

TRIUMPH

“Do you know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (1 Cor. 9:24)

A Study in Philemon (10)

Gabriel Rodriguez

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Whatever the situation and circumstances as to why Onesimus ran away from his master Philemon no one will really know, but one thing was for sure - Onesimus was now a child of God through obedience of the gospel, which was administered by Paul (v.10). And through this conversion, whatever was amiss between Onesimus and Philemon, Paul made it clear that *“in time past he was unprofitable, but now he was profitable”* (v. 11). Using this fact, Paul pleaded with Philemon to accept Onesimus as his new brother in Christ and omit any emotional negative responses for why he ran away. Paul gave this strong argument: *“For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that you should now receive him forever. Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?”* (vs. 15-16).

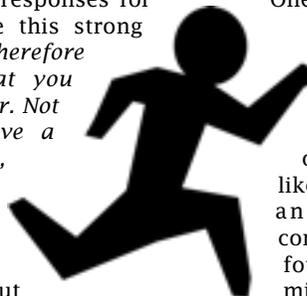
Paul wanted Philemon to put this incident in perspective. Instead of focusing on the negative aspect of the situation, that Onesimus did something wrong to him and ran away from him (vs. 18-19), now Onesimus was being sent back more profitable - a renewed and changed person, who was now a comrade in the army of God and a fellow soldier of Philemon (cf, v. 17). This new found relationship was greater than the past actions Onesimus had committed, and certainly Philemon would have understood this if he knew the power of

the gospel (Rom. 1:16), which he no doubt experienced himself.

The purpose of the gospel is to cleanse minds (i.e., conscience) of sins we've committed before the Lord (Rom. 3:23; 6:1-4, 23; Acts 2:38; Heb. 10:4,22; 1 Pet. 3:21). Therefore, as God forgets our past actions and renews our relationship with Him, Philemon was to do the same with Onesimus. Onesimus had chosen poor life choices in the past, but now he was a different and better man. Hence, the only response Philemon was to take with

Onesimus is seen in Paul's words to the church in Ephesus, *“And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you”* (4:32). Just as God forgives us of our sins committed against Him; likewise, we should be willing to forgive and forget wrong that has been committed to us by others. The parable found in Matthew 18:21-35 comes to mind as well. As God forgives us of our extraordinary debt, we should be willing to forgive others of their petty debt.

This is what Paul desired from Philemon and by practicing this, Paul would have *“joy in the Lord and be refreshed”* (v. 20). Paul was confident that Philemon would do the right thing, or should I say, the logical thing (v. 21). The final point is, may we never put physical matters ahead of the spiritual. While Onesimus had done something in the past for him to flee, it was his choice for future blessings that matters most. (Phil. 3:13-14). May God be praised!



THE NATURE AND EFFICACY OF PRAYER (5)

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

The Ladies' Bible Class and the Men's Training Class will meet today at 4:00 pm. The ladies will be studying lesson 9 and the men will be studying lesson 2 of the Godly Male - The Male Christian's Relationship to the World.

The ladies get-together will be on July 27th, while the men's breakfast will be on July 29th. Sign-up sheets are in the foyer.

The fifth Sunday fellowship/game night will be on July 30 after evening services. Bring games to play. The menu is sandwiches and salads.

Volunteers are needed for August: a host for the young adult devotional, a host for the fellowship luncheon, someone to prepare the communion, and a brother to be in charge of the services. See one of the elders if you can serve in any way.

YOUTH

There will be no July devotional because most of our kids will be out of town.

Our young people are invited to a Summer Youth Devotional at the Northern Oaks congregation on August 12th from 4:30-7:30. If you are interested in attending, please speak with Gabriel.

YOUNG ADULT

There will be no July young adult devotional.

AREA NEWS

See the bulletin board in the foyer for events in our area.

It is no surprise that whenever the subject of prayer is mentioned emotions get the best of us and we lose sight of logic and reason. We've already established with the Scriptures that "**all men**," including the wicked, are blessed by God, generally speaking (cf. Matt. 5: 43-48). The Bible has taught us that God "**already knew**" what we would need before we asked him (Matt. 6:8, 32). This means that God has prepared us fully in this physical world, lack nothing in this life. We then established from the Scriptures that what God wants MOST from us is to **FOCUS** on spiritual things - "*seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*" (Matt. 6:33). Unfortunately, most of our prayers aren't used toward this end, rather we are more concerned about physical well-being and safety, as witnessed in our current prayer practices, where many ask God to "**heal**" or "**protect**" us in this life. But are these requests Scripturally sound? Before someone gets emotional with this question, let's us our logical and rational minds to address this question.

Think about this carefully and thoughtfully. Does not God love His creation? The answer is clearly yes. If this is the case, then the Bible has already addressed his care for us physically - **God has provided for all our needs**. If this is the case, would not asking for things physically be a moot point and serve a different purpose (which we will address later). In other words, anything we ask for, physically speaking, God has already provided an answer and response to it. If we get sick and desire to get better, do we not seek help from those in the medical field, pharmaceutical companies, and food industry? If we are struggling with finances, do we not seek help from financial mentors? If we are struggling with our marriage, do we not seek the help of marriage counselors? I believe the point is well made. If we want help in various areas

of our physical lives we have to seek out the blessings and opportunities already present in the world. And what is obvious is, sometimes we are helped and at other times we are not, which means that we experience fortunate and unfortunate circumstances of life, which is consistent with what the Bible teaches (Eccl. 7:14-15). This is why God demanded us to seek first his ultimate purpose of life, His word and sacrificing ourselves for His cause, because regardless of our fortunate or unfortunate circumstances of life, being in a great relationship is what truly matters to God. Yet, the focus and attention of today's prayer is about God doing something "*remarkable*" (meaning "*miraculously*") for our physical needs. But is God in the business of performing supernatural and/or miraculous acts any longer?

First, we must ask the question, why did God perform supernatural acts to begin with? We answered this two weeks ago by stating that the reason God chose to supersede natural law was for the purpose of procuring the scheme of redemption - the coming of Christ (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4). Second, God performed supernatural acts in order to confirm His messengers and ultimately His message (1 Kgs. 17:24; Jn. 3:2, seeing there were imposters living during the process of the scheme of redemption (Deut. 18: 15-22; 2 Thess. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 2:1-4). And once the scheme of redemption came to fruition, the coming of Christ and His eternal word, then all miraculous actions would naturally come to end. And this is exactly the point made in 1 Corinthians 12:1-13:10. Once the perfect law of liberty was given (the completed canon of Scripture), then all supernatural actions would cease. Why? Because the word of God, which endures forever and "*all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass*" (1 Pet. 2:22-24). May God be praised!

Bro. G. Rodriguez

What Must I Do?

Nearly two thousand years ago an important question was raised before the Apostles after they had delivered the good news of Jesus's life, death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:21-36). The hearer's conscience were pricked of sinful conduct (2 Cor. 7: 10-11) and asked: "*Men and brethren, what shall we do* (in order to be saved)? (Acts 2:37). Without hesitation, Peter elevated his voice and proclaimed: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

Upon hearing the words of Peter, the people obeyed. This demonstrated their belief in Christ (Jn. 8:24). Hence, they repented of sin and confessed allegiance to the name of Christ (Matt. 10:32-33). Afterwards, the people were baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:41, cf. Mrk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21) and given the hope of eternal life (Acts 2:38).

The people's submission to the words of salvation granted them a relationship with God the Father by accessing citizenship into the church of Christ (Acts 2:47, cf. Matt. 16:18; Mrk. 9:1; Acts. 2:1-4). As a member of Christ's body (Acts 8:4) the people were then encouraged to live faithful unto death by conquering sin in their lives (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 6: 4-12; 2 Tim. 4: 6-8). We then await for the coming day in which all men shall be judged the word of God (Jn 12:48; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Cor. 5:10). Will we be ready?

SHEPHERD'S CORNER

Some Suggestions For Improving Our Worship Assemblies

1. **COME.** Never miss a worship service unless it is absolutely necessary. Of George Washington it was said: No guest ever kept him away from worship.
2. **COME EARLY.** Rushing into the assembly late is not conducive to worship. . neither to yours nor other worshippers.
3. **BRING THE ENTIRE FAMILY.** The worship assembly is not a convention where you may simply send a family delegate.
4. **BE SEATED CLOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM.** Leave the back seats for those who may arrive last, and for mothers with small children.
5. **BE REVERENT.** The meeting house is not a theater or place of amusement. You have come to worship God, not to laugh, whisper, or visit. The worship service deserves our utmost reverence.
6. **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.** Don't make a haystack of yourself at the end of the row and expect others to crawl over you to reach a seat.
7. **PARTICIPATE.** Join in the worship service. Be a good listener during the sermon Be sure you sing. Join in the worship. Don't just sit back as a spectator!
8. **BE THOUGHTFUL OF STRANGERS.** They are our guests. Treat them with the same courtesy as you would if they should visit in your home.
9. **CONTRIBUTE GENEROUSLY.** God loves a cheerful giver. Freely ye have received; freely give. Remember your offering is to God.
10. **LINGER.** . Never rush for the door before the end of the closing prayer as though the building were on fire. Speak to others. Be friendly.
11. **BE PRESENT** . . Don't stay away from services because you see imperfections in others. How utterly lonely you would feel in a perfect church.
12. **IF NEEDFUL, USE RESTROOM.** . If needful try to use restroom prior to start of Bible Class, or during break before Worship Assembly.

Bro. Wayne Holmes

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

BISHOPS/SHEPHERDS/ ELDERS

(1 Tim. 3: 1-6)

Brother Elwyn Hipp (830) 510-6311
Brother Wayne Holmes (210) 696-8597

DEACONS

(Acts 6: 1-5; 1 Tim. 3: 7-12)

Brother Raul Baltierra

(210) 843-9730

Brother Bill Dorries

(210) 253-0173

GOSPEL PREACHER

(1 Cor. 9:1-16; 2 Tim. 4: 2-5)

Brother Gabriel Rodriguez

(210) 315-4453



July 23

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *B. Dorries*
 Opening Prayer: *N. Esenowo*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Communion Leader: *T. Mayces*
 Lord's Supper Servers: *E. Castillo; M. de la Garza; S. Amos; R. Baltierra*

Scripture: *Luke 23:33-38*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *R. Baltierra Jr.*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *B. Dorries*
 Opening Prayer: *R. Trevino*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Lord's Supper: *Z. Watkins; B. Dorries*

Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *S. Amos*

After Greeter: *W & K Holmes*
 Greeter/Usher: *T. Mayces*
 AV Duty: *R. Baltierra Jr.*
 In Charge of Invitation: *G. Rodriguez*

REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED

(by writing, calling, and praying)

Wayne Holmes
 Joe Guillen
 Ina Dial
 David and Elijah Sudhoff
 Caral O'Banon
 Sam Amos *(awaiting surgery)*
 Parents of David Lyssy
 Sandra Welch
 Lavender Nelson
 Tita Cortez *(sister of Sam Ramirez)*
 Dolly Gribble *(back)*

BATTLING CANCER:

Johna Dorries Abigail Reyes
 Graciola Anderson Sonny Cary
 Arturo Hernandez
 Renalto *(brother-in-law of Joe Guillen)*
 David Trevino *(brother of Ray)*
 James Watkins

SHUT-INS:

Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest
 Sarah Cannon

TRAVELING:

Art Jacob; Worries (LA)

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES JULY

Organizing Monthly Luncheon:
Harris; Rodriguez
 Preparing Lord's Supper:
Harris
 Auditorium Service Duties:
Harris
 Wash baptismal garments; clean cry
 room
Harris
 Brother in charge of services:
Open

AM Theme:

The Hall of Fame:
Crown of Glory: The King of My Life

PM Theme:

The Canon of Scripture:
Which Books Are Inspired of God?

AM Sermon:

King Saul (6)

PM Sermon:

Introduction (2)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

July 26: R. Baltierra Jr.

August 2: T. Mayces

August 9: E. Castillo

FOR THE RECORD

JULY 16/19

Attendance:

Sunday Bible Study 38
 Sunday AM Worship 56
 Sunday PM Worship 22
 Wednesday Bible Study 25
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,140.02/ \$1,420.20**

Weekly Bible Readers: NA (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Fax: (210) 696-5181

Church email Address:

shenandoah@shenandoahcofc.org

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

Sunday: Bible Study at 9:30 am; Worship at 10:30 am;
 Worship at 5:00 pm.

Wednesday: Bible Study at 7:00 pm