

The Vincennes Voice

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...” (Matt. 3:3)

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LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

Larry R. Ping II

Sometimes we overlook books, or letter of the Bible simply because they are short. Such should not be the case. One of these books is that of Philemon. It holds 25 verses. Even so, there are great lessons emanating from it. Here are some for your consideration.

1) Local Churches May Meet In Any Number Of Places. It seems as though the local church in this book was meeting in Philemon’s house (verse 2). The need for God’s people to “assemble” (Heb. 10:25) outweighs, in importance, where it assembles. In Acts 16:13, folks were meeting “by a river side” to pray and worship. It could be a local body of God’s people today meets in a store-front, a library, a senior center, a parking lot, or a hotel meeting room. All are perfectly fine, as these saints are assembling as directed by God. By the way, do not forsake these gatherings!

2) Our Faith And Friendship Is Refreshing To Others. This was Paul’s thought concerning Philemon and his family when he wrote, “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (Phm. 7). Paul said of Onesiphorus, “he oft refreshed me” (II Tim. 1:16). These actions are like acting as a “breath of fresh air” to others. Can others say this about you and me?

3) Assumption Is A Dangerous Proposition. Great trouble often arrives at the end of assumption. Paul, very badly and for his own good, wanted to keep Onesimus. He wrote, “Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me...But without thy mind would I do nothing” (Phm. 13-14). This sort of attitude is simply in keeping with the Golden Rule, “Therefore all things

whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12).

4) Spiritual Relationships Are Very Special. It is hard to know why Onesimus ran away. But upon his return, Paul urged Philemon to accept him as his “brother” (Phm. 16). There is a special and extraordinary bond that exists among God’s family. It is a bond not easily broken or strained (I Jn. 3:16).

5) Being More Willing To Help Than To Condemn. Paul could have easily (and perhaps rightly) chided Onesimus for stealing from Philemon. Rather, he offered to repay on Onesimus’ behalf (Phm. 19). It is a hard thing to learn, but if we love before we loathe, much good could be the result. This is how we wish to be treated and how love is defined (I Cor. 13:4-8)!

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

Larry R. Ping II

The Bible is very clear, the Christian should consider himself as a soldier, as one who is in the fight for his life. Paul told Timothy to “war a good warfare” (I Tim. 1:18). Paul himself said he had “fought a good fight” (II Tim. 4:7). The Lord has not left us weaponless. In fact, he has provided a wide assortment of weaponry (Eph. 6:10-18).

1) Belt of Truth. It is always the right time to subscribe to, spread and use the truth. Sometimes it might “hurt” a little, sometimes it might be “hard” to say, but the truth is champion. As the “belt,” it is what successfully holds up everything important. It is the “truth” which can make one free (Jn. 8:32). When false doctrine spreads like a wildfire, it is the truth which will extinguish it. When there are quarrels between friends and brethren, it is the truth that will clear them up. Use the truth, and do so amply.

2) Breastplate of Righteousness. A breastplate protects the heart, the most precious and vital of all organs. No heart means no life. Doing what is right according to God and His Word offers spiritual protection. It is when we stop doing right and indulge in wrong that we are left unprotected --- and Satan will be glad to step in

and take over the reins of our life (II Cor. 11:3).

3) Shoes of Peace. Very little is rectified by loud and angry words (Prov. 15:3). In fact, one travels in the wrong direction when acting rashly and rudely. Shoes take us places, and acting peacefully will take us much further than acting frantically. The Lord is in need of “peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9). Will you be one?

4) Shield of Faith. A shield is meant to be a “deflective” weapon. It repels any attempt on the part of Satan and his workers to harm people of God. In fact, our text refers to the “fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16). There will always be those shooting their arrows of doubt and hate, and we must use our faith to resist them. This is the same kind of faith those of Heb. 11 used to do right and keep from wrong. Do you possess this faith?

5) Helmet of Salvation. A helmet protects our brain, our seat of intellect. In a spiritual sense, our minds (hearts) are protected by the assurance of salvation God provides to His believers. We can trust God, we can take His promises “to the bank.” Peter indicates God is “not slack” concerning His promises. John wrote “when he shall appear,

we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (I Jn. 2:28).

6) Sword of the Spirit. A sword is a weapon of both offense and defense. The Bible is our sword, and we use it to actively teach others about God (Heb. 4:12). But it is also used to defend against those who would twist and pervert the Gospel (II Pet. 3:16; II Cor. 4:2). As a sword, it must be sharpened and honed over time. This means we “study” it diligently (II Tim. 2:15) so that we are prepared to always “give an answer” (I Pet. 3:15). Are you prepared?

7) Prayer. We must never forget prayer is an important and significant part of our arsenal of weapons. We pray first, we pray last and pray in the mean-time. Men and women of great faith prayed, and did so often. David said, “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Psa. 55:17). Daniel prayed consistently (Dan. 6:10). It is hard to be tempted or to sin while engaged in prayer. May we never forget prayer is part of God’s plan to ward off sin (I Thess. 5:17; Php. 4:6)!

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm