



Three Important Words

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Close your eyes and see this picture in your head: the worship service is almost over. Your pastor is standing in front with his arms raised. What does he say next? Today's Bible verse might sound familiar. It's called the "apostolic blessing." These are the final words the apostle Paul wrote to a Christian church a long time ago in Corinth. Pastors still use these words in church today because they remind us of God's blessing. Paul uses three really important words in this blessing. Let's listen for them: Grace. Love. Fellowship.

First up is the word grace—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is grace so important? The Bible says, "It is by grace we have been saved" (Ephesians 2:8). Grace means God gives us love and forgiveness even though we do not deserve it. Think about it: Do we always obey perfectly? No! We sin every day. But Jesus still came to save us. He died on the cross and rose again for us. That is grace! It is a free gift from Jesus. But why would he want to do that?

We get the answer in the second word: love. It's a very special love. So the Bible uses a special word for it. It's called agape (ah-GAH-pay). Can you say it? (ah-GAH-pay). God's love is bigger and stronger than any love we know. God loves us all the time—not just when we are good, but even when we mess up. That is amazing love! Because of God's agape—there's nothing we can do to make him stop loving us.

The third word is fellowship. Fellowship means belonging together as God's family. You belong in your family. You also have a church family. When we worship together, pray together, sing together, help each other, or learn about Jesus together, we are enjoying fellowship. Someday, when you get old enough, you can take Holy Communion together! Why? Because that's what Jesus wanted us to do—together. God did not want us to be alone. He gave himself for us. And he gives us Christian friends, families, teachers, pastors, and church families to encourage us in faith.

The next time you hear your pastor say these words at church, listen carefully. Instead of thinking, "Yeah, church is over!" think about three wonderful gifts God is giving you: grace, love, and fellowship. Those are three words worth remembering!

Questions to Consider

- What are the three important words from today's Bible verse?
- Which of these three words is your favorite? Why?
- The third word is fellowship. What does that mean?
- Why is it good for you to worship and pray together?
- What is one way your family can grow in fellowship together?
- When have you felt especially loved by God or by your church family?