

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY ~ WE BRING OUR STUDY OF PHILEMON TO A CLOSE.

▶▶ Verses 21-25 ~ contain Paul's ~ final remarks, ~ greetings, ~ and benediction.

▶▶ Dig right in.

IN VERSE 21, ~ PAUL EXPRESSES HIS CONFIDENCE ~ THAT PHILEMON WILL DO THE right thing.

AND THAT IS ~ TO FORGIVE AND RECONCILE WITH ONESIMUS.

THOUGH PAUL ISSUED ~ NO SPECIFIC COMMANDS, ~ PHILEMON'S ACTIONS ~ WERE ~ a matter of obedience.

▶▶ But not ~ obedience to Paul.

▷▷ Remember, ~ Paul went out of his way ~ to note that ~ he would not use his apostolic authority.

↪↪ So, ~ obedience to Paul ~ would not fit the context.

▶▶ Rather, ~ no doubt Paul was talking about ~ behaving ~ in accord ~ with the will of God.

▷▷ Paul had confidence ~ in Philemon's obedience ~ to Christ. **11 1/7**

WE CAN ASSUME, ~ SAFELY I THINK, ~ THAT PHILEMON ~ WAS WELL INSTRUCTED ~ in the theology ~ of forgiveness.

▶▶ He knew ~ the principle taught in Matthew 6, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that the believer's relational forgiveness from God ~ depends ~ on his willingness ~ to forgive others.

↪↪ We know it too ⇔⇔ Matt. 6:14-15

▶▶ Philemon knew ~ that our Lord had taught ~ that there must be ~ no limits ~ to forgiveness.

▷▷ We know it too

▶▶ And Philemon ~ no doubt was familiar ~ with Paul's teaching on forgiveness.

▷▷ And we are as well ~ from our study of Ephesians and Colossians. ⇔⇔ As the Lord has forgiven you, ~ so you also must forgive.

▶▶ Most likely, ~ because Philemon was aware of the theology of forgiveness, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul does not repeat the teaching here.

▷▷ And Paul was confident ~ that Philemon would put it into action ~ in the situation between himself and Onesimus.

▶▶ And since we too ~ are aware ~ of the theology of forgiveness, ~ it is incumbent upon us ~ to put it into ~ ¶¶

▷▷ loving and voluntary action ~ in our lives. ¶¶ 2/7

BACK TO PHILEMON.

▶▶ In keeping with the tone of Paul's letter, ~ we can say this.

▶▶ Voluntarily, ~~ not because of law, ~~ nor out of fear, ~ but because of love, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Philemon is to obey the God who commanded him to forgive.

▶▶ And that ~ is how the Lord wants ~ all of us to obey.

▷▷ Not ~ out of fear or grudging obligation, ~ or because it's a rule to obey.

↳↳ Rather, ~ he wants us to voluntarily, ~ because of our love for him ~ live according to his will.

IN 1 JN. 5:3 (CSB), ~ JOHN WRITES, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ For this ~ is what love for God is: ~~ to keep his commands. ~ ¶¶

▷▷ And his commands ~ are not ~ a burden.

▶▶ The added words ~ *And his commands are not a burden* ~ explain ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the place ~ of these commands ~ in the experience ~ of the obedient believer.

▶▶ The negative assertion ~ that they are ~ not a burden ~ points out ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that the believer ~ does not find them ~ to be an intolerable burden ~ which he seeks to avoid. ¶¶ 3/7

▶▶ They are not like the ~ heavy loads that are hard to carry ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that the Pharisees placed ~ on people's consciences.

▶▶ Rather, ~ love-prompted obedience ~ finds ~ that God's statutes ~ are not ~ ¶¶

▷▷ a crushing burden ~ which ~ exhausts one's strength ~ and destroys one's sense of freedom in Christ.

▶▶ The believer finds ~ that the new life in Christ ~ implants in him ~ a desire ~ to do the will of God ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and finds ~ that love ~ makes obedience to God's commands rewarding.

▶▶ Why is that?

▷▷ Because, ~ when we truly love God, ~ we come to realize ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that God has given his word ~ for our protection and true well-being.

▷▷ We find in his precepts ~ guidance concerning ~ his ~ good, ~ pleasing, ~ and perfect ~ will.

▷▷ Love-prompted obedience ~ finds ~ that God's commands ~ become songs.

↳↳ And that his statutes ~ prove to be ~ the stepping stones to freedom.

BEFORE MOVING ON TO VERSE 22, ~ NOTE THE PHRASE, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ knowing ~ that you will do ~ even more ~ than I say. ¶¶ 4/7

▶▶ We don't know what Paul meant by this.

▶▶ The main things are the plain things. ⇔⇔ *And the plain things are the main things.*

▷▷ This is neither ~ plain nor main.

PAUL CONTINUES HIS CLOSING REMARKS IN VERSE 22.

AT THE SAME TIME, ~ PREPARE A GUEST ROOM FOR ME, ~ FOR I AM HOPING ~ THAT
through your prayers ~ I will be graciously given to you.

▶▶ That Paul would ask Philemon ~ to prepare a guest room in his home ~ indicates ~ that Paul expected to be released.

▶▶ Philippians

WHAT WAS PAUL'S MOTIVE?

▶▶ Reminder of apostolic authority? ⇔⇔ *No, ~ doesn't fit context.*

▶▶ To check up on Philemon? ⇔⇔ *No, ~ doesn't fit context.*

▶▶ Paul went out of his way

▶▶ It is more likely ~ that Paul was simply hoping ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to eventually visit these believers ~ who had been praying for him.

▶▶ Think contextually. ¶¶ 5/7

THE WORDS ~ YOUR AND YOU ARE PLURAL.

▶▶ No distinction in English

▶▶ Paul here is focusing on ~ Philemon, ~ Apphia, ~ Archippus, ~ and ~ the church in Philemon's house.

▶▶ A reminder that ~ this was not a private letter. ⇔⇔ The church is to be involved

BACK TO VERSE 22.

▶▶ Paul says, ~ for I am hoping ~ that through your prayers ~ I will be graciously given to you.

▶▶ The Greek word translated ~ given means ~ to give freely as a favor, ~ give graciously.

▶▶ The point here ~ is that Paul ~ may be given to them ~ as an act ~ of grace, ~ or ~ Divine favor

▶▶ For Philemon and the church in his home ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to have their prayers answered with a visit from Paul ~ would indeed ~ be a gift of grace.

LESSON.

▶▶ Every answered prayer ~ is a gift of God's grace

▶▶ Praying itself ~ is a gracious gift from God. ¶¶ 6/7

IN VERSES 23-24, ~ AS WAS PAUL'S CUSTOM, ~ he included greetings from others.

EPAPHRAS, ~ MY FELLOW PRISONER IN CHRIST JESUS, ~ sends greetings to you, ~ ¶¶

▶▶and so do Mark, ~ Aristarchus, ~ Demas, ~ and Luke, ~ my fellow workers.

PAUL CONCLUDED ~ ALL 13 OF HIS EPISTLES ~ WITH A ONE-SENTENCE BENEDICTION
~ similar to the one here in verse 25.

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR [PL.] SPIRIT ~ [i.e., ~ your inner
spiritual self].

▶▶In *verse 3*, ~ Paul prayed ~ that the believers meeting in Philemon's house ~ ¶¶

▷▷would continue ~ to experience God's grace, ~ i.e., ~ unmerited favor, ~ and the peace
that flows from it.

▶▶Here ~ Paul most likely was concerned ~ that they be encompassed ~ ¶¶

▷▷with God's enabling grace, ~ for their daily walk before others.

▶▶Something ~ we definitely need as well, ~ for our ~ daily walk ~ and daily spiritual battles.

LET'S PRAY ¶/¶