



WEEKLY SERMON

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Message: Book of Philemon - #3

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Text: Philemon Verses 4-7

Here is the history behind the writing of the song, **"My Country 'tis of Thee"** or **"America."**

On an afternoon in February, gray clouds were hovering over Andover Hill, site of the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts. The wind was moaning through the trees, nature was in a sullen mood. In a drab-looking frame house on the northerly slope of the hill, just below the summit, a young theology student sat in a meagerly furnished room. He was oblivious to the weather. The table in front of him was strewn with papers. In his hand was an open book - a book of German songs. The student glanced from page to page. The music printed with one of the songs, simply done but stately, attracted his attention. Hurriedly translating the German words, he saw that this was a patriotic hymn. Thoughts of his own country flooded over him.

They demanded expression. Why should he not write a hymn for America and fit it to this tune? He picked up his quill pen, seized the first scrap of paper that came to his hand and began with these words, **"My Country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing."** Darkness was falling as the student laid aside his pen and tucked the paper into his portfolio. Thus did Samuel Francis Smith, a youth of 23 years, write the hymn that came to be known to the world as **"America."**

Many years afterward he said, **"I did not propose to write a national hymn. I did not know I had done so."** In fact, the press of his studies soon drove all thought of the verses from his mind; but the paper which bore them found its way into a sheaf of poems - some original and some translated from the German which the student sent to Lowell Mason. It was Mason, pioneer in the introduction of music into the schools of Boston, who had sent him the book of German songs and had asked him to translate some of them. Five months later, on July 4, 1832, greatly to the surprise of young Smith, his patriotic hymn was first sung in public by a chorus of children under Mason's direction in the Park Street Church. It was enthusiastically received. In a few years it was being sung all over the country.

Each time you sing the fourth stanza reading, **"Our fathers' God, to thee, author of liberty, to thee we sing. Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light; protect us by they might, great God, our King,"** keep in mind the words of Psalm 96.

"O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. (2) Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. (3) Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. (4) For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. (5) For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. (6) Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. (7) Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. (8) Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. (9) O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. (10) Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. (11) Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. (12) Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the

wood rejoice (13) Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

“So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens to their country and respectable members of society.” - John Quincy Adams

In His Amazing Grace – *Pastor David Miklas*

“Philemon’s Energetic Faith”

Introduction: Again, we return in our studies from that one chapter of just 25 verses - the Book of Philemon.

Here we find that 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? 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.

So, **Paul** writes this letter to **Philemon** in order to pave the way for **Onesimus** to go back; to ask Philemon to take him back, not as a slave but as a Christian brother. This now brings us to verses 4-7 where Paul writes,

“I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, (5) Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; (6) That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. (7) For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.”

Let me pause and say something that we often overlook in our reading of scripture. In order to come to a proper understanding of a passage, among other things, you need to carefully examine each word or phrase as to its meaning and grammatical uses.

Notice in verse 3 Paul says, “**God OUR father**”. Here he is talking about God in a general way, “**OUR father**”. However, in verse 4 he said, “**I thank MY God**”. Here he refers to God in a specific personalized way, it is “**MY God**”. Even though the Apostle Paul was a great man, he was just like you and me, just a mere man. Here he is saying it is possible to know God in a very personal way. He is saying,

“I thank not the great God of the universe, and he is that. But he goes a step farther, to say “I thank MY God.”

Now, can you answer this question – is your God, “**My God**”? Praise God, I can answer that question with a “Yes!” Since June 30, 1950, I can say God is not some abstract figure in the universe, but he is “**My God**” through my personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Since He is “**My God**,” what a blessing it is to wake up in the morning and to be able to personally talk to God and to continue to do so throughout the day.

Now listen carefully. Until you come to the place in your life that you can call Him “**My God**” through faith in Jesus Christ, “**EVERYTHING ELSE IN LIFE DOESN’T MATTER.**”

Everything in your life is inconsequential because you cannot understand nor can you interpret the will of God for your life from the Word of God until you know Him in a personal way.

My friend, God, has a will for our personal lives. He doesn’t accidently place us here for us to just stumble our way through life to the grave and then be forgotten forever.

God has a specific reason for my being here and for you being here. And when we get to

know Him in a personal way, He reveals in His Word exactly what He wants us to do.

Maybe you are saying, “I don’t know God in a personal way. I know about Him, I heard about Him, I have read about Him, but I can’t say I am personally acquainted with Him.”

Here Paul is saying, “It is possible to know MY GOD personally.” So, you say, “how can this come about in my life?”

Back in verse 3 we read, “Grace to you and peace FROM God...” The **GRACE** of God is for **YOU**. And one of the graces of God is labeled **SALVATION**.

In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

He becomes “your GOD” when there is a response in your heart to the message of salvation as we read in Romans 10:9-10, 13:

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

When we receive the **GRACE** of God in salvation we can say, God is “MY God.” It is now that God gives us the **RIGHT**, the **POWER** and the **AUTHORITY** to be called the “Sons of God”.

Until that happens in your life the Bible will be **TOTALLY** disorganized; you really can’t understand it. You have got to be related to God before you can fully understand the Word of God, and then by faith live your life which is pleasing to Him.

This is the starting point, then after we become rightly related to God, we should then live our lives in such a way to make Jesus Christ feel about us the way Philemon made Paul feel about him. So then, how did Philemon make Paul feel?

FIRST, Philemon made Paul feel THANKFUL: The first word which describes how Philemon made Paul feel about him is in the word “**thankful.**” “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers...”

In the next verse, the Apostle Paul makes mention of **TWO** worthy things that he was thankful for, “Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;...”

Someone described this verse as a picture of a wheel:

In the HUB of the wheel is written the words FAITH in CHRIST, and around the circle of the wheel are the words “Love for all saints.”

When the Apostle Paul viewed the life of Philemon – the Hub of his life was “Faith in Jesus Christ – everything came from that, and then the outreach of his life was love towards all the saints in the family of God.

Notice it was a love to **ALL** the saints, not just some of the saints, but to “**ALL SAINTS.**” So, the question is,

**What are people saying about your Christianity?
What is God hearing about you from other saints?
Do people in your neighborhood and on the job visibly see your faith in Christ?**

SECOND, Philemon made Paul feel Prayerful: Again, in verse 4 we read, “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,” and then beginning in verse 6 he relates his prayer, “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”

Now, let me pause here and call your attention to Hebrews 7:25 in which we read of the current ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Wherefore he (referring to Jesus) is able also to save them to the uttermost (meaning eternally) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ for us who are believer’s is to intercede (**that is to go between us and the Father**) and lay our petitions at His feet. In other words, every time I bow my head in prayer, Jesus is listening to what I have to say and then He brings that desire or need to the very throne of God.

Now just suppose Jesus would pray a prayer for you without you initiating it. What would that prayer be from Jesus to God the Father?

I believe one of most profound prayers in the Bible is the prayer of the Apostle Paul for Philemon found in verse 6. This prayer has something to do with Philemon’s faith found in verse 5, **Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;...**

Did you notice in verse 5 the word **“toward”** is used twice? In the original language these are two different words.

The first word “towards” means you are moving “towards” something in a certain direction. The second word “towards” means you have come in contact with something. You have arrived at your destination.

Perhaps you are asking in your mind, what is all this saying. The fact was Philemon did not know, as you and I also do not know everything there is to know about the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, day after day on this earth as we read God’s Word, we are leaning more and more about the Lord Jesus Christ. Then after we pass from this earth into heaven and through all eternity seeing Him face to face, we will be learning even more and more about the uniqueness and richness of the Son of God.

Philemon has a faith that is moving toward the Lord Jesus Christ. His faith was expanding, developing and growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And that was a FAITH that was worth communicating.

Let me pause to say this, the problem with most of us is that we don’t have the faith that is worth communicating. Perhaps our faith is bland, unattractive, and in some cases, hypnotical to the unsaved world around us. On the other hand, our faith could/should be the faith that is found in II Peter 3:18, where we read

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”

Again, in verse 6 Paul expressed how Philemon’s faith was to be communicated effectively. The word **“effectual”** carries the idea of being **“energized”**.

Paul is praying that this exciting faith may be communicated, and that it may be done in an **ENERGENIC** kind of way. And that your growing faith may have an **INSPIRING** influence, that it may have an **UPLIFTING, EFFECTIVE,** and **DYNAMIC** influence on those lives with whom you come in contact.

Perhaps most who are reading this message would say, “**Yes, He is MY God.**”

Then if He is YOUR God shouldn't there be something **DYNAMIC** about your Christian life? Shouldn't there be something **EXCITING** about your faith that is worth communicating, especially if He is “**Your God**”?

Paul doesn't just want those around Philemon to benefit from his faith. He also wants Philemon to benefit from them. So Paul tells Philemon how to share his faith in verse 6, “**by the acknowledging of every good thing which is IN you IN Christ Jesus.**”

For the most part as you read God's Word you will discover it doesn't speak about the **GOOD** things that are in anybody. Most of the time the Bible is speaking about the **BAD** things that are in us. It speaks of the old nature that we are born with. It's this old nature that will drag us down all the way to the grave. You can't reform it nor can you change it. And not only has mankind been wrecked with this sinful old nature, so has the entire universe.

The whole world refrains from crying out to God.

The whole world refrains from seriously considering God's Word.

The whole world is filled with the sickness of sin, that will take them into the very pit of hell unless they find the remedy of salvation which is found only in the person of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, when you find the remedy of salvation, and use that remedy by faith to receive Christ – then God becomes your God. At that point you will become what the Bible calls a **NEW CREATION** – old things are passed away, and all things become new, and within you is planted the Spirit of the living God.

The Apostle Paul is saying to Philemon,

“I pray that the communication of your energetic and inspiring faith may become a dynamic influence. And I too pray that your faith and my faith might be dynamic and energetic.”

That leads me to this question, “**Is your faith an energetic dynamic faith in light of the fact of the good thing which is in you?**” What is the good thing which is in us?

It is not just a thing; it is the Spirit of the living God.

There is the gift of Eternal life.

There is the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and

There is the joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

Paul is praying that Philemon might become a man of that kind of dynamic faith.

When you are aware of God's grace and your faith is growing stronger, then you need not be ashamed or afraid to communicate it to others. Why are we so afraid? The people in the world around us are not afraid to communicate their wounds, and their ugly sins of life.

On the other hand, as a believer, you ought to remember what Paul said in Romans 1:16-17,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.”

In Philemon, Paul prays that there might be the communicating of your faith. If God has done good things in your life – isn't that worth communicating, isn't that worth sharing? Don't you think you ought to acknowledge before God that good thing (faith) which is in you to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ?

**First, Philemon made Paul THANKFUL in verses 4-5.
Second, Philemon made Paul PRAYERFUL in verse 6.**

THIRD, Philemon made Paul feel JOYFUL: “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.” (Verse 7)

Philemon didn't even know it, but as he was involved in the deeds of kindness and the saints in Colossi were being **edified, strengthened, built-up** and even **encouraged** to go on, Philemon thought he was just doing his job by ministering to them.

However, at the same time, he was benefiting and encouraging the heart of the Apostle Paul himself. Paul said, **“We too here in prison have great joy and consolation in your love.”**

There is a principle we must never forget. It is simply this **“You cannot bring joy to the hearts of others without bringing joy into the heart of God.”** The reverse of that is also true:

**When we bring discouragement in the heart and life of a child of God, or
When we do something to bring discord into the family of God, or
When we do something that hurts a child of God...**

We bring discouragement and hurt into the very heart of God. I sure don't want to do that. I hope you do not either.

Paul is saying to Philemon we have great joy because the hearts of the saints have been blessed by your deeds of kindness.

You see, Philemon was living the kind of life that made the life of the Apostle Paul in that awful prison cell - **JOYFUL** and **THANKFUL** and **PRAYERFUL!**

In closing perhaps you ask, how does all this relate to me? That's a good question that needs an answer. Here it is in a summary statement:

After we become rightly related to God through faith in Christ Jesus, we are to then live in such a way, in a practical sense, to make the Lord Jesus Christ JOYFUL over us, and THANKFUL for having chosen us, and that we belong to Him, and desire to be PRAYERFUL that the communication of our faith be effectual that we may acknowledge the good things he has done in us and for us to the glory of God.

If God has spoken to your heart, after reading the sermon **“Philemon's Energetic Faith”** 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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