

Good Beginnings and Endings

1 Corinthians 1:3 (ESV)

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:23 (ESV)

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The apostle Paul opened and closed his correspondence with similar statements. He focused on God and Jesus, as well as the grace which is available to all of us. His words reflect his heart.

Why wouldn't Paul have made such a focus? After all, consider what God had done for him through Jesus. As "Saul of Tarsus," he was a learned Pharisee who chose to persecute the followers of Jesus. On the road to Damascus, Jesus interrupted and confused him. He learned that Jesus is the Lord and Messiah and that he had been off base. So, when Jesus saved and called him, he responded as the "apostle to the Gentiles."

Our Founding Fathers understood what Jesus had done for them in securing their salvation. They believed He was at work in and through them as they established what would become the USA. So, they too emphasized Him in their correspondence.

Letters were the chief means of communication in their day. There was no: telegraph, phone, email, social media, or rapid transportation. The most economic and fastest way to communicate was by letter.

The handwritten letters of individuals are profound in many ways. They often reveal the depth of the individual author. The letters of John and Abigail Adams, for instance, show a depth of their relationship we may not know otherwise.

The correspondences of our Founders and Framers reveal their true thoughts and intentions about our nation. Had it not been for those letters, we would miss key points about them, such as their faith. This is why an honest examination of those letters is beneficial to us.

I visited Monticello several years ago and loved standing where Jefferson had lived. He was a brilliant man who devised a number of inventions. One that sticks with me is his "copy machine." He made a device that held two pens. As he wrote with one the other made an exact duplicate of his script. He could then send off his letter and keep a copy for himself.

Often our forefathers would open and close their writings with a Christ-centered focus. For instance, the treaty that ended the American War for Independence and secured our Liberty was signed by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay. It began with, "In the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity." Many Presidents including George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson (yes, even Jefferson!) signed international treaty documents and various correspondences with, "In the year of our Lord Christ" along with the year.

Why was there such an emphasis on God and Jesus in letters and treaties? Could it be their Biblical worldview? Could it be that they were so saturated with scripture that it just flowed out of them, even in their correspondence?

I wonder what would happen if we had a similar worldview. What would that look like? What would our social media posts, emails, and other means of correspondence look like? Would they change? What would be required to develop a biblical worldview that made us conscious that God is aware of everything we say or write? Maybe turning off the television, laying down our cell phones and other media to do a LOT of Bible STUDY, and not just skimming the text?

Don't forget, Jesus said in **Matthew 12:36-37** (ESV):

**³⁶ I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,
³⁷ for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.**

Daniel Webster lay on his deathbed after a horse-riding accident. Witnesses recorded his final words in his "full and reverential voice." He said:

And now unto God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be praise forevermore. Peace on earth and good will towards men.

Webster lived and concluded his life with thoughts of God. What areas of our lives can we open and close with God? How would that change us?

Keep the Light of God's Presence Burning!