



WEEKLY SERMON

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Message: Book of Philemon - #4

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Text: Philemon Verses 8-9

In Psalm 78:1-8 we read, **“Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (2) I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: (3) Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. (4) We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. (5) For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: (6) That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: (7) That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: (8) And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.”**

In Proverbs 22:6 we read, **“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”**

Here are fourteen areas to consider in developing GREATNESS IN YOUR CHILDREN.

1. Surround your children with good books and good Christian music.
2. Help your children learn to recognize the consequences of sin.
3. Make home a happy place to be.
4. Encourage Scripture memorization at an early age. Establish a family altar, reading the Bible together daily, discussing what you've read and applying it to today's problems.
5. Teach your children to enjoy work.
6. Be generous with praise. Take time to listen to your children. Discuss family needs and other problems freely with your children. Allow your children to express their feelings and to question things.
7. Make a big thing of family celebrations and traditions. Give your children links to their past. Help them develop pride.
8. Teach them independence and self-reliance. Help your children learn to make decisions by giving them choices about small things, then increasing the kinds of choices they can make.
9. Help your children learn how to handle disappointments.
10. Show your child that privilege brings with it responsibilities.
11. Let your marriage be a model that your children will be happy to copy. Show them your love for each other.
12. Win your children to the Lord at an early age. Help them day by day learn to have a strong reliance upon the Word of God and to learn that prayer is the answer to all life's problems.
13. Teach your daughters the grace of submission and your sons the power of leadership.
14. Develop a strong relationship to your church and the ministries of the church.

“Character is the subconscious doing of right.” – “One with God makes a majority.”

“The Christian on his knees sees more than the philosopher on tiptoe.” - D.L. Moody

“Other books were given for our information; the Bible was given for our transformation.”

“The Devil may tempt us, the flesh may tempt us, the world may tempt us, but it is us, we ourselves, who sin.” – Remember this, “Give Satan an inch, and he’ll try to be a ruler.”

“The bringing of one soul to Jesus is the highest achievement possible to human life.”

In His Amazing Grace –
Pastor David Miklas

“Paul – The Intercessor”

INTRODUCTION: As we return to our studies from the book of Philemon, we find the Apostle **Paul** was a prisoner in Rome, his friend **Philemon** was in Colossi, and the human link between them was a runaway slave, named **Onesimus**.

The details are not clear, but it appears that **Onesimus** robbed his master and then fled to Rome, hoping to be swallowed up in the crowded metropolis. However, in the providence of God, he met Paul and was converted to Jesus Christ.

Now what? Should **Onesimus** remain with Paul, who needed all the assistance he could get? But what about the slave's responsibilities to his master back in Colossi? The law permitted a master to execute a rebellious slave, but Philemon was a Christian.

Beginning in verse 8 the **Apostle Paul** moves to the primary reason for the writing of this letter to **Philemon**. That primary purpose was to ask Philemon to take **Onesimus** back, not as a slave, but as a Christian brother.

As we begin, notice carefully as we read verses 8-13.

“Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, (9) Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. (10) I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: (11) Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: (12) Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: (13) Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:...”

I believe one of the primary objectives of the Pastor ought to be that of influencing, challenging and molding the lives of the people who sit under his ministry week after week. In doing so that they may **ACT** like, **THINK** like and **LIVE** like Jesus Christ. Every God-called Pastor should use every legitimate means possible to achieve that goal.

Now in this epistle, God is working through the Apostle Paul to get Philemon to move up to an even higher plane spiritually that he may also manifest an even greater degree the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Here the Apostle Paul endeavored to do this by getting Philemon to receive back Onesimus, not just to forgive him but to bring him back to Philemon's own home as a member of his own family.

Paul recognizes how delicate this request is, so he approaches the matter very thoughtfully and very prayerfully. In this brief letter, this is indicated by how long it takes Paul to finally reach the issue at hand.

Out of the 25 verses and 431 words in the KJV, it takes Paul 9 verses and 167 words before he mentions the name of Onesimus in verse 10. It seems there was a lot of ground work that Paul had to lay first.

Verse 8 begins with the word, “**Wherefore**.” Here Paul is saying to Philemon

Wherefore as the result of the **LOVE** you previously manifested...

Wherefore on the basis of your **FAITH** which you had in Christ...

Wherefore in light of the fact you had **ENCOURAGED** and **ENRICHED** the heart of the saints...

“**Wherefore**” in light of Philemon's past, that is listed in verse 8, we go to the “**therefore**” in verse 12. “**Wherefore**” looks to the past, while “**therefore**” looks to the future. “**Therefore**”

receive Onesimus. Yes, Paul is saying – Onesimus, the robber, the runaway, I am sending back to you and I would like for you to take him back into your home as a bother.

Now before we go on into this passage, let me pause and address the theme of this letter to Philemon. That theme being **“FORGIVENESS.”**

The Bible clearly teaches the wonderful truth that God is a forgiving God. In Exodus 34:6-7, God described Himself to Moses as:

“... The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, (7) Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

That theme runs throughout Scripture for example:

Psalm. 32:1, **“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”**

Psalm 85:2-3, **“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. (3) Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.”**

Psalm 130:3-4, **“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? (4) But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”**

Isa. 43:25, **“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”**

Jeremiah. 33:8, **“And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.”**

Matthew 5:12-15, **“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (14) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”**

Ephesians 1:7, **“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;..”**

1 John 1:9, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Now in in Ephesians 4:31-32 we read, **“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”**

The first most thrilling realization in life is knowing that all your sins have been forgiven at Calvary. You've not fully experienced life until you have realized that Jesus Christ has cleansed you of your past and present and future sins by the Blood of the Lamb of God.

The second greatest aspect of forgiveness comes when someone forgives you for a wrong you have committed against them. My Friends, it is characteristic of saints to forgive.

At the end of verse 32, we are told why it is characteristic for the saints to forgive, **“even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you.”** Even though neither you nor I deserve it, God's character is revealed when He says, **“I don't care what you've done to Me; I'll love you, be kind to you and tender to you, and forgive you, regardless!”**

Forgiveness follows the example of Christ. The abuses which come against us are **TRIFLING** compared to the mountain of sins Jesus washed away at Calvary on our behalf. There on the cross, in the tense of the language of the first words of the cross,

Jesus repeatedly said, "Father forgive them, Father forgive them, Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." None of us have endured what Christ endured, yet He totally forgave us all our sins.

For a Christian, unwillingness to forgive is unthinkable. It is a rebellious, blatant, open act of disobedience to God. We are to forgive others as God has forgiven us. Failure to do so will bring at least **Eight** unpleasant results.

First, failure to forgive will imprison believers in their past. Unforgiveness keeps the pain alive. Unforgiveness keeps the sore open; it never allows the wound to heal. Dwelling on the wrong done feeds anger and resentment and robs one of the joys of living. Forgiveness, on the other hand, opens the prison doors and sets the believer free from the past.

Second, failure to forgive produces bitterness. The longer believers dwell on offenses committed against them, the more bitter they become.

Bitterness is not just a sin; it is an infection. A bitter person's speech is cutting, sarcastic, even slanderous.

Bitterness distorts a person's whole outlook on life, producing violent emotions, intolerance, and thoughts of revenge. It is especially devastating to the marriage relationship.

Bitterness shuts off the affection and kindness that should exist between the partners. The root of bitterness and unforgiveness all too often produces the weed of divorce.

Forgiveness, on the other hand, replaces bitterness with what we read about in Galatians 5:22-23 as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance:..."

Third, failure to forgive gives Satan an open door. Paul warns believers in Ephesians 4:26-27, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (27) Neither give place to the devil." To the Corinthians he wrote in II Corinthians 2:10-11, "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; (11) Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." It is no exaggeration to say that most of the ground Satan gains in our lives is due to unforgiveness. Forgiveness bars that avenue of demonic attack.

Fourth, failure to forgive hinders fellowship with God. Our Lord solemnly warned in Matthew 6:14-15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." It is a serious matter nonetheless to know that one cannot be right with God if he is unforgiving of others. Forgiveness restores the believer to the place of maximum blessing from God. It restores the purity and joy of fellowship with God.

Fifth, failure to forgive not only hinders our relationship with God, but also with other Christians. In the parable of Matthew 18, it was the unforgiving slave's fellow slaves in verse 31 who reported him to his lord. That is a picture of church discipline. An unforgiving attitude will destroy a believer's relationships with his fellow believers. They will then, through church discipline, ask God to bring chastening into his life.

Sixth, by refusing to forgive others and seeking our own revenge, we usurp the authority of God. Paul urged believers in Romans 12:14, 19 to "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. (19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." By failing to forgive, believers presume to take the sword of divine judgment out of God's hand and wield it

themselves. Such an attitude implies that God is unjust, indifferent, or unable to judge, all of which is blasphemous.

God is far more able to deal with offenses against us than we are. He has a complete understanding of the situation, while our understanding is limited. He has the supreme authority; we have none. He is impartial and just; we are partial to our own selfish interests. He is omniscient and eternal, seeing how everything will turn out. We are short-sighted and ignorant, seeing nothing beyond the moment. He is wise and good, and does everything for righteous purposes. We are often blinded by our anger, and our purposes may be evil. We must, then, leave vengeance to God.

Seventh, an unforgiving spirit makes believers unfit for worship. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said in Matthew 5:23-24, “**Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; (24) Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.**”

Lack of forgiveness makes Christians unfit for fellowship not only with other believers, but also with God. Worshiping God, while living in an unrestored relationship with another believer, is hypocrisy.

Eighth, forgiveness should be given even if it is not sought. Our Lord said, “**Father, forgive them,**” asking forgiveness for those who did not even seek it. Stephen asked the Lord to forgive those who were murdering him, though they had not asked for it. Though the relationship will never be restored until the offending person desires forgiveness, still we are not to hold a grudge, but forgive from the heart and be free from any bitterness—showing only love and mercy.

Forgiveness is so important that the Holy Spirit devoted an entire book of the Bible to it. In the brief book of Philemon, the spiritual duty to forgive is emphasized, but not in principle, parable, or word picture. Through a real-life situation involving two people dear to him, Paul teaches the importance of forgiving others.

Now let’s return to our text in Philemon. Again in verse 8 we read, “**Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoy thee that which is convenient...**” Here, Paul is saying not only is this your **OPPORTUNITY**, it is also your **RESPONSIBILITY**. Paul is saying, he had a **RIGHT** to demand this of Philemon. He could be so bold to say to Philemon, “**DO THIS.**”

Now, the last word in verse 8, “**convenient,**” is an interesting word. It could read that which is **becoming** or that which is **befitting** of you as a child of God, or this is a **recommendation** to forgive and take Onesimus back.

It is interesting that the Greek word for “**convenient**” is used in only two other passages in the New Testament.

Number 1: In Ephesians 5:3-4 we read, “**But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; (4) Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.**”

What Paul is not saying here is it would be nice if you don’t do these things as a Christian. No, he is saying these things **fornication, all uncleanness, or covetousness, ... filthiness, foolish talking, or jesting,** have NO place in your life as a child of God. Doing these things would not be right under any circumstances.

Number 2: In Colossians 3:18 we read, **“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”** The word **“fit”** here is the Greek word for **“convenient.”**

Paul is not saying, wives ought to submit to your husband because this would be a tremendous help in your marriage. He is saying, submission is a biblical thing for a wife to do. You have a moral obligation and responsibly to do that. “Wives submit yourselves to your husband, it is the right thing to do in the Lord.

Now, with that as a background come back to Philemon verse 8. Paul says to Philemon, though I might be bold in Christ to DEMAND that you forgive and receive **Onesimus** back into your home, I am not going to do it. Because, Philemon, you know as well as I do that as a child of God, this is a moral obligation, this is the right thing to do.

As we draw this message to a close let me call your attention to two areas:

First: In verse 9 we again read, **“Yet for love’s sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”** Although Paul had enough confidence in his apostolic authority in Christ to order Philemon to do that which is proper, he did not. Instead, he appealed to him to do what is right “for love’s sake.”

To help Philemon overcome any feeling of anger and hostility, Paul includes two statements about himself. That appeal comes from **“Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”** With that, Philemon could not possibly turn down a request from a man in such honorable suffering.

Second: Perhaps you ask, how did things turn out? No doubt Philemon forgave Onesimus. It is extremely unlikely that the book would have found its way into the New Testament canon if he had not.

If Philemon had not forgiven Onesimus, including the book in the canon would have left a false impression for all history. If he were not the godly, virtuous man Paul describes in this letter, there would have been no purpose in the Holy Spirit’s adding it to the New Testament. Further, as a part of the canon, this book would have circulated widely in the early church.

If Philemon had not forgiven Onesimus, it is inconceivable that someone would not have objected to including it in the canon. (This circulation would also confirm its authenticity.)

As to the further histories of Paul and Onesimus, Paul was released from prison, as he anticipated as noted in verse 22, and he then traveled extensively. One of his trips was no doubt to Colossae, where he saw for himself how Philemon had treated Onesimus.

Half a century later the church Father Ignatius, who was in Smyrna on his way to martyrdom in Rome, wrote a letter to the Ephesian church. In that letter he writes, **“I received your large congregation in the person of Onesimus, your bishop [pastor] in this world, a man whose love is beyond words.” (#1).** Could this be the same man? Perhaps not, because Onesimus would have had to be very old. But if so, it would be a fitting conclusion to one of the great stories of the apostolic age.

Again in conclusion, let me impress upon you a phrase that is fitting to be the theme of your life:

“In living for Christ, In serving Christ, In forgiving others - For Christ’s sake.”

If God has spoken to your heart, after reading the sermon “**Paul The Intercessor**” right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, “**...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...**”

Romans 10:13, “**For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**”

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: “**I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.**”

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, please let me know. Please send an e-mail to pastormiklas@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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