

The Gospel According to Philemon | Philemon 17-25

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daley preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. Well, good morning Ontario Community Church. Let's go ahead and head back to our seats.

Well, it is great to be with all of you here this morning. Fall is here. Well, my name is Patrick Daley, and I'm the pastor here at Ontario Community Church, and it is a privilege to be here with you, to serve with you, and to preach from the Word of God.

Today, we are gonna be finishing up our series on the book of Philemon. We've been learning about how we go from useless to useful, very powerful words.

And we learn about why we must surrender to Christ. To choose Christ, it is the beginning. It is not the end. We learned about what it means to be refreshed in Christ, and how we should pray that people will come to know the Lord.

[1 : 19] That's what we're all about here, my friends. The people will come to know Jesus Christ, that they will have them at the center of their lives. That they'll grow in faith. They'll make that decision for Christ.

We learned about the relationship that was between Paul and Onesimus, and that Paul is making an appeal to Philemon. And so today, I have the title of the slides, gonna be up here.

The Gospel According to Philemon. What is that all about? How does the book of Philemon, the letter to Philemon from the apostle Paul, how does that have to do with the Gospel?

We're gonna learn about that today. We saw about how Paul was appealing to, or Paul was appealing to Philemon to take back Onesimus, not as a slave or a bond-servant, but to receive him as a brother in Christ.

This is so significant in the letter. Perhaps it was the will of God that Onesimus, although he did wrong, came to know the Lord. That's what Paul was writing.

[2 : 24] Onesimus went from being a sinner to free, and he is being sent back as a free man. And this leads us to today.

But before we do that, I want us to pray. Let's pray before we go any further. Father, we pray that as we conclude this little letter from the apostle Paul to Philemon, that we learn more about you and how this letter connects to the Gospel message.

Maybe learn about your grace and your mercy and the love that you have for us. For as scripture says, you knew us before we were born, and you give us life here on the earth.

Father, you sent your son Jesus, who forgives us for all of our sins and paid the debt, the burden of sin. All we need to do is to put our faith in your son Jesus Christ.

May we be refreshed in your love today. And we say this in the name of Jesus Christ. We pray amen. Amen. So I want to start off with this question. We'll put this on the slide.

[3 : 30] Can you think of a time where someone stood up for you or when you stood up for someone? You can probably think of times when you were a young child, right?

When you were going to school and you stood up for someone, or maybe as an adult, perhaps you can think of a time when you saw someone doing wrong.

Maybe you offered to help a brother or a sister out. Maybe there was someone who you helped when they were down, a shoulder to cry on, just being there to a listening ear for someone.

Maybe there is a time where you needed to be there to help someone out. Can you think of a time like that? You don't have to raise your hand, but I hope that all of us can think of a time where we helped someone out or someone helped us out.

Someone comforted us and was there for us. And how did that, how did that change the trajectory in your friendship with this person?

[4 : 33] Or how did that affect you? I think of times when we're down or we're sad. Look, being here on earth isn't perfect. There's a lot of overwhelming emotions.

There's a lot of things that happen in our culture that's just, it's like weight that's on our shoulder. And sometimes we just need someone to talk to. Sometimes we have someone who's there for us who is just listening there for us.

When we think of times where someone comes into our lives and helps us, don't we remember it? Don't we remember a friend or maybe even a family member who was there for us?

When someone helps you or protects you, maybe defends you. I think of the times, the many examples we can think of of someone who's bullying someone at school and someone stands up to the bully, right?

It makes a profound impact on our lives. And that kind of feeling, that memory that we have of a situation like this, it's an example of a connection with what we're going to explore in our verses in Philemon today.

[5 : 39] We see that the apostle Paul is offering to pay Philemon for the wrong that Onesimus has done. To charge it onto Paul's account.

Paul is saying to Philemon, whatever wrong Onesimus did, charge it to my account. It's a great reminder. Doesn't it remind you of the Good Samaritan?

There's a parallel that exists in this part of in scripture. But it also reminds us, and it should remind us of the gospel. Remind us about how Jesus Christ paid for our sins, charged it on his account, if you will, by his death on the cross.

Paul is stepping in on Onesimus's behalf. And I would like for us to read the text together. Let's go to our Bibles. I'll put that on the screen.

Please turn to the book of Philemon, page 1186 in your ESVP Bible. Or if you're using NIV, KJV, whatever translation, please turn to the book of Philemon.

[6 : 45] And let's follow along. We'll start off in verse 17. All right, are we ready?

So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

Now, pretty significant part. I, Paul, write this with my own hand. I will repay it.

To say nothing of your owing me, even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

A beautiful language. I wish to be refreshed. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

[7 : 47] 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. Epipharthas, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you.

And so do Mark, Architius, Dimas, and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirit.

So we start off in verse 17. If you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. Well, we start off, we're at the part where Paul is continuing to appeal to Philemon.

The word partner, it's a word that is used also in 2 Corinthians chapter eight, verse 23. You don't have to turn there. But what's happening is there's the mention of Titus as a fellow worker, a fellow partner if you will.

The word partner, it's defined as an associate, a companion or a partner. So having a partnership if you will. So Paul is saying here that if you work with me, you should receive Onesimus.

[8 : 59] You should receive my child in Christ if you will. You should receive him as a fellow brother in Christ. All of this is part of Paul's appeal. We then go into verse 18, which says, if he has wronged you at all or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

That is such beautiful language that reminds us of the good Samaritan and it reminds us of Jesus Christ. We see that Paul is, he's that fatherly figure towards Onesimus.

He has that love, he has that bond. He's offering to pay off any debt that Onesimus has owed to Philemon. Now, we don't know exactly what Onesimus did, but the language that's being used in here, if he has wronged you at all or he owes you anything, that language can be used, did Onesimus cheat or did he steal from Philemon?

We don't know the full scope of that. But what we do know is that Paul is offering to cover it all. And this verse is a reminder of what we find, like I said, in the story of the good Samaritan and the demonstration of the love that God has for us.

Remember the good Samaritan, a man who is offering to pay at the hotel or the inn, if you will, charging it onto his accounts, that same kind of language, such beautiful language.

[10 : 25] When you're down or you're sad or if you've done something wrong, if someone's offering to pay, thank you, Paul. Thank you, good Samaritan.

Such beautiful language. Jesus paid it all through his life, his ministry, his death, his burial and resurrection, the fulfillment of prophecy.

In verse 19, I wanna go ahead and put this on the screen here. What's very interesting about this, so it says, I, Paul, write this with my own hand.

I will repay it. To say nothing of your owing me even your own self. So you'll see, it's in your notes and on the screen here, Paul says this, right?

He says, I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. I love what Galatians says here. See what large letters I am writing to you, which is typically meant that it's hard for him to see, so he's writing with large letters, right?

[11 : 24] See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. Colossians, I write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains, grace be with you. In 2 Thessalonians, I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

Well, the first thing we need to know is that it was common back in biblical times to have a scribe, to have someone write the letters for you.

So what would happen here is you would have Paul dictate what needed to be written down, right? Just like how we have secretaries nowadays, they type really fast. Or I think of in court when there is a trial that's going on, someone's typing really fast.

They do, what is that called? It's a, the transcription, right? They write shorthand, right? It's a shorter version and they type so fast, it's incredible. It's just like how, now they didn't have typewriters back then or computers, but they were writing with their own hand, the words of Paul.

These people would help in the writing of divinely inspired texts. And I have to take a slight moment here. For those of us who've been going to Wednesday Night Bible study, we've been going over the role of the Holy Spirit, how the Holy Spirit overwhelmed the writers of scripture, right?

[12 : 40] So if you can imagine this overwhelming feeling from the Holy Spirit coming to Paul and Paul saying, hey, you need to write this down. And you need to write it down immediately.

And then writing it down and then I can imagine, imagine them being overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, calling up your scribe or your secretary, and to make sure that they write down the words that you say and make sure it's written correctly.

That would be, that's some divine inspiration right now. As things were written, there would be the need for proofreading and to make sure that the letter, the letters, right, were written correctly.

And in these verses, we can see that there were times that Paul would write with his own hand. Now, if you look at Romans 16-22, Tertius wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

So this could be the only scribe. Some historians say this was Paul's scribe. There could have been others, but we know of one at least.

[13 : 40] And this is a time where Paul would write it in his own hand. So when we literally read that, I write this with my own hand, I write greetings. It's a way to authenticate a letter as well.

If you think about when you have a signature, you have a printed out document, and you sign it with your own hand. Doesn't that authenticate the letter? It's the same way that of what we're seeing here.

And the other thing I want to point out here is, when we're reading in Philemon, he's not greeting Philemon. What is he saying?

He's saying in here, instead of greetings to you, he's saying, I will repay it. I'm writing this with my own hand. I will repay the debt that Onesimus has.

Can you imagine, instead of writing a greeting, the emphasis, the importance to the apostle Paul, why he's writing that, I will repay the debt that Onesimus has done for you, because Onesimus is a changed man in the Lord, going from useless to useful, from being a bond servant or a slave to being a free man.

[14 : 52] Have you ever known anyone who's offered to pay off your debts? That's some, if you've experienced that, what gratitude you must have, that feeling to have.

Paul would write with his own hand. He's writing to make it known that he will repay the debt. And he goes on to say, to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.

Now, that's not typical. What does he mean going on? Okay, that first part, I will repay it, to say nothing of your owing me. This language, Paul is seeking to remind Philemon of the debt, if you will, that Philemon owes to Paul, his own self, what do you mean by that?

Well, Paul helped Philemon come to Christ, coming to Christ, right? Now, here's the thing, when you come to Christ, your debts are forgiven, right?

You are washed clean by Jesus Christ. It is the realizing, it's the reminder, if you will, that Jesus paid it all. So can Philemon pay back Paul?

[16 : 03] Not really, it's just saying, hey look, well you owe me, right? Well, it's not like a debt you can actually pay. So Paul is reminding Philemon that your sins are forgiven, you are washed clean, if you will.

The debt has been paid by Jesus Christ. You can't pay that back, Philemon, you simply can't. So that's the reminder of Jesus Christ.

Jesus paid it all in full, and even a wealthy man, such as Philemon, can't even pay that. That's humbling words right there. And it's also a reminder, my friends, that when we read this, salvation is not for sale.

I know I made mention last week of how there are some churches that still offer indulgences, which is sad because some of my fellow Catholic brothers and sisters, it was outlawed, but yet there's some churches that still do it.

That's very unfortunate. We need to be reminded that salvation is not something that we can earn by the works that we do, nor is it something that if we raise up enough money, I can buy your way into heaven.

[17 : 15] Can you imagine if heaven was like that, though? We need to raise \$10,000 for John's ticket to heaven, and what if you don't have \$10,000?

Can you imagine if heaven was full of the wealthy? Man, I don't know if I wanna be a part of that kind of heaven, because salvation is free, it is available to all who believe in Christ through faith.

That makes it available to everyone, not just the rich, not just the poor, not just the Gentile or the Jew. I'm also reminded of the Wednesday night study when we were talking about the mystery of Christ or the mystery of the gospel being revealed.

Well, the mystery is the fact that salvation is available for all and not just for God's chosen people. So it's this expansion. That is the beauty of Christianity, my friends.

That salvation is that free gift. It is available to all who believe. The physical debt of retribution will be paid by Paul. The wrong that Onesimus did, Paul, saying, I'm gonna pay this off.

[18 : 21] Let this be a reminder of your salvation, that your debts were paid off by Jesus Christ, and we as Christians need to be reminded of that, and those who are not Christian, come to realize that when you come to Jesus Christ, the debt of sin, the burden of sin is gone.

It's paid in full. Onesimus and Philemon, they are brothers. It's no longer a slave and servant or a bond servant.

It's not this separation of socioeconomics, if you will. It's no longer about rich versus poor. They are now brothers in Christ.

You have any idea how revolutionary that was, especially in biblical times? To be viewed upon as an equal? Oh, you're below me. No, you're not. In Christ, you are equal, period.

That's important. And it reminds me, some of you will think of the verse in Galatians chapter three, verse 28, there is neither Jew nor Greek.

[19 : 27] There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female, for you are all what? One in Jesus Christ.

Verse 20, yes, brother, I want some benefit from you and the Lord, refresh my heart in Christ. And Paul wishes to be refreshed by Philemon. Remember how earlier in the letter, we were learning about Paul wishes to receive the benefit.

It's not financial gain or monetary value. He wants to receive that joy and comfort when he was hearing about Philemon and how hearts were refreshed in Christ.

And we went over this whole idea of what does that mean to be refreshed in Christ? To have your hearts refreshed is beautiful language because even us as Christians, we get worn down at times.

And to have another brother or sister in Christ who refreshes you, rejuvenates you, beautiful language. Verse 21, confident of your obedience, I write to you knowing that you will do even more than I say.

[20 : 30] And Paul is confident, that's pretty self-explanatory. Paul is confident in Philemon as a brother in Christ. He is confident that Philemon will do more than what is expected of him.

Do you think that Philemon is gonna accept Dona Semis back? Do you think that Philemon's heart will be moved by the fact that the apostle Paul, the man that contributed or completely led him to Christ, would be moved by that?

That's something to think about. Verse 22, at the same time, prepare a guest room for me for I'm hoping that through your prayers, I will be graciously given to you.

It's most likely that Paul is in prison when he's writing this. It's written around the time of Colossians. We can clearly see that Paul is wishing to see Philemon.

So it's not like Paul is writing this letter saying, hey, you know, I'm making this appeal to you, but we're not good after that. There is this, hey, I would like to see you again.

[21 : 38] I'd like you to take Dona Semis back as a brother in Christ, and I can't wait to see you. We see here that Paul is wishing for Philemon or Philemon's continued prayer that Paul will be able to come and see him in person.

So whether Paul was literally in prison, or if he was just saying I am a prisoner in Christ, well, regardless, it's still the prayer that from Philemon or from Paul to each other that they will see each other again.

Verse 23 through 24, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greetings to you. You have all these names, just like how in the beginning of the letter, we saw all these names of people, what's going on?

So let's put that on the slide. So we see Et Fras, the fellow prisoner, and we're not gonna go over all these verses, but these are the verses where these other people are mentioned.

Mark, we have Demas, the fellow work, we have Luke, we have Archacus, fellow worker. Now you'll notice that most of them are fellow workers, and you see the differentiation for a fellow prisoner.

[22 : 54] We find that Paul is mentioning someone who is a fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus. Now this can mean someone who's been in prison, just like the apostle Paul, or someone who has been suffering for Jesus Christ.

I tend to think, and a lot of scholars tend to think, this individual was also in prison. Someone who's been in prison with Paul around the time, it's beautiful language though, a fellow worker, a fellow prisoner, people who are suffering for the cause of Christ, or working for the cause of Christ.

It certainly appears that the apostle Paul is making mention of Et Fras differently than the others, and so to be put in prison physically or figuratively, they are experiencing the same common bond with each other, because back in early Christianity, to be a Christian was revolutionary, but that also reminds me how Christianity is very different than what the world has to offer.

Verse 25, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. And this is where we see the end of the letter of Philemon, the closing of the book where Paul is wishing that God's grace be with their spirit.

Now for some of you, you may have a Catholic background when you hear the Lord be with you and also with you, or nowadays in Catholicism, the Lord be with you and with your spirit. That is a cultural echo, if you will, from verses like this.

[24 : 33] So Paul is wishing for God to be with the essence of the person, with their very being of who they are of holistically.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you holistically, with your spirit, with all that you are. So Paul is wishing for God to be with them.

And that's the book of Philemon. We've gone over thematically, we've gone over verse by verse in the book of Philemon. Looking over the closing of the book, I wanna ask you, how does this letter to Philemon, how does this impact our lives today?

What do we do with this letter? Perhaps there's been something that has stuck out to you, whether you've been here once or you've been here the entire time. We've gone over the idea and the foundational belief that we go from useless to useful, what heavy language, I don't wanna be called useless.

I wanna be called useful in the eyes of God. And there's one more thing that we can learn, we can implement in our life. It is to say, we see that in our verses, the apostle Paul offering to pay off the debt that was owed from Onesimas.

[25 : 54] The beautiful thing that Paul is offering to Philemon. It's a reminder of the love that God has for us. Well, God loved us so much that he sent his son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our debts, to charge it to his account.

So that all who believe, will they perish? No, so that they don't perish, but have everlasting life, have eternal life. Whoever believes shall not perish, but have eternal life.

That's the focal point of Christianity. That is the most important thing as the body of Christ, as fellow believers, to encourage people to come to know the Lord and make that decision for Jesus Christ.

We see a brother in Christ offering to pay off the debt that was collected from another man who did wrong. We are seen as the equal in the eyes of God. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free.

There is no male and female for you are all in Christ, Jesus. All that we need to do is believe in the Lord, Jesus.

[27 : 05] Receive that free gift of salvation. It's not about how much money I make. It's not about what status or how tall or how short I am. It doesn't matter what skin color I am.

What matters is that I believe and that you believe in Jesus Christ. The mystery of Christ is the revelation that salvation is free for all.

Every person who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, our sin debt. Can we pay that off ourselves? Can we do it?

We can't do it on our own. We simply cannot. We can't, that debt is paid by the blood of the Lamb, by Christ the atoning sacrifice.

Consider your own life. And I wanna ask you, do you know anyone who represents onus seamus in your life? Maybe there is someone who has entered your life and you've seen a transformational change in their life.

[28 : 06] Do you know anyone like that? Do you know anyone who maybe they came to Christ and their trajectory in their life, they were going towards death and now they're going to life.

They're making that as people say that spiritual U-turn. Maybe if you met someone who has to face the consequences for their actions, but you can help them along the way.

You know anyone like that? Think about it. Maybe there's someone in your life where you need to share the good news of the gospel like the apostle Paul did with onus seamus. Maybe you need to share in your testimony and how God is working in your life, just like how God works in all of our lives.

Maybe you need to let people know that their debt is paid by making a decision for Christ. We think of the connection with the good Samaritan, someone who offered to help another in need.

Paul offered to help not just a stranger, but a changed man. We thank God for paying the price of our sin through Jesus Christ's death on the cross, his resurrection.

[29 : 17] This gives us trust and confidence in God that we find comfort in God's grace. May we find that we have, look, maybe this is a call for us to remember that we are all equal in the eyes of God.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, what are we doing fighting amongst each other? Maybe it's a reminder of that. We're all made in the image of God and our calling is to come to Christ.

We're called to have that relationship from him and from that salvation, we are called to share in the good news of the gospel. We're to exhibit that same kind of love to others, even if they're not a believer.

They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love. Maybe they'll see the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Let me tell you, being a Christian, you'll find other Christians, something tragic or terrible has happened in their life, but yet they're calm, they're full of peace, that everything will be okay.

[30 : 28] You just lost your house, you just lost a family member. Your friends cut you off, your mother wants nothing to do with you. How are you so calm? I don't understand that.

Well, to an unbeliever, they don't understand it, but we understand it though, that there's a peace, there's joy from the Lord. Let us be a church that is united in Christ and that we come together as Christians on the things that unite us and not the things that divide us, that we believe in this, that the holy Bible, that the word of God is divinely inspired and that the Holy Spirit guided the writers into writing or dictating to their scribes what is going to be written.

And the fact that we have the Bible here today is powerful. The connections that we find in scripture is wonderful. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and it is the glory of kings to find that matter or discover a matter.

Culture divides us. It divides us into turning against brother and sister in Christ. Culture seeks to divide that which is united, that which is holy.

We have to stand firm in the word of God and deal in love. Our closing question, how can we stand as a beacon of hope, of reconciliation and grace?

[31 : 59] Let me ask that again. How can we be, how can we stand as a beacon of hope, of reconciliation and grace? I wanna share a story with you.

It's not just one, but it's many stories. Maybe you've had the same pattern. There are many times in my life where I had to willingly choose to forgive someone, someone who really hurt me, someone who did me wrong.

Sometimes it was someone close. Sometimes it was a close friend, someone you grew up with. Maybe it was someone you worked with. As I was writing this, I thought of three individuals.

That's why I'm writing it as sometimes it's a family member, sometimes it's a friend. Sometimes it was someone I interacted with. But something happened.

Something happened, this person did me wrong. Might have been bitterness, it might have been misunderstanding. When I was hurt, I wanted to retaliate.

[33 : 06] But time and time and again, the Lord, family, other friends, they comforted me. They made me realize that I need to offer the same kind of love that God offers to those who have hurt me.

Turn the other cheek. Oh, I wanna retaliate for some of the wrongs that you have done or whoever it was. But to still exhibit love, to offer, to offer love instead of hatred.

Oh, it's hard to do. But let me tell you, that is the same kind of love that God gives to us. Think of all the wrong that we've done in the eyes of God, that God still loves us and God still forgives us.

And every time this has happened, it wasn't easy to do. But when I forgave them, it felt like a weight was lifted off of me. I needed to let go of that anger.

Why do you think God wants us to live lives that are holy? Do you realize that the closer you come to God, the simpler your life will be? I don't mean easy, I mean simple.

[34 : 19] I mean that God wants you to be at peace. God wants you to be comforted, even when bad things happen to you, even when people do you wrong, God wants you to still exhibit that love.

Now that doesn't change the fact that it hurt. Oh boy, does it hurt. But to still offer that love. And sometimes in these situations, I parted ways with this person.

Other times I didn't. And maybe you can think of a situation that way. No matter what the situation, extending forgiveness is critical. And that's what we see in fight, Lehman.

That is one of the lessons. Yes, from useless to useful, but also the reminder of the gospel, that Jesus Christ saves us.

All we need to do is believe. If you flip this on its head, there are times where we, or even myself, I need to ask for forgiveness for the wrong that I've done.

[35 : 21] I've mentioned, look, there's people that have wronged me, but I've also wronged people. We've all wronged people. Do you ask for forgiveness? Now it's not an easy thing to do, I understand.

It's just a reminder for us. I too am a sinner. I am imperfect. But I believe in God who forgives me, who loves me, no matter how much I mess up, no matter how much I screw things up.

He's still there. Maybe you identify with Paul. You see a man come to the Lord and be on a better path. Maybe you need to make an appeal for someone.

Maybe you need to say, hey, look, this person's changed, you should see it. Maybe you identify with Philemen. Someone did wrong to you and you need to forgive them. Or maybe you identify or relate with Onesimus, who needs to make things right, even though he's a changed man.

Still needs to go have a conversation with Philemen. And this week, I challenge you to take a step of bold faith. Is there a relationship that I need to work on?

[36 : 32] Is there a conversation that I need to have? Maybe it's a family member. Maybe it's a coworker. Maybe it's a friend that you wronged a long time ago.

Oh, those are fun. Having those conversations. Offer your burdens to God, though, for his love is everlasting. And never forget that God's grace is greater.

It's like that song, grace greater than our sin. If you trust in Jesus, you will be forgiven. You will be saved and you will be set free from sin.

We have confidence in knowing this, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Maybe you're hearing this message today and you realize that you need God's grace in your life.

If that is you, you can receive forgiveness and new life in Jesus Christ today. All you need to do is admit you're a sinner, believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord.

[37 : 33] Think of the thief on the cross. The thief cried out, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom and Christ said to him, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

It is the believing in Jesus Christ, right? Do you think the thief knew he did wrong? Do you think that when you're about to die and you see Jesus the Christ right there and you know you did wrong, wouldn't you want to admit to yourself the wrong that you did and then believing that Jesus Christ is Lord, believing in Him?

That's some faith right there. Remember me when you go into your kingdom? That's a call to the Lord and Jesus answered. And again, it's not about what you do.

It's about believing in Him and recognizing what Christ has done for you. I didn't say, I'm not the first one to say this, but religion will say it's all about what you do.

But in Christianity, it's about what Christ has done. It's not about the direction of what, where are you going to pray? How often are you going to pray? What type of prayer you're going to pray?

[38 : 51] It's not about how much money I give. It's not one of those things. It's about belief, having faith in Christ. And in closing, I want to share this prayer with you.

It's a, we have a slide for that. You know what? That's okay. In your notes on the back, there's a prayer. It's, some of you may know it, some of you may not.

It's a known as the prayer of St. Francis. It says in here, there are verses to support this because I want to make sure that prayers like this are biblically backed up.

Oh, there it is. Lord, make me an instrument of peace. Doesn't God make us instruments of peace? He gives us peace. Where there is hatred, let me show love.

Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, let there be faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light.

[39 : 54] Where there is sadness, joy. Seeking to console, understand in love. For it is in forgiving.

For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned. And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

And this is part of that transformation that happens in our lives when we make a decision for Christ. Extending love to each other. And certainly, when people are in despair, may we offer them hope.

Where there is doubt, may we show them and share our faith with them. I just thought that in conclusion to this book of Philemon and the connection with the gospel, I thought it was appropriate to share this prayer with you.

That we may be instruments of peace. That we will be instruments of love. And with that, I'd like for us to close in prayer.

[41 : 00] Father, we have concluded our time in Philemon. We ask that we come to know you. Choose a life in you through faith. And as we believe in you and we become brother and sister no longer separated by class or skin color or whatever, may we grow in you.

May we go in your holy name to do good in your name. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ so that we can do good in your name.

We ask that you give us the strength to forgive and let us be forgiven for the wrong we may have done. We know you forgive us, Lord. We know that you're that constant in this fog of culture, this ever-changing world that we live in.

When the world changes and values seem to change by culture standards, you, God, are constant. We ask that you are with us this week.

Let us know you're unfailing, you're everlasting, you're unconditional agape love and may we exhibit that to others. We thank you for your love for us.

[42 : 13] Be with us, be with us. It is in Jesus' name that we pray and we all say together, amen, amen. Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast.

For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org. May God's blessings be with you.