

Philemon 1:1-9

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Date: 28 December 2025

Preacher: Spencer Baumgardner

[0 : 00] Good evening. I think I'm going to teach tonight, the good Lord's will, next Sunday as well.

! I'd like to go to a very tiny and much neglected book in the New Testament, right between Titus and Hebrews, a little book called Philemon.

And I was talking to Missy about it on the way here tonight, and I preached this book one time in one sermon. And I probably haven't been preaching, I don't know, three or four years when I did.

And that was before I was recording, and quite frankly, I should be very thankful for that. Because there's a whole lot in this book, and there's way too much to cram into one sermon like I did.

But that's the only time I've really ever been in this book. I've read it several times, and the rest of you probably have similar experience. The closer you walk with God, the longer you're in this walk, and the more you're into Scripture, the more God reveals Himself in Scripture.

[1 : 18] And truth be known, I shouldn't have preached that one. I did. But I did anyway. So I think this is an opportunity possibly for redemption tonight for that short sermon, probably about 40, 45 minutes that I preached years ago.

But anyway, Philemon is one of the prison epistles. Much like Brother Mike read from this morning about Philippians, that being one of the prison epistles, as well as Colossians and Ephesians.

In fact, many times I recommend if people are going to read either Colossians or Philemon to read them together.

That being because it's very possible that the church at Colossae was started in the house of Philemon. And we'll see that as we go through this short little letter here the next couple of Sundays, Lord willing.

It's estimated by scholars who are much smarter than I am that this letter was written between 60 and 62 A.D., which is a very, very good possibility that it was written there.

[2 : 36] But it was written as a prison epistle. Paul makes it very plain here that he was imprisoned, whether it was house arrest or whether it was actual jail, is neither here nor there.

It's considered a prison epistle because he was under bonds. And we all know why Paul was under bonds when he wrote his prison epistles. It was for simply preaching the gospel and for no other reason.

Because he preached about Jesus Christ. He preached salvation through Jesus Christ. And people didn't like that, especially those pagans and heathens that ruled the empire at the time.

They didn't want him preaching this Jesus or preaching this gospel. And Paul was accused many times of inciting riots and all kinds of other things.

You can read about some of those incidences in the book of Acts. And, you know, he was wrongfully accused, but he was accused nonetheless. He incited nothing. The people just got angry because he was preaching Jesus.

[3 : 42] But it wasn't Paul's fault that they got angry. That was the result of the fallen state that this world is in. But anyway, we're going to hopefully, for the Lord's help, get through the first nine verses of Philemon this evening.

And honestly, I hate stopping at verse nine. But if you notice in verse 10 in your Bibles, verse 10 ends with a colon. I don't like stopping where a verse ends with a colon.

So because that's indicative that it needs to continue. So with the Lord's help, we'll stop at verse nine tonight. But nevertheless, there's still a whole lot in these scriptures, not just historically.

And that's something that I recommend to every one of you if you're studying scripture, to think of it in a historical aspect, just like Genesis.

You know, when you're reading Genesis, think of it as a historical account. Yes, it's the inspired word of God. And we should keep that in mind.

[4 : 51] But it's also a historical account of creation. It's a historical account of the beginning of mankind. It's a historical account of the fall of mankind. It's a historical account of the first mention of the gospel in Genesis 315.

And all of it, you know, Genesis tells us so much. It tells us, again, about our fall, about the promise of the gospel, about why we're in the state that we're in.

It tells us where Israel came from. It tells us all kinds of things. I've often said, could you imagine if the Bible began with the book of Exodus? You know, you would you would open up Exodus to chapter one.

You'd be like, well, what's a Pharaoh? Who was Israel? Where'd these people come from? And all those answers are given in the book of Genesis. But so so we're going to look at this from a historical perspective.

Yes, as an inspired God breathed account. Yes. But there's something unique about this letter that Paul wrote to this man, this fellow servant in the Lord named Philemon.

[5 : 56] And that's that this letter is a personal letter. The other letters that you read from Paul are to churches or to groups of people. But this is a personal letter from one man to another.

Never meant to be read to other churches. You read at the end of some of some of his other letters, he says, be sure to read this to the congregation. Read this, read this to the others and make sure you pass this to this church or to that church.

And you read the letter that I sent to them. But there's nothing like that that was ever intended for this letter to Philemon. But it was as far as Paul's Paul is concerned.

I'm sure that Paul never dreamed that this little letter that he wrote to Philemon would make it into the canon of Scripture. There are people that say this letter shouldn't even be in the canon of Scripture.

There's people that say the same thing about the book of James. Some very well-known older scholars from centuries ago said the book of James shouldn't be in here. There's people that say the book of Philemon should not be in here.

[7 : 06] But folks, it is part of the closed canon of the 66 books of Scripture that we have. God intended for it to be here. And God had his purposes for that one main purpose that we'll likely get into next Sunday night.

Lord willing. So, all that being said, in the book of Philemon, verse 1, it says, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy, our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow laborer. So, Paul, many times in his other letters, again, this is a personal letter, versus a letter to a church or a group of churches, whatever have you.

But Paul, many times would say, an apostle of Jesus Christ. That's how he would introduce himself. A servant of Jesus Christ. But here he says, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

And remember, Paul was in bonds here. Paul, this is one of the prison epistles. He says, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Folks, we can learn a lot from just these few words here.

[8 : 17] Now, I understand what he is saying, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He is a slave to Jesus Christ. He is a servant to Jesus Christ. And you all have heard me say it. I've heard Brother Mike say it.

I've heard many, many other people say it. That you're either a slave to sin or you're a slave to Christ. That's the only two types of people there are in this world. And I understand when Paul here says, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, that the language that he is using is meant to convey something to the receiver of this letter to Philemon.

Instead of him beginning, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Or a servant. Or anything along those lines. I'm the one that met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

I had a very, very, very personal experience with Jesus Christ. He doesn't begin with that. He says, Paul, a servant or a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And we can learn a lot from that.

One, if we are born again, we are prisoners of Jesus Christ. But, what else can we learn from this? Paul was a prisoner at this time.

[9 : 25] He was a prisoner of the government. They had him in bonds. They had him shackled. If he was under house arrest, yes, he could leave his little place that he rented there and go about as he pleased.

But he was constantly chained to a guard. If he was in jail, he did not have that freedom. But, either way, he was a prisoner. But he understood something. He understood that he was a prisoner of

Jesus Christ.

But, not only that, Paul also understood that he was a prisoner for Jesus Christ. And this is what we can learn from Paul. Paul, that whatever situations we find ourselves in, whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, we look at our current circumstances, and a lot of times we feel like we're shackled.

A lot of times we feel like we're bound. A lot of times we feel like, you know, absolutely, it's out of our control. There's nothing that we can do. And a lot of times that actually is the case.

But, folks, if we are in the will of God, and we find ourselves in such circumstances, we are there for the cause of Jesus Christ.

[10 : 38] And we are there for the cause of the gospel. Paul understood why he was in prison. He understood why he was bound with fetters.

Why he was bound with chains. Why he had been arrested. Why his freedom had been taken away. He understood that. And it was for the cause of Jesus Christ.

And if we can learn that from Paul, if we can learn that our circumstances, many times, if we are children of God, are for the glory of Jesus Christ, we will go through this life a whole lot smoother.

I'm not saying that things are going to be easy. But we can take our circumstances and take our situations to a whole other level, resting in the fact that God is going to get the glory out of whatever the outcome is of whatever situation that we find ourselves in.

And I think that brought Paul a great amount of rest when he was in prison and when he was bound with knowing that he was there for the cause of Jesus Christ.

[11 : 44] Now I ain't saying when we do something stupid and we're all guilty of that. I'm not saying, you know, we go somewhere we know we're not supposed to.

We say something that we know we're not supposed to. And we get in trouble because of that. That that's going to be to the glory of God. God can turn that around. God specializes in taking bad situations and turning them into good.

But I'm not saying that every time we do something in the flesh, something on our own, that it's all for the glory of God.

Because many times we rob glory of God over the way Christians rob glory from God over the way that we act and over the way that we that we present ourselves over the way that we handle certain circumstances.

But if we can just learn from Paul here, a servant or a prisoner of Jesus Christ, that we that we're that sometimes those circumstances and those situations are to and for the glory of God.

[12 : 47] There'll be a whole lot easier for us to take. I'm not saying it'll be smooth sailing. I'm not saying you're going to have an easy life. I'm not saying anything along those lines. Jesus Christ said himself in the world, you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

I have overcome the world. We shall we will have tribulation in this world. We will have trials in this world. But when we learn as children of God that there that those trials are to the glory of God and we and we glorify God while going through those trials, it's a whole lot easier for us to accept things along those lines.

Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ and Timothy, our brother, and Timothy, our dearly beloved and fellow laborers. So Paul brings up Timothy here. Timothy here is beginning to get a little bit or Paul, I should say, Paul is getting some age on him.

He's training Timothy to to be a pastor. He's training Timothy to be a man of God. He's training Timothy to do the things that a pastor should should do.

And Timothy, he's greeting Philemon with a greeting from Timothy. So obviously he has had some, Paul here has had some contact with Timothy.

[14 : 07] Timothy, he refers to him here as our brother. He says unto Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow laborer. So he calls Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow laborer.

Now there are liberal quote unquote scholars out there that will say that Paul and Philemon didn't really know each other.

That, you know, they maybe met in passing, blah, blah, blah. Folks, he calls him dearly beloved.

And he calls him a fellow laborer. So obviously he knows that Philemon is a brother in Christ.

He's he's had more than just a acquaintance type contact with Philemon. He knows him and he knows him well. And not only does he know him, he knows some other people we're going to get to here in just a moment.

He knows Archippus and he knows Appiah of the household of Philemon. So he's had some pretty intimate contact with Philemon.

[15:11] And he refers to him as dearly beloved and a fellow laborer. Folks, this is something else we could learn as Christians. Whether they go to this church, whether they go to another.

And if they are true Christians, if they have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, they are fellow laborers with us in this thing. And they are dearly beloved in this thing.

Every Christian out there should be dearly beloved. Now, if you're like me, some of them are more dearly beloved than others. And that's just us as human beings.

But they are brothers and sisters in Christ nonetheless. And we could learn a lot from what Paul is writing about Philemon here.

When he says our dearly beloved and fellow laborer. We must keep this in mind. We must. Now, if somebody's out there preaching just outright heresy.

[16:08] Someone out there preaching more than one way to God. Someone out there preaching we are our own way to God. Someone preaching that there's no need for repentance.

Or something along those lines, folks. That's not true gospel. And that's not a true born again person. That would preach such a thing. And unfortunately, there's a lot of that that goes on out there.

And that's just a couple of examples of what we might hear. But if someone truly believes the gospel of Jesus Christ, they have been born again. They have been saved by God's power.

Saved by grace through faith just as you were. Just as I was. There is no reason that we cannot call them dearly beloved. And there's no reason that we cannot consider them a fellow laborer.

A fellow laborer for the cause of Christ. Verse 2. He continues his greeting. He says, And to our beloved Appiah and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house.

[17:09] So to our beloved Appiah, it's assumed, it's purely speculation, because there's not really historical documents to back it up. But it's assumed that Appiah is the wife of Philemon.

And Archippus is the son of Philemon. And again, that's not corroborated by any type of historical document. The Bible or an extra biblical text.

But it is assumed, and pretty rightfully assumed, that Appiah is Philemon's wife and Archippus is Philemon's son.

Archippus is actually mentioned, as I said before, at the end of the book of Colossians. And as one of the higher ups in that church.

And you can read that for yourselves a little bit later. But, he says, to our beloved Appiah and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house.

[18:08] This is one of the greatest lines in this whole little letter that we read to Philemon. And the church is in thy house. Or the church in thy house.

Folks, I've said several times that the church began in houses. It did not begin in separate buildings. It began in people's houses.

And chances are, when this whole thing wraps up, the church is going to be going on in people's houses. And that's not what makes this such a great line. But I have said that many times.

That's how the church began. That's probably how the church is going to end up. I'm talking about the true church. It's going to end up in hiding. It's going to end up having to meet in private and away from other people over fear of arrest, over fear of being killed, over fear of this and over fear of that.

And folks, that's going on the world over right now. I know Brother Delbert Gillette, missionary to Romania, the mission I know very well. He said that during the communist rule in Romania that the people would meet underground, outside of the public.

[19:20] And they would sing songs, but they would sing no words. They wouldn't make a noise. They would stand there with their songs on little scraps of paper that they had. And they would mouth the words to those songs without saying a word.

The folks, they were worshiping God the best way that they could. But that's how they had to do that. Now, they could have made a big spectacle and risked getting arrested or murdered or whatever the case was.

But, folks, that's going on even now. Even now that Romania is no longer a communist country, but it goes on in China a lot. There's a lot of underground churches in China that we know about. And they have to remain underground.

Because of that. And people will say, well, they need to get some boldness about them. Folks, if they're all arrested, how are they going to spread the gospel? If they're all murdered, how is the gospel going to go forth?

I'm not saying that God is incapable of causing that to happen. I'm saying these people are using the good sense that God blessed them with. Right. In doing so. In doing things the way that they are doing. But he says in the church, in the house.

[20 : 24] Have you ever wanted to be in ministry? I'm not saying necessarily a preacher. Necessarily a deacon or an evangelist.

Not even necessarily a singer. But just in ministry. Folks, we are all called to ministry. We are all called to ministry. And your first ministry is in your house.

It is in your house. It is proclaiming the faith and the gospel of Jesus Christ within the walls of your house.

This church met in Philemon's house. We know that here from Scripture. However many people were there, we don't know. How often they met, we are not real sure. But we know that there was a church that met there.

So Philemon was obviously proclaiming the faith and proclaiming the gospel to his, who we assume is his wife, Apheot. And whom we assume is his son, Archippus.

[21 : 28] And this spread outward. And people started meeting at Philemon's house. Now it's rightfully assumed that Philemon must have been a fairly wealthy fellow. To have had a house, you know, that he could invite people into.

That he could, you know, entertain people in. That the gospel could be preached and spread inside of. The fact that he had slaves is what this letter is mostly all about.

It's a slave named Onesimus. We're not going to get that far tonight. But it's well and rightfully assumed that Philemon was a fairly wealthy man.

But yet he opened his house up to others to come and meet. For what? For church. For worship. To hear the word of God. To talk about God.

To sing about God. To worship God. And folks, like I said, our houses, our own houses, is the first step for any ministry that is out there.

[22 : 32] If there is no ministry in the house, the church, this building, and the other buildings will fall apart in our time. It must begin in the church. It must begin within our own families.

We've all got, well, we might not all have children. But we all know people. We've got nephews. We've got nieces. We've got brothers. We've got sisters. We've got parents. We've got children, grandchildren, whatever the case is that we can witness to.

When they are inside of our house, they need to see the gospel in us. Right. They need to see the gospel outflowing from us. They need to see the goodness of God coming out of us.

And folks, that is ministry. That is ministry. And we are all called to it. When Jesus said to go into all corners of the world and preach the gospel to every living creature, He wasn't just talking to men.

He wasn't just talking to women. He was talking to all saved people that we are to go into the world and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone that we meet, to everyone that we come into contact with.

[23 : 38] And what better place to do that than your own home? When you have visitors. This is the time of year. When we have a lot of visitors, a lot of people that we don't normally see.

Did they see Christ in you? Did they see Christ in you? Did they see Christ in me? God help me. God help us all that that's the case.

That Christ is seen in each of us. Because that is ministry. And just because someone sees Christ in you does not mean they are going to get saved.

Y'all have heard me say before. My testimony ain't never got anybody saved. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Right. And if they hear the gospel and they see the change that the gospel has made in my life.

And I tell them of the change that the gospel has made in my life. And God's spirit can convict their heart. If the gospel has been truly presented.

[24 : 39] God's spirit can convict their hearts and draw them to the door of salvation that they have in Jesus Christ. But again in verse 2 he says, And to our beloved Appiah and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house.

Folks, keep in mind every time you're home, every time you have a visitor, every time you're with other people, that is an opportunity for ministry.

It is an opportunity for ministry. It's an opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verse 3. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a greeting. Grace to you and peace. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just any grace.

And not just any peace. But the grace and peace from God and from Jesus Christ. And this is wonderful the way that it's phrased.

[25 : 45] And I understand this isn't the only time that Paul has ever used that in such a greeting. And I praise God for that quite frankly. But he says, Grace to you and peace from God the Father.

What is significant about that? Well folks, we're saved by grace through faith. I just got through talking about how the church was in Philemon's house.

So obviously Philemon was telling people about his faith. Beginning with Apphia and Archippus. And then it spreading outward from there.

So we're saved by grace through faith. What does that bring us to though? What does being saved bring us to? It brings us peace. It brings us peace.

If you ever read about the offerings. Sometimes when you've got time, do a good study on Leviticus chapters 1 through 7. About all those offerings. About the third chapter you get to the peace offering.

[26 : 45] And that peace offering is not what we have it in our heads that it is. Husbands, you make your wife mad.

You go out and you buy her flowers. Or a box of chocolates. I don't know, bring her home. Or a hamster or something. And you come home and you present that to her after she's mad at you. What are you doing? That's a peace offering. Folks, that is a peace offering in our eyes. But folks, that's not how the peace offering with God works. Right.

Amen. If you read about the peace offering. You don't bring an offering to God to make peace with Him. You bring an offering to God because you have peace with Him.

Read that sometime. Read about it in Leviticus 3. You can read about it in Leviticus 7. Because it's brought up again there. But the peace offering is not something that we make with God.

[27 : 44] It's something that we bring to God. We bring an offering to God because we have peace with Him. The burnt offering is the one that's offered in Leviticus chapter 1. That's the one that cleanses.

That's the one that really matters. That's why it's the first one that's brought up. But until two chapters later, you see something about a peace offering. But we bring an offering to God because we have peace with Him.

He says, grace to you and peace from God our Father. If Philemon was not a saved person, there would be no peace from the Father toward Him.

We are naturally, according to the Scriptures, we are naturally children of wrath. And we have the wrath of God abiding upon us before we're born again.

But once we're born again, we have peace. And we have peace because of grace. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[28 : 50] Grace and peace to you. Remember, the only reason you have that peace with God is because of the grace that He has shed upon you. The grace that He saved you with.

God was under no obligation to save a single soul. He is God. He could have snuffed this entire world out. He could have snuffed it out with Noah. He could have snuffed it all out when Cain killed Abel.

He could have snuffed it out at any given time at the Tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11. God could have said, I'm done with this. I'm finished. I'm going to start afresh. But no, that is not God's character.

God's character is grace. God's character is reconciliation. As Brother Ellis was talking about in Sunday school this morning. It's to bring His creation back to Him.

To worship Him. And to serve Him. And to glorify Him. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is Paul writing to Philemon.

[29 : 54] Someone who has already received grace. And because he has already received grace, he has received that peace. This is Paul writing to Philemon. I want these things multiplied upon

you.

And you and I should have that same outlook to every brother or sister in Christ that we have. That grace and peace be multiplied to them. If we've already received it through salvation, folks, there is no other way to get more of it unless it is multiplied.

And that should be our wish and our hope and our prayer. For every other brother and sister in Christ that we have. Is that grace and peace be multiplied to them.

Folks, there's times that I need peace in my life. Just like there's times that you need peace in your life. There's times that we have problems. You know, we've all had financial problems. We've all had relational problems.

We've all had spiritual problems. We've all had health problems. And we need peace at those times. And I thank God that there's some people out there that are praying for grace and peace to be multiplied upon me.

[30 : 59] If that weren't the case, my goodness, where would any of us be? Where would any of us be? Verse 4. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers.

So he's already commended Philemon. He's already spoken to Philemon.

Written to Philemon, we should say. That he's dearly beloved. That he's a fellow laborer. He's already talked about the church in his house. He's already wished or prayed for grace and peace to be multiplied to Philemon from God.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he says, I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers. Folks, this is something else we need to learn. He has not said one negative thing toward Philemon.

He has not mentioned one negative thing that's going on in Philemon's life. Everything that he has brought up here has been good. It seems to be smooth sailing for Philemon.

[32 : 03] It seems that all is going well for Philemon. When do you and when do I most pray for people? When they're under burden.

When they're being attacked. Whether it's a spiritual attack, a physical attack, a physical slash spiritual attack. That's when we pray for people.

So and so is sick. Let's pray for them. What's wrong with praying for somebody when they're well? What's wrong with praying for somebody when everything's going right in their life?

Amen. I can guarantee you, if you are a Christian and everything is going well. Everything is going well in your life. You've got a bullseye on your back from the enemy.

Amen. Not because he's coming after your soul. But because he wants to drag you down into depression. He wants to drag you down into sadness. He wants to drag you down into doubt.

[32 : 57] He wants to drag you down so that you are ineffectual for the kingdom of God. That's why we have marks on our back. So we need to pray for one another.

Not only when we're sick. Yes, God help us to do that. When we're sick. When we're ailing. When we're sad. When we're suffering. Whatever the case is. By all means, yes. Pray for those people. But pray for others that everything's going well for them. He says here, I thank my God making mention of thee always in my prayers. And again, he had not mentioned one negative thing up to this point.

But he's still praying for Philemon. My goodness, what we can learn from that. I want people praying for me all the time. If things are going well.

If I go to work tomorrow and I get a \$50,000 a year raise. I want y'all praying for me. If I go to work tomorrow and I get a pink slip. I want y'all praying for me.

[34 : 01] Either way, I want folks praying for me. We need to pray for one another. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for these people that we were talking about just a little while ago.

That are in underground churches. That are in danger of being killed. Being martyred. Or being arrested. Or being beaten. Or whatever the case is. Yes, pray for them. But pray for the churches that are flourishing as well.

Pray for the churches that are able to preach the gospel freely. Unhindered. Pray for them. Because they're the ones with the target on them. The target's already found its mark with some of them other people.

Yes, pray for them that God can bring them out from that. So that they can flourish as well. So that the gospel can go forth unhindered. But pray for all. Pray for all.

Don't just pray for people when they're down and out. Don't just pray for folks when they're sick. Pray for them when they're well. Right. Two. Verse five.

[35 : 01] Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints. Folks, if we have love toward the head, which is Jesus Christ.

If we have love toward Him. Right. It is natural for us to have love for the body. The church. Right. And if we've got love for one and not the other, I question your love for Christ.

Amen. If we have love for the church, but not for Jesus, I would certainly question your love. But if we claim that we have love for Jesus, but not for the church.

Folks, there's something bad wrong there. We know we've passed from death into life because we love the brethren. Amen. According to first, first John. If we love the brethren, we want to be where the brethren are at.

If we love the brethren, we want to do what the brethren are doing. We love the brethren. We want to have fellowship with the brethren. And where are we going to get that? At the house of God.

[36 : 17] Yeah. In the church. He says again, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints.

He's talking about love. He's talking about faith. He's talking about love toward Jesus. He's talking about faith toward Jesus. But he's also talking about love toward the other saints and faith toward the other saints.

That's not saying depending upon the saints for salvation. That's not what Paul is getting at here. That's not what Philemon was doing. And that's not what scripture gets at in any way, shape, form, or fashion.

But I have faith in you all. Hopefully you have faith in me somewhat. We have faith in one another. Why?

Because of our common faith that we have in one other person. Jesus Christ. That's why I can have faith in you. I can have faith in you to pray. I can have faith in you to encourage me.

[37 : 17] You can have faith in me to encourage you. I can have faith in you to call me out when I'm wrong. You can have faith in me to call you out when you're wrong.

And folks, we need that. There has to be some accountability in the church of Almighty God. If there's no accountability, folks, we're destroying ourselves.

We must be accountable to one another. But he says, Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints. We must have love toward Jesus.

We must have love toward all saints. As hard as that is sometimes. Because we've all got people that, I guess you could say, we love a little more than maybe others.

Or some that we love a little less than others. The folks that are brothers and sisters in Christ. We must have love toward them. That doesn't mean that we have to agree with everything.

[38 : 18] I'm very good friends and love very dearly some dear brothers in Christ. And I have no reason whatsoever that I can't call them brothers in Christ. But theologically, we disagree on some things.

But it's nothing that's primary. We agree on the virgin birth. We agree on the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The vicarious death of Jesus Christ.

We agree on the death, the birth, the resurrection. We agree that Jesus is coming again. We agree that the gospel includes repentance. And that we can only be saved through the power of the gospel.

We can only be saved and washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ. We agree on the main points, in other words. But I don't agree on some secondary and some tertiary things. But that doesn't mean I can't call them brothers in Christ.

We must have love toward all saints. And if we have love toward all saints, folks, we need to be praying for all saints.

[39 : 22] I'm not talking about saints like the Roman Catholic Church deems people saints, folks. According to what I read in Scripture, if you're a child of God, you're a saint. Right.

You're a saint. If you're part of the church, you are a saint. It is not up to man to deem you a saint. God calls you a saint the moment that you receive Jesus Christ in your heart and in your life.

The moment you're born again. Verse 6. So we need to couple these first couple of verses before this as well.

I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and thy faith and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual.

He's praying for Philemon. Remember, I thank God. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers. Then he says, hearing of thy love and thy faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints.

[40 : 35] He's praying that the communication of thy faith may become effectual. That the communication, this communication is not a communication, the way that it's translated in Scripture sometimes talking about your life.

This is talking about actual communication, like I'm communicating to you right now. If we were having a conversation, we'd be communicating with one another. That's the communication we're talking about right now.

Right. It says that the communication of thy faith may become effectual. This is a question for me. And this is a question for you. Is the communication of your faith and my faith effectual?

Or is it just something that we feel like we need to check a box off to say that we've done it for the day? God help us. Amen. God help us. We all know the verse from James.

The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We all want prayers like that. But what about our communication of the faith? Do we want it to be effectual?

[41 : 43] Do we want it to be effectual in our lives and in the lives of others? Here's this man, Philemon, who has a church in his house, which was a voluntary thing for him to do.

He didn't have to open up his doors. He could have said, no, go out there and meet on the sidewalk somewhere. Go down yonder or up yonder or wherever the case is.

But not here. But no. He opened up the doors of his house. God help us. God help us.

To live lives. Amen. That communicate the faith effectually. Because people see the good that is in us. Paul said himself in the letter to the Romans that in him dwelleth no good thing.

And that, of course, is outside of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only thing that was good in Paul. Christ is the only thing that is good in you. Christ is the only thing that is good in me.

[42 : 49] Outside of Jesus Christ, you and I are nothing more than wretched, vile sinners that deserve the flames of hell forever and forever. Amen.

So if there is any good thing in us, it is Christ. Are we living a life that communicates the faith that we have in Christ that shows the goodness of Christ to others?

God help us to do that. Help me to do that. We all react. We all do and say things that we shouldn't. Right. Even as born again children of God, we do it. I've done it. You've done it. We're all guilty of it.

God help us to do it less and less and less.

Folks, that's part of sanctification. Right. We are conformed more and more and more into the image of Jesus Christ every day of our lives.

[43 : 50] Folks, how do we do that? How do we do that? It is by our faith in Jesus Christ. It is by our faith in the Word of Almighty God. It's by our faith in the goodness of God.

Again, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. Who is going to be acknowledging this?

Well, immediately, the immediate context here is the all saints that verse 5 ends with. They're going to be witnesses of that.

So that's the immediate context. But the broader context is anyone that you come into contact with. Philemon, you have a church in your house. And word is getting out about this church.

Yes, you've probably got people that have been coming to service after service or meeting after meeting, however you want to phrase that. But word is going to get out. And you're going to have newcomers coming in there. Be sure that they see the goodness that is in you because of the communication, the effectual communication of your faith to the outside world and to the saints.

[44 : 58] God, help us to be that way. Yeah. Help us to have effectual communication toward people.

Verse 7. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love. This is great. This is awesome. What he says here. Again, nothing negative has come out about Philemon here.

Paul doesn't have the first negative thing to say about him. Really throughout the entire letter. But he says, for we have great joy and consolation in thy love.

What's he doing here? What's Paul saying? He is celebrating. What's he celebrating? What did he just say in the previous verse? He's praying for them that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is.

Is in present tense. Which is in you and in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love. He is celebrating the love that Philemon has for the saints.

[46 : 04] He is celebrating the love that Philemon has for Jesus Christ. Folks, we should celebrate likewise. But what do we do?

What do we do? Even though the scripture commands us to rejoice with them that they rejoice. To weep with them that we. To mourn with those that mourn. We're to do all of these things. But what do we do?

Do you ever rejoice? Do you ever celebrate someone else's love for Jesus Christ? That's exactly what Paul is saying here in these words when he says, For we have great joy and consolation in thy love.

He is celebrating and it brings him a sense of comfort. That consolation. He is celebrating the love that Philemon has. And it brings him comfort. It says, In thy love because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

The bowels of the saints are refreshed. Do we live a life like this? Do we live a life when we come into contact with brothers and sisters in Christ? Whether it be here.

[47 : 08] Or whether it be at a meeting somewhere else out there. Whether we meet at the Donald sometime. Or whatever the case is. Do we live a life where the goodness of Christ flows out of us so much?

And the gospel truth flows out of us so much. And the goodness of God does so. That the bowels of the saints. This is just to say their most inward parts.

The very seat of their emotion. That it's refreshed. Because they've been in contact with us. Again, God help us to live a life like that.

God help me to emanate and elume people with the light of Jesus Christ. Anyone that I come into contact with.

But especially the saints. Folks, we need refreshing. We need consolation. And we're not going to get any of that from the world. It's an impossibility.

[48 : 09] We might get some very temporal comfort from the world. We can have a lost person walk up to us when we're having a bad day. Put their arm around us and tell us it's all going to be okay.

That will bring us a form of consolation. But folks, that is not the peace that passeth all understanding. That is a temporal peace. That's a temporal consolation. I have a peace that is guaranteed by Almighty God through Jesus Christ.

That has started the day that I got saved. And is guaranteed to go on into the next plane. Into the next region. Into the next world. And into all of eternity.

That's the peace that I want. And that is the consolation that I want. And that's the consolation and the peace that I want to show people. When I come into contact with them.

Again, for we have great joy and consolation in thy love. Because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. The bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee.

[49 : 09] Why? Because of the love that he has for Christ. And because of the love that he has for all the saints. That's why it's so refreshing to come into contact with Philemon.

God, help us to live a life like Paul is commending Philemon on. I'm not putting Philemon up on a pedestal. Don't y'all get me wrong. Philemon was a man.

He was a human being just like you and I are human beings. Folks, have you ever known Christians like that? I have. That you just walk up to them, shake their hand, and have a 30 second long conversation with them.

And you just feel better when you walk away? Yeah. I've known some like that in my short walk as a Christian. Amen. Amen. And I thank God for people like that. Thank God for people like that.

I've said many times, and again, I'm talking about Brother Delbert Gillette, and I don't mean to put him up on a pedestal either. I've said about that man more than once that I know I'm supposed to model myself after Jesus Christ.

[50 : 11] All of us are supposed to do that. But if I were to model myself after man, it would be him. That man will take any conversation and turn it into something about God. And turn it into

something about the goodness of God.

God help me. God help me because somehow we get to talk about sports or whatever the case is. And God help me. I'll find something negative to say about it.

God help. Amen. Verse 8. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient.

Now, we've gone through these first seven verses of commendation that Paul is giving to Philemon. Greeting that he has given to Appiah and Archippus.

And commendation that he's given to Philemon. Now that he's finished doing that, and he's not buttering Philemon up by doing this. But now that he is finished with that, he gets into the subject matter of why he's writing the letter.

[51 : 13] But notice, first he commends them. He commends them. He acknowledges all the good things that are going on with the church that is in his house. He's thanking God for him.

All these things are going on. All this positivity is going on. In these next couple of verses, he gets into why he is writing the letter. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient.

Verse 9. Yet for love's sake, I rather beseech thee, being such in one as Paul the agent, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul could have very well and very easily invoked and cited his apostolic authority.

He could have done that with the very beginning verse of this short letter that we're reading. But he chose not to. Instead, instead of saying, I, Paul the agent, Paul the one who is an elder, Paul the apostle, instead of saying that, he's appealing to the heart of Philemon.

He's appealing to the love that he's been talking about, that Philemon has for Jesus and for the other saints. He's appealing to that side.

[52 : 43] He could have cited, again, his authority as an apostle and commanded things to Philemon. And Philemon, especially in this day, would have been obligated to have abided by whatever Paul said.

Because Paul was an elder. And because Paul had apostolic authority. This is something that many, I won't say many, but a good handful of preachers that I know need to get a hold of.

Yeah. I believe in pastoral authority. I do. And I also believe that a pastoral authority is abused in many cases. Right. Yeah.

He is not invoking his power or his right as an elder or as an apostle here. Folks, and that's not the way of the gospel either.

Now, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. We know that from Romans chapter 1. And it is powerful. The gospel is powerful. God is powerful.

[53 : 51] But folks, instead of God looking down sinful man and saying, be saved, which he does to an extent.

But instead of him just commanding that, how is it given to us? How is it presented to us? It's presented as an invitation. And that's what Paul is doing in this letter to Philemon.

Not with authoritative power that he could have used. But it's an invitation for Philemon to do the right thing as a brother in Christ.

Again, read these verses. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee, that which is convenient. What is he saying here? He's saying, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee.

To make you do this thing. To make you do the right thing. And again, we're talking about a runaway slave here. We haven't gotten that far in this letter.

[55 : 01] We're not going to tonight. But this man named Onesimus. That's what he's getting at in these two verses, though. Is the reason that he wrote. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee, that which is convenient.

Yet, for love's sake. For love's sake. I'm not going to cite my authority. And I'm not going to use my authority. Yet, for love's sake.

I rather beseech thee. Being such a one as Paul the age. And now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He refers to himself again, as he did in the first verse.

As a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Again, he is appealing to the heart. Which is exactly what the Spirit does when someone is lost.

The Spirit appeals to the heart. The Spirit shows that person, that individual. That they are wicked. That they're sinful.

[56 : 06] That they are hopeless outside of Jesus Christ. But then there's invitation given. There's a way out of that. Whosoever is a thirst, let him come take it with water of life freely.

Sounds like an invitation to me. God told Noah, come into the ark. He didn't say go, as some of the other translations have it.

You look at the Hebrew word that's used there. He says, come into the ark. It was an invitation for Noah to go. He says, come. And folks, had he said go into the ark.

That intimates that God's outside the ark. With Noah. And he's saying, go on to the ark. But I'm going to stay right out here. But he says, come on the ark. That intimates that God is right there on the ark.

And the ark was a picture of salvation. It was a picture of Jesus Christ. There's invitations all throughout the Scripture. Come. Come. Come.

[57 : 06] Isaiah 1. Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. But it begins with, come.

There's invitation given there. And that's what Paul is doing with Philemon right here. He is giving Philemon invitation. Knowing who Philemon is. Knowing the love that he has for Jesus Christ. Knowing the love that he has for the saints. He is giving invitation to Philemon to do the right thing. Folks, had Paul commanded Philemon to do it.

And Philemon done exactly as Paul said. God would have still been glorified. But, for Paul to go about it the way that he is. And we'll get into it more next week.

For him to go about it the way that he is. And appeal to the heart. And the love that Philemon has for fellow saints. And for Jesus Christ. How much more glory does God get from that?

[58 : 05] That a man made the right choice. He wasn't forced. He wasn't made to. And salvation is the same way. Salvation is the same way.

We are not forced to accept Christ. We are not forced to believe what the Bible says. We are not forced to confess Christ as Lord. But when we choose to.

When we acknowledge it. And we praise God because of it. How much more glory does God get from that? God is glorified either way. Because he is God.

And all the glory belongs to him anyway. And his word is true. No matter who says it's a lie. Amen. So God is glorified. But how much more is he glorified? When we choose.

When we choose God. When we choose to follow God. When we choose to love God. And the only reason we choose to love God. Again, 1 John is because he first loved us. We love God because he first loved us.

[59 : 02] It's not the opposite. It's not the opposite. Again, Paul here is appealing to Philemon. And his heart and his love. To do the right thing. We'll give him next week.

More as to what that right thing is. Y'all can read ahead if you want to. In fact, I highly encourage you to do so. That's where we're going to leave it tonight. God bless y'all. I appreciate your attention.

Anybody got any questions or any comments on that? I ain't afraid to ask that when I teach. Alright. God bless y'all.

I appreciate it.