



“Prisoners of Christ”
1st in the “For Love’s Sake” Series
Philemon 1-3 pg. 1000
September 3, 2017
Pastor Mickey Klink

Introduction

In this passage we are introduced to Philemon and how Christianity changes how we view ourselves and others.

The Text: Philemon 1-3

- 1) Setting the context: Onesimus, Philemon, Paul, and Jesus.

- 2) The story of Onesimus teaches us to trust in the providence of God.

Heidelberg Catechism, 27-28

Q27. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. God’s providence is his almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.

Q28. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by his providence?

A. We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from his love; for all creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they cannot so much as move.

- 3) Our identity in Christ redefines all cultural divisions and classes (vv. 1-3).

Problem: What about slavery?

(1) Slavery in the ancient world.

(2) Slavery in the modern world.

-Historical Perspective

-Social Perspective

-Theological Perspective

Response

- God wants Hope Church – and each Christian – to live and act “For Love’s Sake.”

Sermon Questions for Philemon 1-3

September 3, 2017

Pastor Mickey Klink

- 1) Read the text aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification. You may want to read the entire book as a group to gain some context.
- 2) Paul, our author, almost always begins his letters by using the title, “apostle.” Why might it be significant that in v. 1 he introduces himself as “a prisoner?”
- 3) The ESV translates the phrase in v. 1 as “prisoner *for* Christ” and the NIV translates it as “prisoner *of* Christ.” The Greek allows for both translations. What is the difference in meaning?
- 4) We don’t know much about the church of Philemon, or the relation of Apphia and Archippus (v. 2 - likely Philemon’s wife and son). If they are his wife and son, how might it suggest that God views all people in the church as significant for ministry – men, women, and young people?
- 5) Paul often ends the opening of his letters with the phrase, “grace and peace” (v. 3). What might the phrase mean? Hint: “peace” is a common OT word – *shalom*, and “grace” is a common NT word.
- 6) List the 7 terms in vv. 1-3 that speak of relations Christians have with God or one another. What do each of the terms teach us about our identity as Christians?
- 7) A contemporary issue raised by the book of Philemon is slavery. How should Christians think about slavery?
- 8) How are people divided or in different classes in the modern world? How might the modern systems be abusive to some divisions or classes of people, and what is an appropriate Christian response?
- 9) Does being a Christian make all other distinctions (nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, education, social-economic level, etc.) secondary? Explain.
- 10) In what ways might Hope Church have divisions of people that do not associate or are in conflict? How can we begin to nullify such divisions “in Christ” and unify as the Body of Christ?

Further study this week: 1 Thessalonians 2 on love for one another (Mon); 1 John 3:11-24 on loving one another in deed and truth (Tues); Ephesians 2:11-22 on unity in Christ (Wed); Galatians 3:23-29 on no distinction in Christ (Thurs); Revelation 7:9-17 on the international church (Fri).