

Sermon Discussion

22 March 2020

Philemon 4-5 (read)

I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have towards the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,

Dig Deeper

There was a church meeting in Philemon's home. This tells us something about him. He was hospitable and willing to face the persecution that would come by identifying so openly as a believer. He was also somewhat wealthy, having a home large enough for a meeting to take place in.

At this time in history, local bodies of believers met in homes. This practice encourages volunteers to help with the various activities as well as warm, close relationships between the believers. **The size of homes would naturally limit the size of congregations keeping fellowship close while also encouraging rapid reproduction.**

1. What do verses 4-5 show about Paul's attitude toward Philemon?
2. How did Philemon give Paul joy?
3. What was the content of Paul's prayers for Philemon?
4. What do you think is Paul's purpose in sharing these high words of praise with Philemon?
5. Does your testimony shine brightly like Philemon's? What might someone say about you?

Philemon 6-7 (read)

...and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Dig Deeper

"Sharing" (Greek *koinōnia*) carries a wide range of meaning, including the ideas of generosity, partnership, and fellowship that result from the common faith and common life that believers have in Christ. This usage is similar to the way Paul commends the Philippians for their tangible generosity in supporting the cause of the gospel (Phil. 1:5). Paul is laying the groundwork for his appeal to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus. Philemon's sharing will result in his own deeper knowledge of every good thing in Christ, that is, a deeper awareness and experience of the blessings that Christ has for him.

1. What did Paul suggest that Philemon would gain by actively sharing his faith?
2. What had Philemon done for Paul?

3. What had Philemon done for the other Christians in the region?
4. Why would Paul rejoice when others are refreshed?

Application:

1. Paul began by role-modeling giving thanks to the Lord God in prayer. He then taught, by example, Philemon to pray to the Lord God—giving thanks for those who partnered with him in the Lord's service.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a fellow believer whom He wants you to lift up in thankful prayer.

2. Philemon did not encourage the saints as a result of resources or wisdom of the flesh but rather as a consequence of blessings that flowed to and through him to others.

When have you observed a leader whose faith was strong and through whom others were blessed because the Lord God's blessings overflowed them?

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a fellow believer with whom He wants you to share this text.