

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL BEGIN TO TAKE UP ~ THE NEXT SECTION OF PHILEMON, ~ VERSES 4-7.

▶▶ After listing the recipients of the letter, ~ Paul narrows his focus to Philemon, ~ the principal recipient. ⇒⇒ Not just a private matter.

THIS ¶ ~ IS PAUL'S STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION ~ FOR HIS FRIEND PHILEMON ~ ¶¶

▶▶ and can be outlined this way.

▶▶ In *verse 4*, ~ Paul tells Philemon ~ that ~ whenever he prays for him, ~ he expresses thanks to God for Philemon.

▶▶ He then tells him ~ why he gives God thanks, ~ *verse 5*. ⇒⇒ 2 reasons.

▶▶ In *verse 6*, ~ Paul informs Philemon of one of the things he's been praying about for him.

▶▶ And then ~ Paul gives a personal testimony in *verse 7*.

▷▷ He states the impact Philemon's ministry to believers ~ has had on him ~ personally.

BEFORE WE BEGIN ~ TO GET INTO ~ THE DETAILS ~ OF THESE FOUR VERSES, ~ ¶¶

I WOULD ONCE AGAIN LIKE TO NOTE ~ PAUL'S APPROACH TO PHILEMON.

▶▶ Paul ~ was gracious and tactful ~ in his approach to him. ¶¶ 1/10

▶▶ Instead of ~ immediately pleading ~ for the man's life, ~ 77

▷▷ Paul first ~ expressed ~ sincere appreciation ~ for his friend Philemon.

▷▷ This was not ~ empty flattery.

↪↪ It was sincere Christian appreciation.

▶▶ And lest we think that Paul ~ was ~ buttering Philemon up, ~ we need to consider this.

▷▷ Paul ~ normally offered ~ congratulatory thanksgivings ~ in his letters.

▷▷ And ~ his tribute to Philemon ~ for his faith and love ~ is identical ~ to his praise of all the Colossians.

▶▶ Paul teaches us ~ an important lesson here.

▷▷ We need to become ~ genuinely ~ gracious and tactful ~ in our relationships with our fellow believers.

↪↪ And, ~ when we genuinely appreciate someone, ~ we should let them know.

NOW LET'S UNPACK THESE FOUR VERSES, ~ PHILEMON 1:4-7.

IN VERSE 4, ~ AS NOTED, ~ PAUL EXPRESSES THANKS ~ TO GOD FOR PHILEMON.

CSB: I ALWAYS THANK MY GOD ~ WHEN I MENTION YOU ~ IN MY PRAYERS.

▶▶ I.e., ~ whenever Paul mentioned Philemon in his prayers, ~ without fail ~ he gave thanks to God. 77 2/10

▶▶Based on his description of Philemon, ~ most likely, ~ ¶¶

▷▷Paul was always thanking God in prayer ~ for Philemon's ~ exemplary ~ Christian witness.

PAUL CONTINUALLY GAVE THANKS ~ FOR HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS.

▶▶He told the Ephesian believers, ~ "I do not cease ~ to give thanks for you."

▶▶And to the church in Philippi ~ he wrote, ~ I thank my God ~ in all my remembrance of you.

▶▶If you think about it, ~ this is the attitude that we should have ~ ¶¶

▷▷toward all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

↳↳Whenever we ~ think of them ~ or pray for them, ~ we should thank God for them.

▶▶David weighs in on this as well.

▷▷Ps. 16:3, ~ As for the saints in the land, ~ they are the excellent ones, ~ in whom is all my delight.

↳↳Like David, ~ we should have the attitude ~ that our brothers and sisters in Christ ~ "are the excellent ones," ~ ¶¶

→→and take pleasure in them ~ and enjoy their company.

AS WE OBSERVED, ~ IN VERSE 4 (CSB), ~ WHENEVER PAUL MENTIONED PHILEMON IN prayer, ~ without fail ~ he gave God thanks.

TWO OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PAUL HERE. ¶¶ 3/10

1st, ~ PAUL WAS CONFINED ~ AND NOT FREE TO GO AROUND PREACHING & TEACHING,
~ etc.

▶▶IOW, ~ he was restricted ~ in what he could do in ministry.

▷▷But not useless. ⇨⇨ Prayed. ~~ Wrote 4 letters.

▶▶Someone ~ may be restricted (illness, etc.). ⇨⇨ But not useless.

THE 2nd OBSERVATION ABOUT PAUL HERE.

▶▶Thanksgiving to God was a big part of Paul's life.

▷▷He prayed ~ with a thankful heart, ~~ and he prayed for Philemon ~ with thankfulness.

▶▶Paul was an example ~ of a much larger truth.

▷▷Thankful people.

▷▷Believers ~ are to have a continual ~ attitude ~ of gratitude ~ toward the Lord.

▶▶Remember the repetition in Colossians? *⇨⇨ Why the repetition?*

▶▶Reject ~ our inherent ~ ingratitude.

▷▷And develop ~ a continual ~ attitude of gratitude ~ toward the Lord.

↪↪And we should be ~ expressing that thankfulness ~ 77

→→in thought, ~ word, ~ and deed. 11 4/10

LET'S LOOK AT VERSE 4 ONCE AGAIN.

CSB: I ALWAYS THANK ~ MY GOD ~ WHEN I MENTION YOU ~ IN MY PRAYERS.

▶▶ "my God." ⇔⇔ Personal relationship.

▶▶ This reminds us ~ that the sovereign, ~ almighty Creator of the universe ~ is personal.

▷▷ He's not some ~ untouchable, ~ unknowable ~ God.

▶▶ He is not like what deists claim, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that ~ he created everything ~ and then ~ went off ~ and has nothing more to do with His creation.

▶▶ No, ~ He is ~ deeply personal ~ and very much involved ~ in His creation.

▷▷ In Acts 14:17, ~ Paul says, ~ "Yet he did not leave himself without witness, ~ for he did good ~ by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, ~ satisfying your hearts ~ with food and gladness."

▷▷ Ps. 145:18, ~ The Lord is near ~ to all who call on him, ~ to all who call on him in truth.

▷▷ Ps. 34:18, ~ The Lord ~ is near to the brokenhearted ~ and saves the crushed in spirit.

▶▶ So involved and personal is God ~ that ~ he sent his Son to save us from our sins.

▷▷ Problem.

▷▷ God remedied. ¶¶ 5/10

▷▷ Jn. 3:16-17, ~ NIV, ~ For God so loved the world ~ that he gave ~ his one and only Son, ~ that whoever ~ believes in him ~ shall not perish ~ but have eternal life. ~ For God ~ did not ~ send his Son into the world ~ to condemn the world, ~ but to save the world through him.

▷▷ Everyone ~ who puts their trust ~ in Jesus for salvation ~ ¶¶

↳↳ has a personal relationship ~ with this ~ very personal ~ and very involved ~ God.

▷▷ Even more, ~ those who have accepted Christ for salvation ~ are now children of God.

↳↳ 1 Jn. 3:1a, ~ NIV ~ "See ~ what great love ~ the Father has lavished on us, ~ that we ~ should be called ~ children of God! ~ And that is what we are!"

▷▷ My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ each of us can say, ~ "God ~ is my God," ~ "God ~ is my Father."

↳↳ I don't know about you, ~ but I think that's pretty awesome!

IN VERSE 5, ~ PAUL SAYS ~ WHY ~ HE GIVES THANKS TO GOD ~ FOR PHILEMON.

BECAUSE ~ I HEAR ~ OF YOUR LOVE ~ AND OF THE FAITH ~ THAT YOU HAVE ~ ¶¶

▶▶ toward the Lord Jesus ~ and for all the saints.

▶▶ Technical notes (2)

FIRST.

▶▶ The Greek text here ~ employs a literary figure ~ that becomes confusing ~ using a literal English translation. ¶¶ 6/10

▷▷It's a somewhat ~ awkward reading ~ ¶¶

↪↪and needs to be smoothed out ~ in translation.

▶▶What's going on here is this.

▷▷Paul's thanksgiving ~ is based ~ on reports reaching him ~ concerning the love and faith of Philemon.

▷▷Namely, ~ his faith toward the Lord Jesus, ~ ¶¶

↪↪and ~ his love toward fellow believers.

▶▶This ~ is the better reading ~ of the Greek text.

▶▶A clearer translation ~ that brings out the meaning quite well ~ is this.

▷▷[I give thanks] ~ because I hear of ~ your faith in the Lord Jesus ~ and ~ your love for all the saints. NET

▶▶So ~ there are two reasons ~ Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon.

▷▷His faith in Jesus.

▷▷And his love for all believers.

2nd TECHNICAL NOTE.

▶▶Continual ¶¶ 7/10

▷▷I give thanks ~ because ~ I keep hearing ~ about your faith in the Lord Jesus ~ and ~ your love for all of God's people.

NOW LET'S UNPACK ~ THE FIRST ~ OF THESE TWO REASONS.

▶▶Next, ~ 2nd reason ~ as well as vv. 6-7.

1st, ~ PAUL KEPT HEARING ABOUT PHILEMON'S FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS.

▶▶Paul thanked God for Philemon, ~ first, ~ because Philemon ~ was a genuine believer.

▶▶And people were continuing to testify ~ to that fact.

▷▷IOW, ~ Philemon gave plenty of evidence ~ of genuine salvation.

▶▶That means ~ Philemon's life ~ was bearing ~ good ~ spiritual fruit.

▷▷And it was quite evident ~ to all who had contact with him.

▶▶Bearing good spiritual fruit ~ is a sign ~ of a genuine believer. ⇨⇨ Spend time on this.

▷▷In his upper room discourse Jesus said, ~ ¶¶

⇨⇨My Father is glorified by this: ~ that ~ you produce much fruit ~ and prove ~ to be my disciples. (Jn. 15:8, CSB)

▷▷The proof of genuine discipleship, ~ ¶¶

⇨⇨i.e., ~ genuine salvation, ~ is fruit-bearing. ¶¶ 8/10

▷▷ Jesus' statement coincides ~ with his teaching in the sermon on the mount.

↳↳ Matt. 7:15-20

↳↳ These verses show that ~ true faith in Christ ~ changes the life ~ and produces fruit for God's glory.

↳↳ Everything ~ in nature ~ reproduces after its kind.

→→ And this ~ is also true ~ in the spiritual realm.

↳↳ Good fruit ~ comes ~ from a good tree.

↳↳ But bad fruit ~ comes ~ from a bad tree.

→→ The tree ~ that produces rotten fruit ~ is cut down and thrown into the fire.

↳↳ 2 important questions to ask ourselves ~ are these.

→→ 1. Did my decision for Christ ~ change my life? ~ 2. What kind of fruit am I bearing?

▷▷ In his explanation of his parable of the sower, ~ Jesus said, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ But those that were sown on the good soil ~ ¶¶

→→ are the ones who ~ hear the word ~ and accept it ~ and bear fruit, ~ thirtyfold ~ and ~ sixtyfold ~ and a hundredfold.

↳↳ Diff. amts. ⇔⇔ But will bear. ¶¶ 9/10

▷▷ In Rom. 7:4 (NIV), ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ So, ~ my brothers and sisters, ~ you also died to the law ~ through the body of Christ, ~ that you might belong to another, ~ to him who was raised from the dead, ~ in order that ~ we might bear fruit for God.

↳↳ Our new life in Christ ~ is expected to bear fruit.

▷▷ And using different words, ~ James makes the same point. ⇔⇔ James 2:14-17

↳↳ James emphasizes ~ the absolute necessity ~ of post-conversion works.

→→ He calls ~ a faith that ~ does not ~ bring about a changed life ~ dead, ~ lifeless, ~ and ~ useless.

▶▶ As in the case of Philemon, ~ genuine belief ~ in Jesus ~ as Savior and Lord ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will bear good spiritual fruit ~ that is quite evident to others.

▶▶ In closing, ~ let's get a brief glimpse ~ of the nature of this fruit ~ that true conversion produces.

▷▷ Phil. 1:9-11 . . .

LET'S PRAY 10/10