

The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

# LIFENEWS

## Greetings Salutations

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by Ron Story, Community Life Pastor



I'm sure that you have noticed how the Apostle Paul begins his letters with "greetings and salutations." In Romans, he writes: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle ... to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be His saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:1,7,8)

All of his letters have very similar greetings and salutations, his personal introduction to those whom the letter is addressed and then his desire for them to know God's grace and peace. I find it interesting that when reading the New Testament Letters, we don't have to wait until the end to find out the author. He lets you know right away who the writer is. Knowing that it is from the Apostle Paul definitely grabs your attention!

At any rate, I've been thinking about the importance of how we greet people and our response to their greetings. Some common greetings:

- Good morning/afternoon/evening
- Hello, Hi, Hey, Yo Bro, G'day Mate, Dude
- How are you? How's it going? What's up? ...

... and many variations of the above depending upon the situation and your familiarity with the person.

My primary interest is in how to best respond to those greetings. We often give a simple cursory response like: good, great ... how are you? And move on down the road with no real intent to engage in a conversation. However, if our desire is to "*intentionally connect others with the love of Jesus,*" we might need to be more creative in our response.

Recently, when I was in the process of recovering from some health issues, my responses included some old-time sayings like: "fair to middlin'" (okay but not real good); "pert near but not plumb" (better but not there yet); "fit as a fiddle" (one that is out of tune).

Some of my favorite responses include: "far better than I deserve" and "blessed beyond measure." Those usually grab people's attention and sometimes can lead to a conversation that conveys, no matter what my feelings or situation, that I am always secured by the knowledge of God's grace and peace!

A friend of mine was recently going through a major storm in his life and arrived at an excellent response to the question, "How are you?" Not wanting to pretend that life in that season was "grand" or, on the other hand, pour out all his problems to the person asking, he came up with the phrase "Blessed in the mess." I loved that response! It reminds me of Ron Hunnicutt's counsel: "God is good, life is hard, don't get the two confused."

One of my more recent encouragements to those amid struggles is: "In the midst of the storm, Jesus is in the boat with you!"

All this to say, if our Mission Statement is to "*intentionally connect others every day with the transforming love of Jesus,*" perhaps we can be a bit more creative in our responses to those everyday casual greetings and salutations like, "How are you?"... A response that in some ways conveys the treasure of God's grace and peace, something like ... "Blessed" or "Far better than I deserve." Thanks for asking!

*Pastor Ron*