



WEEKLY SERMON

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Message: Book of Philemon - #6

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Text: Philemon Verses 12-17

“Saved By Grace”

Fanny Crosby continued writing hymns until the day she died, though she did slow down a bit in her eighties, reducing her quota from two hundred hymns a year to about fifty. One of her last popular songs was “Saved by Grace.” She later said it was inspired by a sermon preached by Dr. Howard Crosby, a distant relative and dear friend. In his message, Dr. Crosby said that no Christian “should fear death, for if each of us was faithful to the grace given us by Christ, the same grace that teaches us how to live would also teach us how to die.” His remarks deeply moved Fanny, and she wrote “Saved by Grace” as a personal hymn for herself, not to be published.

Sometime later at a Bible Conference, D. L. Moody asked Fanny to share a word of testimony. Caught off guard, Fanny used this poem, saying, “There is one hymn I have written which has never been published. I call it my soul’s poem. Sometimes when I am troubled, I repeat it to myself, for it brings comfort to my heart.” Soon thereafter it was published, and became one of her “greats.”

Several years later, Fanny, who reached the age of ninety-five, realized she was dying—a prospect that brought her great joy. During the last weeks of her life, her face manifested an unusual glow. Numerous people observed it, and it became a curious subject of interest. On February 11, 1915, Fanny said she didn’t feel well and could stay in bed that day. At 3:30 in the morning, Fanny quickly slipped into the presence of the King, fulfilling her own soul’s poem.

“Saved by Grace” was one of favorite hymns of both D. L. Moody and his music associate, Ira Sankey. It is reported that as Ira Sankey lay dying, he drifted into a final coma as he softly sang, **“Someday the silver chord will break, and I no more as now shall sing; but oh the joy when I shall wake within the palace of the King!”**

Take time to anticipate the moment when you, like Fanny Crosby, will see the face of Christ. Praise Him even now because you have been saved by redeeming grace. Allow this musical truth to encourage your way and perhaps even share it with another.

Someday the silver cord will break, And I no more as now shall sing;
But, oh, the joy when I shall wake Within the palace of the King!

Refrain: And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace.

Someday my earthly house will fall; I cannot tell how soon ’twill be;
But this I know—my All in All Has now a place in heav’n for me.

Someday, when fades the golden sun Beneath the rosy tinted west,
My blessed Lord will say, "Well done!" And I shall enter into rest.

Someday: till then I'll watch and wait, My lamp all trimmed and burning bright,
That when my Savior opens the gate, My soul to Him may take its flight.

In HIS Amazing Saving Grace,
Pastor David Miklas

“Three Specific Things”

INTRODUCTION: Biblical scholars agree that the Apostle Paul wrote thirteen New Testament Books with his name attached. Some also believe that he penned the book of Hebrews. Within the sequence of Paul’s letters in the New Testament is his letter to the believers at Rome. The book of Romans is a great masterpiece on Christianity, in which Paul talks about the spiritual needs of the **WHOLE** world.

The very last letter of the Apostle Paul in the order of our Bibles is his book written to Philemon. In Romans, Paul talks about the spiritual needs of the whole world, and how we are to touch the whole world for God. In the book of Philemon, the Apostle Paul is concentrating on **ONE** very lowly individual, Onesimus.

In **verses 8-12** we read,

“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:”

Here Paul is talking about Onesimus. This run-away slave of Philemon had been converted under the ministry of Paul. Now Paul is in the process of sending him back, not to be received as a slave but rather as a beloved brother in Christ.

Reception is the first step in the process of forgiveness. It entails opening up one’s life and taking back the person who offended. Philemon needed to receive this slave back into his life, because Onesimus did seek forgiveness, as shown by three things that were true of him.

First, Onesimus was repentant. He returned to face the master he had wronged and who had the power to punish him severely. Paul appeals for his **child** in the faith, **begotten** in his **imprisonment**, who now seeks restoration with the one he had wronged. The former fugitive is now Paul’s spiritual offspring, like Timothy, Titus, and Philemon himself. His repentance shows the genuineness of his faith.

Second, Onesimus was transformed. Philemon was not getting back the same man he had lost. He who **formerly was useless** had been radically changed by the grace of God. He **now is useful** both to Paul and Philemon.

Third, Onesimus was proven faithful. So useful had he become to Paul that sending him **back to** Philemon was like **sending** Paul’s **very heart**. Paul’s feelings ran deep for this fugitive slave. He had taken him in and found him to be a great man to know and love. Paul knew Philemon would find him the same, if he would take him back.

In **verses 13-16** we read,

“Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: (14) But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. (15) For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever; (16) Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?”

In these four verses Paul indicated he is not unmindful of **THREE** specific things. **THREE** specific things we must also be mindful of in our own Christian life and walk.

FIRST: In verse 13 Paul was not unmindful of that which was **ACTUAL** in his own life and own experience. He does not cover up his own problems and the pressures he was facing in his own life. He doesn't complain about his trials, his problems or his testing's. Rather he does acknowledge them and the ways whereby he endeavors to cope with the problems in his own life.

Again in verse 13 please notice the personal pronouns Paul uses, "**Whom I would have retained with ME, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto ME in the bonds of the gospel:...**" Paul is saying I have a need to be ministered to, and if I had my way, I would have kept Onesimus with me in the bonds of the gospel, in my imprisonment. He was saying

I would like to have someone to pray with me. I would like to have someone to talk to me. I would like to have someone to share my burdens with. So, I would like to have Onesimus stay in this place and minister unto my needs.

When Paul used the word "**ministered**", what did he mean? Interestingly the Greek word here for minister is "**diakonos**" a translation of our word for **DEACON** meaning "**servant**" or "**minister.**" The word actually means "**to kick up dust,**" as one running an errand.

The Apostle Paul is saying to Philemon, I would like your slave Onesimus to be my **DEACON**. So the question we ask ourselves, what is a Deacon supposed to do?

In I Timothy 3:8-13 we are given a list of very specific **qualifications** for the deacons. Here we read,

"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; (9) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (10) And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. (11) Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. (12) Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. (13) For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

These are the qualifications of a Deacon. The **responsibilities** of a Deacon were developed in the early church as recorded in Acts 6:1-4, where we read.

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (2) Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. (3) Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (4) But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

These deeply spiritual men were primarily chosen to minister to the physical needs of the members of the body of Christ.

Paul was saying to Philemon, "**Here in this difficult situation; if I had my way I would like to have Ominous as my DEACON. I need someone who is deeply concerned about my needs. I need someone to be with me and to touch my life and in some ways help me with my needs."**

Now what is this saying to us? I believe it is saying that when we gather together in the House of God it is only natural and biblical to be concerned over our needs.

When we come to the house of God and the hymns are sung, and the scripture is read and the message is preached it is only natural to take spiritual inventory and begin to see our weakness and our short coming in our life of faith. Even in our own devotional time, we become aware of what is **actual** in our own lives.

In all this, it is not unspiritual, it is not abnormal to want the prayers, the love, the concerns, the support and even at times the assistance of the brothers and sisters in Christ as we travel down life's highway. You have the right to expect that from one another.

Here is a prayer that you can pray each and every time you enter the House of God. **“Lord not only make me mindful of the needs of others but please make others mindful of my needs also.”** That's what Paul is saying here, **“I would like for Ominous to remain with me to be my DEACON.”**

SECOND: In verse 14 Paul is not unmindful of that which is ETHICAL. Here we read, **“But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.”**

Without Philemon's consent, Paul did not want to do anything. Paul did not wish to presume on their friendship. He did not want Philemon's goodness to be by compulsion, but of his own free will.

The Apostle Paul was obsessed with doing that which is right down to the most minute detail. He was thinking, “Philemon, without your consent I would do nothing. I would not keep Onesimus here even though I am sure you wouldn't mind.”

Interestingly, when we read these two verses together we come face to face with this great biblical principle,

“It is more important that our ethical convictions be maintained than our actual needs being met.”

We ought to have convictions about our ethics and those convictions must be maintained even it is to the detriment of our actual needs being met. Now this is not my emphasis, it is God's emphasis from His word.

Notice again in verse 13, **“Whom I WOULD retain with me...”** I would have him staying with me. Notice again in verse 14, **“But without thy mind WOULD I do nothing...”**

In the English these words appear to be the same. However, in the Greek these words are different.

The word in **verse 13** has the idea of **“I wish.”** I wish Ominous could stay with me. Here Paul is talking about something that was just a **desire** of his heart. In **verse 14** he is talking about something that is a determined **force** in his life. When it comes to ethical convictions even down to the minute detail they must be carried out.

Today we have in our society what we call **“Situational Ethics.”** Situational Ethics means: **“There are no absolutes, you cannot say this is always right and that is always wrong. Your decision has to be determined in light of the situation in which you find yourself. This is “Liberal Theology.”** So, what is the Christian answer to situational ethics? The Apostle Paul says that our ethics ought to supersede even our needs. Someone made this comment:

“You and I must never allow the Devil to get our minds absorbed in that which is hypothetical. My problem is not dealing with the hypothetical, my problem is dealing with that which is actual.”

So, what is the answer for the believer? I believe it is found in I Corinthians 10:13 where we read,

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

How then can I make the right decision or decisions? The foundation to making the right decisions or choices is found in Matthew 6:33, **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”**

The following are principles I have put in writing. They are the principles I have used in my personal life and ministry over and over again.

PRINCIPLE #1, IS THE GLORY OF GOD: Whenever there is a question as to whether I should do this or should not do this the main principle is found in I Corinthians 10:31, **“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”** Our purpose in life, whatever we do ought to be for the **GLORY OF GOD**. Whenever anything arises, I must ask myself if this honors God. And if it would honor God then I am on the right track.

PRINCIPLE #2, IS THE WORD OF GOD. In II Timothy 3:16-17 we read, **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”** If there is a decision that has to be made, and since the Bible is profitable for these things, search the Word of God to find principles upon which you can base your decisions.

PRINCIPLE #3 IS PRAYER. In Philippians 4:6-7 we read, **“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”** Our text tells us to literally stop worrying, but in EVERYTHING talk to God about your concerns, needs, and situations for which you have no answer or solution.

PRINCIPLE #4 SEEK OUT THE WISDOM OF OTHERS. In Proverbs 20:18 we read, **“Every purpose is established by counsel...”** In Proverbs 24:6 we read, **“For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.”** Notice again this last phrase, **“in a multitude of counselors there is safety.”** There is wisdom in seeking out others for their wisdom relative to what the Will of God may be on an issue.

PRINCIPLE #5 WATCH FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we read **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”** There are times in seeking the will of God, God will use PEOPLE, PLACES, and THINGS to direct you.

God might provide the money, way, means, or God might with-hold the money, and means.
God might bring into your life people as an answer to your situation.
God might bring into your life a positive situation as a means of directing you.
God might bring into your life a negative situation which He could also use.

I have seen in my life God use all these as a means by which He enabled me in a practical sense to determine the Will of God. However, let me caution you. **“Don’t just rely upon this alone for direction, because the devil is still a clever fellow who could use circumstances as a decoy.”**

PRINCIPLE #6 INVOLVES PEACE OF MIND, In Colossians 3:15 we read, **“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”** When that moment comes and you say this is the path I believe God will have me to take and you feel the sweet peace of God's presence in your heart **THEN YOU CAN SAY**

THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD.

First, Paul was not unmindful of that which as ACTUAL.

Second, He was also not unmindful of that which was ETHICAL.

THIRD: In verse 15 Paul is not unmindful of that which is PROVIDENTIAL. Here we read, “**For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever;...**”

Here is a question I am often asked: “**What is the will of God or how can I know the will of God for my life or in this situation?**” As a partial answer, there are certain areas and aspects that can be shared with a great deal of biblical authority.

Number 1. The will of God is never apart from the Word of God as far as salvation is concerned. When I speak of the Person of Jesus Christ and the salvation we can have, I speak with authority because that’s God’s sovereign perfect will.

In I John 5:10-13 we read, “**He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. (11) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**”

Number 2. The will of God is never apart from the Word of God as far as how we are to live the Christian life. It is the will of God that you live a moral up-right life. Those who do not, are out of the perfect will of God, so God cannot bless your life.

For example in I Thessalonians 4:3 we read, “**For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:...**” That means abstain from sexual impurity, that is the will of God that you do not live in sin. There are many other things in the Word of God we can clearly say – that this is the will of God.

But then on the other hand, there are times we have to say with the Apostle Paul about the will of God “PERHAPS.” Isn’t that what he said in Philemon verse 15? “**For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever;...**”

As your pastor, I don’t have the right to say without any biblical principle to back it up that something is the will of God for your life. There are certain things we have to say, “**perhaps**” this would be right, this would be God’s leading.

God chooses to reveal the specifics about your life to you that is the will of God. But He will only reveal it to you if you are living and walking with Christ.

In John 14 our Lord makes a personal statement. Starting in verse 16, He talks about the sending of the Holy Spirit.

“**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (18) I will not leave you comfortless (or as orphans): I will come to you.** Now notice verse 21, “**He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.**”

Again notice: “**He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them**” I will reveal myself to him. So we see how vital it is that we LIVE and WALK in fellowship with God. So that we may know the will of God for our lives.

We are to be rightly concerned with that which is **ACTUAL**. We are to be concerned with that which is **ETHICAL** (that which is right) and abstain from every appearance of evil. We are also to be concerned with that which is **PROVIDENTIAL** where we our living in the hands of God.

Remember Joseph who was thrown into a pit and then sold into slavery by his very hateful brothers? In Egypt he was thrown into prison, but afterward became an important leader in Egypt. Now in Genesis chapter 50, he again comes face to face with these brothers where we read in verses 50:19-21,

“And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? (20) But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. (21) Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”

God can turn a bad situation around and mean it for good in your life, if you give Him his rightful place in your life.

The worst crime that was ever committed on the face of the earth – God turned it around and made it the most blessed event ever in all of human history – that of the crucifixion of His Son Jesus Christ.

What I am saying to you in this message is – Regardless of the circumstance in which you find yourself, if you commit yourself to the Holy sovereign will of God, and you say I’ll be and do whatever you want – God can take that circumstance and turn it around, not only for His glory but for your benefit as well.

If God has spoken to your heart, after reading the sermon **“Three Specific Things”** 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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