

1. Welcome Back to LifeLines!
2. Our LifeLines verse for September 18 will be 1 Corinthians 1:18
3. LifeLines will meet through Monday, November 13!

LifeLines September 11, 2023

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

Philemon 6

I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter to his friend, Philemon (Fi-LEE-mon). Philemon is thought to have been a wealthy man, maybe even a minister of the house church which met in his home (probably) in Colossae. Onesimus (O-NES-e-mus), Philemon's slave, had escaped & fled to Rome. There, he heard Paul preaching & accepted the gospel. In this letter, Paul is intervening, trying to smooth the way for Onesimus to return to his master & trying to encourage Philemon to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.

Purposefully sharing the gospel, forgiveness & reconciliation are themes of this letter. Paul refers to Philemon as *brother* & doesn't try to coerce him because of any authority he might feel Paul has.

Extra credit if you read all 26 verses of this letter!

[Theologians believe Philemon freed Onesimus & sent him back to help Paul in Rome, where he became a minister & possibly pastor of the church at Ephesus. Both Onesimus & Philemon were martyred.]

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

AMP

I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective & powerful because of your accurate knowledge of every good thing which is ours in Christ.

CEV

As you share your faith with others, I pray they may come to know all the blessings Christ has given us.

ESV

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.

Good News Translation

My prayer is that our fellowship with you as believers will bring about a deeper understanding of every blessing which we have in our life in union with Christ.

GW (God's Word Translation)

As you share the faith you have in common with others, I pray that you may come to have a complete knowledge of every blessing we have in Christ.

KJV

That the communication of thy faith might become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

MSG

And I keep praying that this faith we hold in common keeps showing up in the good things we do, & that people recognize Christ in all of it.

NASB

And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for the sake of Christ.

NCV

I pray that the faith you share may make you understand every blessing we have in Christ.

NIV

I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.

NIRV (New International Reader's Version)

I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely understand every good thing we have in Christ.

NLT (New Living Translation)

And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand & experience all the good things we have in Christ.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

I pray that the sharing of your faith... Paul is counting on Philemon to step up & demonstrate the faith he & Paul share. Sharing denotes fellowship. When we fellowship with others & share the gospel, we advance the kingdom of God - the very thing Jesus came here to do! We advance Christ's cause!

People who hesitate to share their faith assume they have a *faith problem*. What they probably have is a *knowledge problem*! Do we have a firm handle on our faith? Do we know what we believe & why? How do we refer to our faith? In 2 Peter 1:1, Peter addresses his letter "to those who have received a faith as precious as ours." Do we consider our faith 'precious'? If we did, perhaps we'd be more likely to share it with others!

may become effective... Effectiveness is the key! Are we effective in sharing *our* faith? Paul wants Philemon to be a *witness for Christ*! Paul is praying that God will enable Philemon to bear witness *to* his faith by *sharing* his faith *effectively* & agree with Paul that freeing Onesimus is the right thing to do.

Faith becomes effective when we speak it, share it & act on it with the help of the Holy Spirit in us. Each time we quote scripture, it's as if little capsules of God's grace are extended to us through His Word. They come out of our mouth for *us* to hear & for others to hear & build us up in the Word. This is how we grow. Speaking God's Word feeds our faith. This is our positive response to what God has already promised & done through His grace. Speaking & sharing scripture is a way of acknowledging the faith we've been

given (and helps solve the *knowledge problem* mentioned above - see the word 'knowledge' in 'acknowledging').

when you perceive all the good that we may do... To perceive is to realize, become aware of or conscious of something; to grasp it, finally! Do we even *begin* to perceive all the good we can do *if we open our mouths*? Without our participation in sharing the good news, telling others the redeeming love of the Father through the Son, explaining redemption (being forgiven of our sins), the kingdom will cease to grow!

Imagine a world of believers in the God who loves us, forgives us, & sent His Son to die for our sins & diseases so we would never be separated from Him & would, instead, spend eternity with Him in heaven! **Do we perceive the vital role of doing all the good we can do?** If we don't know what we have, we can't release it - the knowledge. If we don't recognize & understand the faith, power, everything that is in us – because of what Jesus did on the cross – we will never be able to use it/release it for His glory! No wonder “Scripture Is Our LifeLine”!

Are we refusing to accept precious gifts from the Father? Are we refusing to unwrap others? Are there helpful features on our cars, on our computer or phone that we don't have knowledge to use? Are there gifts of the Spirit, like praying in tongues, that we have dismissed for lack of knowledge or desire? *Do we know what we have in Christ?*

for Christ... It's all about sharing the gospel *of Christ for Christ*, to further the Father's Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Witnessing is sharing the genuineness of Christ with others. So is loving. So is forgiving. So is sharing. Witnessing is telling others they can have & enjoy eternal life *NOW*, for the sake of the One who died that may have it all!

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Matthew 5:16, In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works & give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 6:14-15, For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Mark 1:17, And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me & I will make you fish for people.”

Luke 15:7, Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek out & to save the lost.”

John 17:3, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, & Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

John 17:20, “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their word.”

Acts 1:8, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; & you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea & Samaria, & to the ends of the earth.

Romans 1:16, For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first & also to the Greek.

Romans 6:14, For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 8:2, For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin & death.

Romans 10:17, So faith comes from what is heard, & what is heard comes through the Word of Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:12, For the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also overflows with many thanksgiving to God.

Ephesians 2:8, For by grace you have been saved through faith, & this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 3:19, And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:32, And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 6:5, Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear & trembling, in singleness of heart as you obey Christ;

Philippians 1:6, I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:9-11, And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more & more with knowledge & full insight to help you to determine what's best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure & blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory & praise of God.

Philippians 2:13, For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will & to work for His good pleasure.

Colossians 1:9, For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you & asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom & understanding.

Colossians 2:6, As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted & built up in Him & established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, And you became imitators of us & of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the Word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia & in Achaia.

Titus 3:14, And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

Hebrews 6:10, For God is not unjust; He will not overlook your work & the love that you showed for His sake in serving the saints, as you still do.

James 2:17, So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

1 Peter 3:15, But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.

2 Peter 1:1, Simon Peter, a servant & apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God & Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:3, His divine power has given us everything needed for life & godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory & goodness.

2 Peter 1:8, For if these things are yours & are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective & unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:18, But grow in the grace & knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now & to the day of eternity. Amen.

SUMMARY

As his letter unfolds, Paul offers to pay Philemon for anything Onesimus might have stolen, *if* Philemon forgives him & takes him back. Slaves were certainly expected to obey their masters, so what Paul was suggesting was an extraordinary thing. Does this remind us of anything else in the gospel message? For Paul, perhaps it was a matter of ‘practicing what we preach’ - sharing the good news, divine love, forgiveness, redemption, things we as Christians should *know* as well as practice.

Before we were ‘born again through water & the spirit’ into the body of Christ, we were all slaves to something: the world, its demands, pleasures, expectations. Without a faithful connection to the Trinity, we were useless to our Lord & slaves to sin. Faith in Jesus freed us from all of that. Paul wanted to make the same parallel regarding Onesimus & Philemon. Paul was beseeching Philemon to forgive Onesimus as Christ forgave us. Jesus still welcomes us today, as brothers & sisters, His joint heirs to the Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

Accepting the Word of God & having faith in Jesus as the risen Son of God who died for our sins, sets us free from the law of sin & death. We are no longer slaves to that law. Paul believed equality should exist among believers. Even in prison, he knew true lasting freedom comes through knowing Christ. In becoming free in Christ, we are no longer slaves to the world. All are equal in the eyes of God.

Who among our friends, relatives, neighbors or co-workers would be grateful beneficiaries if we would “perceive all the good that we may do for Christ,” by sharing our faith? Who needs to be set free of something?

Have we stepped out of our comfort zones to touch others with the gospel message; to free them of the burden of sin; to introduce them to the joy of eternal life *now*? When we embrace our faith, we embrace the genuineness of our Lord & our trust in Him. Oh! We must not keep this to ourselves! We must “perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.”

We know how much the Good News of the gospel as meant to us. There are others who need to hear the same Good News. It is through *sharing* our faith that it becomes *effective*. Jesus & the Father long for all to come to them so the Kingdom of Heaven will grow! The more we realize the benefits of sharing our faith for Christ & for others, the more eager we’ll be to share, fellowship & watch the kingdom grow.

Things we delight in are easy to do. Let us delight in sharing our faith.

Let Philemon 6 be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!