

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 06 Mar..... Phil 1:1-11 Link Up with Others
- 2) 13 Mar..... Phil 1:12-26 Lift Up the Gospel
- 3) 20 Mar..... Phil 1:27-2:11 Live Up to the Gospel
- 4) 27 Mar..... Phil 2:12-30 Light Up the World
- 5) 03 Apr..... Phil 3:1-21 Look Up to Heaven
- 6) 10 Apr..... Phil 4:1-23 Never Let Up
- 7) 17 Apr..... Col 1:1-20 Knowing the Truth
- 8) 24 Apr..... John 20:1-18 Believing the Truth [Easter Message]
- 9) 01 May..... Col 1:21-2:7 Expressing the Truth
- 10) 08 May..... Col 2:8-23 Keeping the Truth
- 11) 15 May..... Col 3:1-17 Be Focused
- 12) 22 May..... Col 3:18-4:18 Be Faithful
- 13) 29 May..... Philemon 1-25 Be Forgiving

INTRODUCTION

- Man's ways, devoid of godly influence, tends toward selfish ambition (greed) and enslavement of the weak
- According to U.S. government estimates, thousands of men, women, and children are trafficked to the U.S. for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents are trafficked within the country primarily for sexual servitude and, to a lesser extent, forced labor (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/factsheet.html>)
- In the small African country of Mauritania, over 100,000 Africans are enslaved; while in Kuwait it is estimated 20% of the population consist of slaves from Asian countries
- Historically, Christianity has been the only force to successfully limit society's social ills such as forced child labor, slavery, and prostitution
- Paul urges a slave owner (Philemon) to readily accept the return of a runaway slave (Onesimus) as a dear brother in the Lord – and he does! This letter being handed down to us is a testament that Philemon did what Paul asked of him

Passage	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul wasn't flattering Philemon to manipulate him (Prov 26:28 ...flattering words cause ruin), but spoke truthfully for Philemon to see things from a different perspective, not as men see things (I own you), but from God's perspective (we owe Him and each other love)
1:8-9	<p>Love Compels Obedience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul was in a position to command Philemon to do what was right, but Paul realized a higher principle – Love compels obedience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Paul was compelled to share the Gospel ♦ Christ was compelled to go to the Cross ♦ Philemon, who Paul knew was a vibrant, mature Christian, would be compelled through love for the saints to accept Onesimus equally
1:10-16	<p>Zero to Hero</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v11. Onesimus was "useless" to Philemon, so he was not a good slave. He might have also stolen from his master (v18) before running away • v10. Somehow Onesimus became a Christian while Paul was still in a Roman jail ("whom I have begotten while in prison") • vv12-13. Onesimus became such an asset to Paul that Paul wanted to keep Onesimus in his company, but there was a higher principle – Onesimus was legally bound to someone else <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Recall in the Old Testament that when a male slave married a female slave, he could not take his wife & kids away with him after gaining his freedom, for his wife & kids were still owned by his former master Exodus 21:2-4 ♦ Paul (and Onesimus) were intent in seeking reconciliation, even if it cost Paul money, and Onesimus' freedom
1:17-25	<p>Obedying God's Principles is Win-Win</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philemon could not lose <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He would gain a spiritual brother who would be a hard working and honest slave 2. He would reap spiritual blessings for forgiving & releasing Onesimus back to Paul 3. Paul would reimburse Philemon for any losses

Passage	Comments
1:1-3	<p>Greetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul does not highlight he was an Apostle, but a Prisoner of Jesus Christ. This possibly to reflect his close and personal relationship with Philemon • After all, we don't have to remind our kids who's the boss in the family unless they disobey • Philemon was able to host a church in his house, and to have slaves (v16), so he was financially set
Note on Slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 12 records Abraham receiving male and female slaves from Pharaoh of Egypt, so slavery has been around since the early part of Genesis • 35 out of 39 books of the Old Testament address slavery/servants in some capacity • In fact, slavery is seen as an act of mercy. If slavery was forbidden then few, if any, prisoners would be taken in war. Genocide would prevail. So slavery is the lesser of the 2 evils • Also, God seems to allow war, slavery, divorce and other social ills to show man's depravity and his need for a Savior
1:4-7	<p>Prepare Someone for a Difficult Decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul knew Philemon well, so he set the tone for Philemon to see the situation from a biblical perspective before hitting him with a challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ v4. You are always in my prayers ♦ v5. Your love for God & others is well known ♦ v6. You strongly encourage the saints

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- Though the Bible does not outright condemn slavery, it does condemn harsh and neglectful treatment of society's weaker members such as the elderly, women, orphans, handicapped and foreigners, and yes, slaves and servants
- God's commands and principles are worth finding and obeying

NEXT WEEK: Jeremiah 1. Jeremiah was hand-picked by God from birth to carry His message to a lost bunch of people

