the catechism question, death and disintegration.

And so, can I plead with you? Ask yourself, are you a friend of Jesus? Are you a friend of Jesus? Are you a friend who has received his greater love, accepted it?

Jesus Christ, the one who said, greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for his friends. And so, are you a friend of Jesus? Have you turned to him through repentance and faith?

[ 4 : 03 ] Or, do you deserve his greater judgment? To those of no affection for the Lord. Final words from Paul. Let them be accursed.

And actually, he says here, come Lord. Literally, Maranatha. He's speaking in tongues here. He's saying, he's going from his heart to say, look, Jesus is coming. Make today the day of your salvation.

Be a friend of Jesus today. And then, final sign off, number two. To those in Christ Jesus. Paul says, grace and love to you.

It says here, verse 23, grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. And my love be with you in Christ Jesus. How can Paul love them?

We've heard their story. Chapter after chapter of problems that Paul has to solve with the gospel. They had issues about marriage and about finding a partner.

[ 5 : 05 ] They had issues about church division and taking each other to court. And they had issues about being puffed up. This was not a happy church. No church is a happy church.

And yet, Paul can still sign off and say, grace to you. My love to you in Christ Jesus. Isn't that amazing? They are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Not because they are so lovable. But because God loves Paul in Christ. And he has the love that overflows from that. And says, my love to you. My love to you.

Time away last week was tiring but wonderful. And one of my impressions I got was as I met with friends in ministry. We organized to go down to the South Island to catch up with some friends.

We had a college. Some of them are pictured here. Some of them who actually mentored us into ministry. Even as I was listening to Pastor Nathan's sermon, I was remembering and giving thanks to so many of these people.

[ 6 : 10 ] Some of them are co-workers in the gospel. You can see Enoch and Abby in the corner. We support them now as mission partners as well. Some of them share the gospel with their lives as well as their words.

There's the Fleeners, a dear family. And they're 10 years in serving and planting a church in Rolleston outside of Christchurch. And, you know, there were lots of conversations.

We talked all day. That's why I'm talking like this. But I don't remember half the things we said. And I'm sure you've had those times. You catch up with people all the time. And it's a long time.

And then you don't remember any of it. What do you remember, though? You remember the grace and love you received from them. Do you not? That's my lasting impression as we drove up the country and returning this camper van.

That was the impression. Such grace from these people and love. And so can I just ask you, at the end of this letter, 1 Corinthians, is that your final impression?

[ 7 : 16 ]     Grace to you from Christ Jesus. And a love that flows from him. Will that be your impression to the brothers and sisters here in this church?

Despite all their problems. Despite all the issues that we have fought over. Or that you are not sure about. That you still have questions over. Will grace and love be your lasting impression as it is for Paul?

Let's pray. Amen. Father, grace is a word that we find hard to accept.

Because we are selfish people. Who think that we can serve ourselves. We can make our own way. But thank you that in Christ we have received grace upon grace.

In Christ we have nothing to boast. And so we want to keep serving you. Yet not I, we pray. But Christ in me as we continue to worship. In his name we pray.

[ 8 : 19 ]     Let's pray.