

# Koinonia

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[ 0 : 00 ] For me, coming to church isn't so much sometimes the message, it's the community. Because it reminds me so much of what God has done in my life, and so much what it's going to be like to be with Him in eternity.

And that relationship, that community, that koinonia that we've been sharing about lately and everything. And so, not going to worry too much about the idea about how it goes today. Hey, because it's this community I'm hoping that's going to be speaking to you. Because, you know, it is. The love of God that I have found from other people and has shared with me ever since I've accepted Christ, it's just amazing.

I was thinking about that when I was standing back there in the back a little bit ago. I was just thinking, you know, God, You're just so good and everything. And I just look forward to that day that we'll be with Him, and we'll share the time, the fraternity, the feast, the eating, the joyfulness of being there together.

And so, I just say that all in just for you to be thinking a little bit about it as we go into the Scripture and everything today. I was telling John that I'm probably running down all kinds of rabbit trails today.

[ 1 : 25 ] I just, I'm not really sure. But I just seem like I would read things. There is so much packed in this, by Lehman, this little letter. There's so much.

As a matter of fact, I saw people that wrote books on this stuff. And I was just amazed. But I'm going to share something that I read a week or so ago. And just because it made me think it's written by a pastor for pastors.

But I think we can apply it to our lives. Early in the Korean War, a naval chaplain named George Markle wrote the following in an article titled, How Are We Facing Up to the Task of Chaplains? Well, I would kind of want to say, How Are We Facing Up to the Task of Being Brothers and Sisters to Each Other? And so, but let me read what he wrote. Whenever the human contacts another, as touching the deep and vital issues of life, there is an opportunity for service to God and man. We to whom men look and may rightly expect guidance and sympathy, counsel and aid in the spirit of the Master, should treasure each contact as a privilege and an opportunity.

[ 2 : 31 ] During the earthly ministry of our Lord, he never lost sight of the value of personal work. When others would have sent men and women on their way in blindness and pain, disappointment and sorrow, Jesus stopped to deal and bless, to guide and to save by precept and example.

Remember, he says, Remember this, my brother. You may be a good preacher. You may have the swayed hundreds Sunday after Sunday with your eloquence and logic, but when you have gone to your next assignment, men will cease to remember your texts or your subjects.

They may forget even every sermon that you ever preach, but they will never forget you. You, as an individual worker, as a personal friend, our ears should ever be open and our hearts responsive to the individual.

And you know, I think that applies to each one of us. We should always be that way. And as we look through our scripture today, and we're going to be doing Philemon verses 8 through 16.

As we look through that today, I want you to think of, you can follow along. Now, I'm going to tell you I'm using a different translation today. I'm using one that's called The Voice. I just, for some reason, decided to use that.

[ 3 : 54 ] So, I'm actually going to have the scripture up on that screen for you too. So, in case you think, well, this hasn't really hit up with my translation. But Paul in 2 Corinthians, he said, You are the living letter of the Anointed One, the liberating King, nurtured by us and inscribed, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God, a letter too passionate to be chiseled into stone, but

emblazoned upon the human heart.

And you know, that letter that we have and we show to other people is that koinonia. And that's what touches us and makes a difference in people's life.

So, remember, we are living letters of Jesus Christ. And we should be writing love notes to each other and to the world. But there's a problem.

People are messy, aren't they? You leave one job because of people, and when you get to the next job, guess what? There's people. Yep. You might even leave a marriage or a family to go to another marriage or family.

But again, you know what? There's people. You get on the highway to drive down the road, and guess who's on that road? People. You go to the grocery store.

[ 5 : 16 ] You know, pick up what you need to get. And guess what? There's people. You go to church. And you know what's there at church too? People.

People. So, to take care of the messiness in our lives, we just need to get rid of all the people. And take it. Where's Mr. Mark?

Okay. Can you show my video? I got a little short video. All you got to do is click on it. Oh, there you are, Mark.

What are you doing down there? I'm how you're doing.

50% positivity. Yeah. And it's something I have to try Well, from love to do is see you I'll say it was a chance And ask you to dance And that will start a romance And after all I've been through Just to get close to you I hope that you will love me too Thank you, Steve.

[ 7 : 05 ] So there you go. Community would really not be very good If it wasn't for people. Yes, people are messy. The problem is without people Life would be lonely.

No fellowship, no koinonia. Plus, the thing is We're people too. Each one of us. I recall hearing a pastor One time tell a deacon Not a pastor, yeah, a pastor tell a deacon Who was complaining about all the mess Of the leaving in the church and everything.

And I know I've shared this before But he looked at me and said Well, brother, if there's no poop on the floor There's no animals in the stall. So, you know, it's going to happen You're going to have messes If you've got kids in the church and stuff You're going to have messes.

So, instead Paul says, instead be kind And compassionate Graciously forgive Forgive one another Just as God has forgiven you Through the anointed, our liberating king.

So, let me ask you this Does Christian brotherly love really work? Even in intense and difficult situations? Will it work for a prominent businessman And a slave owner When it comes to one of his runaway slaves?

[ 8 : 19 ] Here we find Paul Is again involved in another messy situation. Things in Philippi were messy He had to write a letter Corinth was messy And now Colossaea Paul seems to continually be To be dealing with messes Why? Because churches have people And people are messy Paul's letters are often written To a church congregation Addressing many issues This time, Paul's letter is different This letter seems addressed To an individual, Philemon About an individual, Onesimus And I have always believed It was Paul's intention This letter not be seen by By no one else but Philemon Why? Because To tell you the truth I almost feel like when I'm reading this Sometimes I'm reading it without permission You know, you know what I mean You're sitting there texting something on your phone Or typing something on your computer And you notice the person over there beside

Just kind of eyeballing what you're doing And don't you even do it? Don't you sometimes somebody's sitting there You know, your wife or somebody She's over there texting You're thinking Who's she texting over there? And everything But you know what? I'm wrong He is Paul has addressed it to Philemon But to his family and to the church And I wonder what everyone thought When the letter was read Still I believe every word in the Bible Is an inspired word of God And it is his intention For it to be there So let's get started As we journey through today's word And think about through Christ As brothers and sisters as we read this I want you to think about a couple things Do we, God's children See our situations and circumstances Different in this world?

Does our relationships with Jesus Christ Transform how we relate to each other? And then I want you to think Is God's grace a hallmark in you?

In God's children? So Paul is a prisoner in Rome And he writes Starting with verse 8 Although I am bold enough in the anointed Our liberating king To insist you do the right thing Instead, I choose to

appeal to you On account of love I do this for my own sake Since I, Paul Am an old man And am held prisoner Because of my service to Jesus The anointed I make this request On behalf of my child Onesimus Whom I have brought to faith During my time in prison Before, he was useless to you But now, he is useful to both you and me Listen I am sending my heart back to you As I send him to stand before you Although truly I wish To keep him at my side To take your place as my helper While I am bound for the good While I am bound for the good news But I didn't want to make the decision Without asking for your permission This way, any good will on your part Wouldn't be seen as forced But as your true and free desire Maybe this is the reason Why he was supposed to be away from you For this time So that you will have him back forever No longer as a slave But as more than a slave As a dear brother Yes, he is a dear brother But I suspect He will come to mean even more to you Both in the flesh as a servant And the Lord as a brother So let's examine these scriptures A little bit more closely And everything Paul, starting now Paul is letting Philemon know That he, Paul Has the authority To order him Or to give him A command necessary To do the right thing Because of the relationship Paul has with him, Philemon See, Paul is the one

[12:25] Who shared the gospel with him Introducing Philemon To Jesus Christ Thus introducing him To freedom And eternal life Philemon Was a well-to-do merchant Living in Colossae And he met Paul While he was in Ephesus And it is in Ephesus That Philemon Becomes a Christian And returns home And begins to host A church at his home Now Paul Has not said What the right thing is yet But he's going to get to that He's going to get to that Paul is demonstrating God's wisdom And discretion As he writes this So let's continue In verse 9 He says Instead I choose To appeal to you On account of love So this For my own sake Since I, Paul Am an old man And am held prisoner Because of my service To Jesus The anointed See, Paul Is asking Philemon To accept his request Based on love The love of Jesus Christ Given to God

Given by God To him See, through Christ We see our situations We should see our situations And circumstances Differently Than those of the world Plus, Paul wants Philemon To understand his situation As an aging brother As a prisoner And because of his service To the Lord He's now in jail But he was doing this In service to Jesus Christ Paul's expressing His confidence In the change That the gospel Has had In Philemon's life Because Paul knows That the change The gospel can have In one's life Paul is an ultimate Example for this Paul was a zealous Of Jews And beginning In the early church He did everything Possible To stop The spread of the good news Of Jesus Christ He sought And received authority To persecute The early church By arresting Imprisoning And even killing Early believers In Jesus Christ But God has a way To do anything But God Through Jesus Christ Had a different plan For Paul The resurrected Jesus Christ Met Paul On the road To Damascus And personally Chose him To be an apostle For the good news Not only Not only Was Paul Going to share The gospel But he was Going to go Throughout the Roman Empire And he was Going to bring The plan of salvation To Gentiles Not through force But driven by The Holy Spirit Gift Of love Of Jesus Christ Through God That he did this So let's continue On our scripture He says I make this request On behalf of my child Onesimus Whom I thought Whom I brought To faith During my time In prison Okay Paul has Been preparing Philemon And now he's Coming to the subject Of his letter You know You kind of Work your way Up to it And the spirit Is guiding him In this And he has Requested For a specific He has a request For a specific Person And that is Onesimus Paul is referring To him As his child Because he has Brought Onesimus To salvation Through Jesus Christ So he feels As he has A fatherly Responsibility To him Paul demonstrates The same Fatherly Child relationship He speaks of here With Timothy And Titus Too We're not Sure of the Circumstance As to which Onesimus And Paul met But What many believe Is that Onesimus Stole something From Philemon And ran away From Colosseum And he Journeed to Rome In order to get Lost in the Vastness of the city And avoid being Arrested for what He had done While in Rome For whatever reason He met Paul And through their Friendship He came to know Jesus Christ As his savior And since Paul Was a prisoner Of Rome He could use All the friendship He could get Paul takes Onesimus Under his wing And discipling him As child of Christ And in verse 11 He says Before he was Useless to you But now he is Useful to both You and me Here Paul Does a play On words Because you know The name Onesimus Means useful Or profitable And now Onesimus Is actually Useful And profitable To both Of them Where before He was not Useful And had even Wronged Philemon Now he is Truly useful Not only to Philemon But to Paul Too Paul is Pointing out There is

a Change In the dynamics Of the relationship Of them See our Relationships Are different With kindred Spirits And we We are Kindred spirits Of the one Spirit of God So I don't know If you've Actually experienced That Have had that Happen I can I remember Times And I'm getting A little bit Off what I Had written But I think

[ 17 : 30 ] Of Renee and I When Renee Was having Her Brain surgery And stuff We were Going through All these tests And everything We were up In Chapel Hill One day Of course You know You've got a Little short Appointment But you sit There all day Long sometimes And so We were up There And there Was this Gentleman Sitting over On the side He was a Pretty good Size guy Looked like He was Military to Me And after A while He came Over And he Said Do I Know you And I Said I don't Believe We've Ever Met And he Said Well where Are you From And I Was Telling And he Was Sharing He Was From Jackson Jacksonville And But in Our conversation We realized We were both Christians And I Come to feel Like that's How that Kindred spirit Kind of spoke Between us In some way And I Find that A lot Of times When I Meet Somebody I Often Can Kind of Feel The spirit Of god In them And So I Think That spirit Of god Brings us Together But continuing

On Listen I am Sending my Heart To you Wait Let me Make sure I got Myself Off track Because I Got Talking About Stuff Okay So in Verse 12 It says Listen I am Sending My heart Back To you As I Send him To stand Before you Although truly I wish To keep Him At my Side To take Your place As my Helper While I Am bound For the Good news Paul is Not only Beginning to Point out A change In Onesimus But how Much Onesimus Means To him Like others Paul has Discipled Onesimus Is not only Like a Brother But he Is also A spiritual Son to him And In Philemon's Absent Onesimus Is providing The brotherly Companionship That Paul Desperately Needs While he Is in Prison Now don't We all Need to See Don't we All hate It when We see A beloved Brother Or sister Leave our Church family For whatever Reason

You know If they Move If they You know Take a new Job somewhere Or something Else calls Them away It's always Hard to see Them leave And everything And I Imagine That's what Paul was Experiencing Right here Because he Knew What he Was doing But it's Verse 14 He says But I Didn't want To make This decision Without asking For your Permission This way Any good On your Part Wouldn't Be seen As forced But as Your true And free Desire Paul is Now demonstrating His concern Not only for Anesimus But for Philemon Paul is Showing a Humble Spirit Towards his Brother Philemon Not only That Philemon's Reputation as A Christian Will benefit Because Philemon Will demonstrate A Christlike Character In his Decision To Paul's Request See if Paul made The decision For him He would Deny Philemon The opportunity To act In a Christlike Manner Now think

Of it How many Times has God given Us an Opportunity To act Like in A Christlike Manner And how Do we Handle And I Think about That a lot Of times When God Is giving Me an Opportunity Have I Handled it And used It in The way That he Would want Me to Do Verse 15 and 16 The last Two verses I have Maybe this Is the Reason why He was Supposed to Be away From you For this For this Time So that Now you Will have Him back Forever No longer As a Slave But as More than A slave As a Brother Dear Brother Yes He is a Dear to Me But I Suspect he Will come To mean Even more To you Both in The flesh As a servant And in The Lord As a Brother We all Wonder why Things happen And often Thinking there's a Reason or purpose For when they do Happen And we go Through various Circumstances With various Circumstances In our Life And I Know Folks Even in Our Congregation Are dealing With things And we

Wonder why We're having To deal With it Here we Find Paul's Doing the Kind of like What maybe Paul's not Justifying Whatever wrong Onesimus Has done To Philemon But he's Stating that God Has taken A negative Situation And brought Good out Of it See our Relationship With Jesus Christ Transforms How we Relate To others And so Paul is Expecting to See this Onesimus Is no longer Just a slave To Philemon Not But much More A dear Brother Paul in Confidence Paul is Confident That the Person Onesimus Has become Through the Gift of Salvation Will mean Even more To Philemon Both as a Servant But mostly As his Brother in Christ Onesimus Like Philemon Belongs To Christ So Christ And so Christ And not Philemon Has a claim On Anesimus And his Obedience Notice Paul Is not trying

[ 22 : 32 ] To change The social Position Of the Two men But he Is clearly Pointing out There is Even a More important Revelation That's going On here They are Brothers In Christ And seen As children Of God One is More Is not More important Than the Other Jesus Christ Died for Both of These men For they Are not Seen as Jew Or Gentile Free Or slave Circumcised Or uncircumcised

See God's Grace is a Hallmark Of his Children So let's Kind of Bring this Message To Home As brothers And sisters In Christ They Paul Philemon And Onesimus And we Are to Distinguish Ourselves From other Men But not By our Country Not by Our Language And not By our Customs Those are Things of The world We are Not of This world We exist For a Short While In the Flesh Upon this Present Earth And our True Citizenship Is of Heaven And in

The new Earth To come That is Why Onesimus Philemon And Paul And all Christians That's Something we All share So while We are Here No matter How Our Civil Status Or our Social Standings Are We all Are members Of one Church Brothers And sisters In Cornelia Even If the External Structure Of which We Remain Is Unaltered Still This Can Can And will Change Those Who Observe Us In Our Everyday Life At Work At School And In The Community Paul Goes On To Say All These I Have Mentioned Died In Faith And This Is What He's Writing From Hebrew I'm Sorry All These I Have Mentioned Died In Faith Without Receiving The Full Promise Although They Saw Fulfillment As Though From A Distance These People Accepted And Confessed That They Were Strangers And Foreigners On This Earth Because People Who Speak Like This Makes It Plain That They Are Still Seeking A Homeland If This Was Only a Bit of Nostalgia For A Time And Place They Left Behind Then Certainly They Might Have Turned Around And Return But Such Saints As These Look Forward To A Far Better Place A Heavenly Country So God Is Not Ashamed To Be Called Their God Because He Has Prepared A Heavenly City For Them This Does Not Mean We Live For The Future But We Are Brothers And Sisters That Live Here In Exile In Koinonia All Of Us On A Common Pilgrimage Anticipating A Common Goal And That Is Eternity With The Father And I Want To Share Just A Few Three More Scriptures That Just Kind Of Something That You Can Think About Out Of Philippians Paul

Says But We Are Citizens Of Heaven Exiles On Earth Waiting Eagerly For Liberator Our Lord Jesus The Anointed To Come And Transfer These Humble Earthly Bodies Into The Form Of His Glorious Body By The Same Power That Brings All Things Under His Control And Then In Corinthians He Wrote For The Slave Who Hears The Lord's Call Is Set Free To Belong To The Lord In The Same Way The So Called Free Person Galatians He Says It Makes No Difference Whether You Are A Jew Or A Greek A Slave Or Free Man A Man Or A Woman Because In Jesus The Anointed The Liberating King You Are All One So What Do We Get From This What Are Some Things And I Want To Just Give You Three Things To Think About Through Christ We See All Situations And Circumstances Differently We Should

All Have That In Our Relationship With Jesus Christ Transforms How We Relate To Others And Then Third God's Grace Is A Hallmark Of God's Children So I Would Ask Are These Things Evident In Your Life What Type Of Letter Living Letter Are You Here At Church In Your Community In Your Workplace In Home With Your Family What Kind of Letter Are You And What Is Actually Written On Your Heart I Think Paul Is Able To He Knows The Change That Jesus Christ Makes In Our Person When They Accept Him As Their Lord And Savior And It Does It Makes A Huge Difference In The Way We Can Live Our Life If We Allow The Holy Spirit To Do So And So I Would Encourage You To Think About This Where You Stand With This And As Our Musicians Come Up To Do Our Last Song I Want You To Be Thinking About Where Do You Stand With Your Relationship With Lord And Does It Make A Difference In

[ 27 : 34 ] How Others See You Or How You See Them Do You See Other People In Other Situations In A Christ Like Manner So Bow Your Heads With Me In Prayer As They Prepare Father Today We Have Seen A Brother Intercede To Reconcile A Relationship Of Two Individuals Not As Before But Better May We Through The Love Of Jesus Christ Be Able To See Our Situations And Circumstances Differently Help Us To Live To React In A Christ Like Manner Lord In Our Family Life Those We Meet In Our Community At Our Workplace And At Our Schools May Our Relationship With Jesus Christ Increase And Transform Us In The Person That He Is May We Demonstrate His Love Towards Others As He Did To Us And God Let Your Grace Be A Hallmark Of Our Lives

A Witness To All Those That We Meet Telling Of Your Mercy And Your Love Through Your Son Jesus Christ Amen So What Glenn Has Up There Particularly Number One I'm Thinking Of Is Through Christ We See Our Situations And Circumstances Differently And Really That's What This Next Song Is All About As Difficult As Life Can Be We See Our Circumstances Differently Because I think I've Read This Earlier Already Is That We Know That He Is Using All Things For Our Good Those Of Us Who Have Accepted Him And Who Are Following Him And So As We Stand And Sing

This Think About The Difficult Situations Or Difficult People That You Might Have In Your Life And When You Were Talking About You Know Having The People Around I Jokingly Said A Few Times This Place Wouldn't Be So Bad For All People Right But We Need To Each Consider How We Can Love The Difficult People In Our Life And Even Our Enemies Right And How We Can Embrace Our Struggles As We Move Forward In Christ Let's Dance Together When Peace Like A River Attended My Way