

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 (8)

Gabriel Rodriguez

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So now that we have covered the **high expectations** God had for the master/servant relationship, the epistle of Paul to Philemon, a master who possessed a servant named Onesimus, can now be treated with these principles considered from the Old Testament. Therefore, in this epistle Paul highly anticipated that mutual respect and care of Philemon and Onesimus was to be practiced. How do we know this? Consider verse 1 when Paul likened himself to a “*prisoner of Jesus Christ...*” The word “*prisoner*” is defined as a captive person held in bonds. Therefore, the point was clearly made to Philemon, that despite his position as master over servants, Christ is our master and we are His servants. And as Christ’s possession, this makes all of us “*family*” through the use of the terms “*brother*”, “*dearly beloved*”, and “*fellow laborer*.” What is interesting is, the name Philemon comes from the Greek word *philo*, which means “*friendly*”. There is no doubt that Paul wanted to emphasize their relationships in Christ before he addressed a critical situation with Philemon. Paul strengthens this idea when he also addressed close friends and companions of Philemon - Apphia, Archippus, and the church which met at his house. He expressed “*grace and peace*” from God the father and the Lord Jesus. Before addressing his main point to Philemon,



Paul tactfully and graciously commended him for his work within the kingdom. Paul said, “*I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith, which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; that the communication of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you...For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the bowels of saints are refreshed by you, brother*” (vs. 4-7).

We learn several things about Philemon from this opening statement. *First*, he was a loving and obedient servant to Jesus Christ and all the saints. *Second*, his reputation preceded him, as he being known for good moral works. *Third*, he was someone the church could find comfort and refreshment in, physically and spiritually.

Paul wanted to remind Philemon of his impeccable service to Christ and how his work served to help the church that Christ established. By establishing this fact, Paul wanted to discuss with him and reinforce the notability of Philemon, that if indeed he was genuine as his outward actions indicated, then the next item of business would go smoothly. Would Philemon rise to the occasion and continue his wonderful testament of faith, or would Philemon renege in his commitment to Christ? May God be praised!

THE NATURE AND EFFICACY OF PRAYER (3)

Church News and Announcements

CONGREGATION

The family home devotional, hosted by Carolyn Harris, will be at 11:00 on July 1 at Raymond Rimkus Park in Leon Valley (6440 Evers Rd). A sign-up sheet for food is in the foyer.

Our congregational meeting is today at 4:00 pm. We encourage all our members to be present.

YOUTH

There will be no June devotional because of our Youth Day.

YOUNG ADULT

There will be no July young adult devotional.

AREA NEWS

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

As we noted last week, the concept that many people have, mainly religious people of all stripes, concerning prayer is, God answers prayers when we go to him. They treat God as their personal "genie in the sky," but as we noted, the blessings that many acknowledge God giving them in prayer are simply "general blessings" God gives to all men. Let's take a closer look at the benevolence of God. For this we go to Matthew 5:43-48, where Jesus talked about a new concept and idea, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (v. 44). The old way of thinking was, love only your neighbor and hate your enemy. But Christ transformed this thought by commanding us to His people to seek the best interest of all men (i.e., "love"), including and especially miscreants and sinners. Jesus likened this new concept (God's benevolence shown to all men) to the blessings of nature - "for he (God) makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (v. 45). What this thought reveals is, God's "general blessings" come to all people, regardless of belief and practice in life. Therefore, we can clearly see that the concept that God answers prayers of everyone is **grounded** on the fact that God's general blessings, of which we noted last week that God prepared a world with everything we would need to thrive and be successful (Matt. 6:8; Ps. 104), is what is under consideration.

So we can see the misconceptions of both the religious person and the person of the world with regard to prayer and a non-prayer life. For the religious person, it isn't that God personally and directly answers prayers, rather it is the fact that God has provided all of us with the potential for blessings if we would use those blessings He has already given. This is why the non-religious person

(non-believer) is able to receive the same benefits of life without the use of prayer, because God has afforded all men with the same general blessings. Jesus went on to say in verses 46-47 that with God there is no respect of persons (cf. Rom. 2: 11). God blessed all men equally to enjoy this life. Hence, just as God is equally benevolent to all men; likewise, Jesus said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (v.48). God's people were to continue this model of behavior and be a blessing to all men, including enemies. By practicing this, then we could as Paul said, "Overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

The point to all of this is, general blessings of God come to all *regardless* of prayer. These blessings do not come as a result of asking or not asking, they simply come. Despite prayer, our food supply is still given, our water supply is still flows, and our shelters are provided. This would be Jesus point in Matthew 6:25-34 where Christ commanded us to not worry about the necessities of life (v. 25) because they were already provided for (vs. 26-27). All that would be needed would be a resolve and drive to garner God's general blessings in order to be blessed by it. Jesus then noted the most important item we should be concerned about, more than general blessings, to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (v. 33). In other words, we're taken care of physically, and our true purpose for living is to seek God's will and live righteously. Unfortunately, instead of focusing on the spiritual, many are so consumed about addressing God with their physical needs, and thus the reason why prayer is often connected with asking God for things instead of concentrating on what God truly desires from us in in life - to be found holy and righteous. 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

In Order To Have Eternal Life We Must Love God And Brethren

The apostle John makes it clear that love and eternal life belong together. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, He replied, "Love God...love your neighbor" (Mark 12:30-31). Our doing the will of God is based on love, for, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). And, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). It is really very simple. If we are motivated by love for God, we will do what the Lord wants - we will live for Him.

But love for God leads us to love one another, also. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John 4:20). Some, like the Pharisees of old, are willing to obey the letter of the law (as they see it) and bind it on others, but have no real love for the brethren. Jesus said, "Love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples" (John 13:34-35). John sums up the importance of love when he wrote, "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you: (John 15:12-15).

Bro. W. 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



June 25

AM WORSHIP

Announcements: *G. Rodriguez*
 Opening Prayer: *E. Hipp*
 Song Leader: *A. Maldonado*
 Communion Leader: *E. Castillo*
 Lord's Supper Servers: *D. Mathis; R. Baltierra; R. Trevino; M. de la Garza*

Scripture: *Matt. 27:45-54*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *T. Mayces*

PM WORSHIP

Announcements: *G. Rodriguez*
 Opening Prayer: *E. Castillo*
 Song Leader: *Cong. Singing*
 Lord's Supper: *E. Hipp; Z. Watkins*
 Sermon: *G. Rodriguez*
 Benediction: *J. Guillen*

After Greeter: *G & D Gribble*
 Greeter/Usher: *S. Amos*
 AV Duty: *J. Guillen*
 In Charge of Invitation: *W. Holmes*

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 (PAM Hospital)
 Tita Cortez *(sister of Sam Ramirez)*

BATTLING CANCER:

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

SHUT-INS:

Dazel Ball
 Mildred Geest
 Sarah Cannon

TRAVELING:

A. Jacob; Esenowo's (Nigeria)

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 (4)

PM Sermon:

Congregational Singing

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DEVOTIONAL

June 14: D. Mathis

June 21: W. Holmes

June 28: G. Rodriguez

FOR THE RECORD

June 18/21

Attendance:

Sunday Bible Study 29
 Sunday AM Worship 47
 Sunday PM Worship 18
 Wednesday Bible Study 25
 Budget/Offering: **\$2,140.02/ \$1,584.00**

Weekly Bible Readers: NA (Adult Bible class)

SHENANDOAH CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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