

“I Thank My God!”
Philemon 4-7

Introduction:

1. I Was Listening To A News / Talk Show Earlier This Week:
 - And - The Participants Were Answering Some Questions:
 - Posed To Them By Their Viewers.
 - Some Questions Were Lighthearted:
 - And So Were The Answers!
 - But There Was One Question:
 - That Was More Serious Than The Others:
 - And So Were The Answers!
 - It's A Question That, I Think:
 - Everyone Tries To Answer:
 - At Some Point In Their Lives - And The Question Was This:
 - “What Do You Want To Be **Known** For?”
 - One Person's Answer:
 - Was A Noble Answer!
 - He Wanted To Be Known For:
 - His Work With Children In Need!
 - Another Person's Answer:
 - Was A Common Answer!
 - She Wanted To Be Known For:
 - Her Work & Career As A Journalist!
2. Have You Ever Thought About That Question?
 - It's A Question That Strikes At The Heart:
 - Of The Very Purpose For Life!
 - What Would **Your** Answer Be?
 - “What Do **You** Want To Be Known For?”
 - Surely - There Is A Greater & Higher Purpose:
 - For Life - Than Just Being Known As:
 - A Good Person Or A Successful Person!
 - And The Truth Is - There Is!
 - In Fact - The Bible Teaches:
 - That The Highest End In A Persons Life:
 - Can Be & Ought To Be:
 - “To Glorify God, And To Enjoy Him Forever!” (Westminster Catechism)
3. As We Turn Back In Our Bibles To:
 - Paul's Letter To Philemon:
 - I Think We Will See That:
 - This Was The Kind Of Life & Purpose:
 - Philemon Had!
 - Because - In Verses 4-7 - Paul Describes:
 - What **Philemon** Was Known For:
 - Through His Words Of Thanksgiving & Prayer:
 - For Him!
 - Let's Read Those Verses Together:
 - “I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, / 5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; / 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. / 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother!”
4. In These Verses - Paul Is Sincerely Grateful:
 - To God For Philemon!
 - When He Says - Verse 4:
 - “I Thank My God!”
 - He Wasn't Just Trying To Flatter Him With His Words!
 - Paul Meant These Words!

- But - What Kind Of Life:
 - And What Kind Of Testimony:
 - Would Lead To This Kind Of Response:
 - Before God & By Others?
 - What Kind Of Life Is A “Praise-Worthy” & A “Thank-Worthy” Life?

5. This Morning - We’re Going To See:
- Through The Testimony Of Philemon:
 - What A “Thank-Worthy” Life Looks Like!
 - The Kind Of Life That Will Even Lead Others:
 - To Thank & Glorify God:
 - For You!

* First - A Praise-Worthy Life Consists Of:

1. A Genuine Faith!

- This Is The Only Kind Of Life:
 - That Will Bring Glory To God:
 - And Fulfill The Highest End & Purpose:
 - For Your Life!
 - After All - As Hebrews 11:6 Tells Us:
 - “Without Faith It Is Impossible To Please Him!”
 - And Impossible To Glorify Him!
 - You Need A Genuine Faith!
 - And This Is The Kind Of Faith:
 - Philemon Possessed - Which Caused Paul To Write In 1:5 - “Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints!”
 - We See From This Verse:
- The Foundation Of A Genuine Faith!
 - It Is A Faith - “Toward The Lord Jesus!”
 - You See - There Are Different Kinds Of Faith:
 - Aren’t There? A Lot Of People Will Say They Believe In God!
 - But Is That All That Is Necessary To Please & Glorify Him?
 - James 2:19 - “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble!”
 - It Is Not Enough To Just Believe In *A* God:
 - Or Even To Believe In *The* God!
 - It Is To **Know** God Through A Genuine & Saving Faith!
 - Jesus Himself Said - In John 17:3 - “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent!”
 - All Other Faiths Are Counterfeit Faiths!
 - And Do Not & Cannot Bring Glory To God!
 - You Must Be A Christian!
 - Philemon Was!
 - Are You?
 - Have You Turned From Your Sin & From Your-Self?
 - And Are You Trusting In The Lord Jesus:
 - As Your Savior?
 - The Lord Jesus Christ & Him Alone Is The Foundation Of A Genuine Faith!
 - And - That Faith Is - In The Words Of John Gill:
 - “A Looking Towards Christ, A Moving Towards Him, A Laying Hold Upon Him, And Embracing Him, A Staying And Leaning On Him, A Living Upon Him, And A Walking In Him!”
 - This Kind Of Genuine Faith:
 - Brings Glory To The Lord! Also:
 - The Fruit Of A Genuine Faith!
 - It Is A Faith That Bears Fruit!
 - And One Of The Primary Fruits Of Genuine Christian Faith:
 - Is Love - 1:5 - “Love Toward All The Saints!”
 - Philemon Had A Testimony Of This Kind Of Love!
 - It Was A Love That Reflected:
 - The Love Of His Own Savior!

- How Many Times Did Jesus Say:
 - “Love One Another!”
 - And - “Love One Another, As I Have Loved You!” (John 15:12)
- And Paul Wrote That He:
 - “Heard” Of These Things:
 - In Philemon’s Life!
 - Now - He Probably *Was* Told About Philemon - From Epaphras & Even From Onesimus!
 - But The Only Way You Can Hear About Someone’s:
 - Faith & Love - Is For Someone Else:
 - To See Their Faith & Love:
 - In Action!
 - In 1 John 3:8 - John Wrote:
 - “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth!”
 - It’s One Thing:
 - To Say You Believe & To Say You Love!
 - It’s Another Thing:
 - To Show It!
 - A Genuine Christian Faith:
 - That Bears The Fruit Of Genuine Christian Love:
 - Is The Only Kind Of Life:
 - That Is Thank-Worthy & Will Bring Glory To The Lord!
 - Is This What You Want To Be Known For?

* Second - A Praise-Worthy Life Consists Of:

2. A Growing Faith!

- This Too Is The Kind Of Life:
 - That Will Bring Glory To God:
 - And Fulfill The Highest End & Purpose:
 - For Your Life!
 - And This Is Why - Whenever Paul Thought About Philemon:
 - He Prayed For Him - 1:6 - “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus!”
 - You See - Paul Wanted The Faith & Love Of Philemon:
 - To *Not* Remain Where They Were!
 - As Strong As They Were - There Was:
 - And There Still Is - A Danger:
 - For Them To Become Stagnant & Dormant!
 - **IE:** Rain / No Rain!
 - Especially - Since Paul Was About To Ask Philemon:
 - To Stretch His Faith & To Stretch His Love:
 - By Receiving Back Into His Life:
 - Into His Home & Even Into His Church:
 - Someone Who Had Left Him & Even Hurt Him!
 - And So - Paul Prays About:
- The Purpose Of His Growth!
 - 1:6 - “That The Communication Of [His] Faith Become Effectual!”
 - Or - That The Fruit Of His Faith:
 - It’s “Communication” And Benefit To Others:
 - Would Flourish & Abound!
 - Sometimes - Things May Come Into Your Life:
 - That Will Challenge Your Faith & Your Love!
 - And The Temptation Will Be:
 - To Just Give Up!
 - Faith / Love!
 - Jesus Said In John 15:8:
 - “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples!”
 - We Need To Pray For Ourselves & For Others - To Not Give Up!

- But That We Might Be “Always Abounding In The Work” & In The Faith & In The Love “Of The Lord!” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

- A Growing Faith:

- Brings Glory To The Lord!

- But - How Does This Growth Happen?

- Find Out - As Paul Also Prays For:

- The Progress Of His Growth!

- 1:6b - “By The Acknowledging Of Every Good Thing Which Is In You In Christ Jesus!”

- The Fuel For A Growing Faith:

- Is A Growing Knowledge & Acknowledgment Of All The Blessings You Have In Christ!

- **IE:** Like The Song - “Count Your Blessings” - “It Will Surprise You What The Lord Hath Done!”

- Not Only Will It Surprise You, It Will Sustain You & Strengthen You In Your Faith & Walk With God!

- So Keep Your Mind On:

- The Sufficiency Of God’s Blessings!

- “Every Good Thing!”

- Remember James 1:17 - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!”

- The Security Of God’s Blessings!

- “Which Is In You!”

- The Promises & Provisions Of God Belong To You!

- And The Source Of God’s Blessings!

- “In Christ Jesus!”

- And - Ultimately - For His Glory & For His Praise!

- An Active Knowledge Of:

- And Delight In - These Things:

- Will Fuel Your Faith:

- More And More!

- Is This Your Desire?

- Remember Philippians 4:8 - “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things!”

- Because - Growing Christian Faith:

- Is The Kind Of Life:

- That Is Thank-Worthy & Will Bring Glory To The Lord!

- Is This What You Want To Be Known For?

- And When You Dwell On The Goodness Of God:

- It Will Bring Forth The Growth:

- And The Goodness:

- That He Desires!

* Third - A Praise-Worthy Life Consists Of:

3. ***A Generous Faith!***

- This Will Also Be The Kind Of Life:

- That Will Bring Glory To God:

- And Fulfill The Highest End & Purpose:

- For Your Life!

- And This Is What Caused Paul To Write To Philemon In The First Place!

- It Was Because - 1:7 - “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother!”

- Paul Wrote Because He Had Hope!

- Hope That Philemon Would Continue To Display The Grace That God Wrought In His Life!

- It Was A Grace That:

- Yielded Great Rejoicing!
 - Even To The Apostle Paul!
 - 1:7 - “For We Have Great Joy!”
 - A Genuine, Growing, And Generous Faith:
 - Is A Source Of “Great Joy” Within The Body Of Christ!
 - So Often We Think Of:
 - Our Faith - As - **Our** Faith!
 - That It Has Little Impact Or Effect:
 - On Others! But That’s Not True At All!
 - Even The Apostle John Felt This Way:
 - In 1 John 1:3-4 - “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. / I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth!”
 - When You Seek To Glorify The Lord:
 - In Your Life:
 - It Will Yield Great Joy To The People Of God!
 - **IE:** And Like Fire Will Beget Fire - Sometimes The Spark Of Your Faith Will Enliven The Faith Of Others! Mississenewa 1812 / Fire Piston / Ember
 - Also - It Was A Grace That:
- Yielded Great Rest!
 - 1:7 - Even - “Consolation In Thy Love!”
 - The Love That Philemon Had:
 - For The Lord & For His People:
 - Was A Blessing To Paul!
 - God Used The News Of Philemon’s Faith & Love:
 - To Show To Paul:
 - That The Gospel Was Still At Work:
 - And Powerfully Changing Lives!
 - Sometimes - It Is Easy:
 - To Get Discouraged:
 - When It Seems Like Faith & Love Are Ebbing Away!
 - But - When You Hear Fresh [News](#):
 - About God’s Ongoing Work In Someone’s Life:
 - It Lifts Your Spirit & Comforts Your Heart!
 - But It Will Also:
 - Yield Great Refreshment!
 - Paul Then Explains The Evidence Of Philemon’s Love Was That:
 - 1:7b - “The Bowels Of The Saints Are Refreshed By Thee, Brother!”
 - The Saints Of:
 - His Own Church - Had Been Blessed & Refreshed:
 - By His Active & Generous Love!
 - This Is The Kind Of Life:
 - That Is Thank-Worthy & Will Bring Glory To The Lord!
 - A Faith & Love:
 - That Brings:
 - Rejoicing!
 - Rest!
 - Refreshment!
 - Is This The Kind Of Generous Spirit:
 - That You Are Known For?

Conclusion:

1. So - If You Were Asked That Question Today:
 - How Would You Answer?
 - “What Do You Want To Be Known For?”
 - Is It Something That:
 - Is Temporal & Temporary?
 - Or - Will It Be Something That:

- Is Truly Meaningful & Will Last Forever!
- 2. Because - A Praise-Worthy & A Thank-Worthy Life:
 - Like The Life Of Philemon:
 - And Like The Life Of The Apostle Paul:
 - Is The Only Kind Of Life:
 - That Will:
 - Exalt The Lord & Encourage Others!
 - This Is Why Paul First Wrote:
 - In 1:4 - "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers!"
 - You See - Philemon Couldn't Have:
 - A Genuine, Growing & Generous Faith:
 - Apart From God & His Grace!
 - So - Paul Praised & Thanked God:
 - "From Whom All Blessings Flow!"
 - So - If You See This Kind Of Faith:
 - In Your Own Life:
 - Or In The Lives Of Others:
 - Give God The Glory!
 - And If You Need:
 - This Kind Of Faith:
 - In Your Own Life:
 - Pray For It!
- 3. So That - In The End:
 - It Won't Be **You** That Is Remembered:
 - But The **Lord!**
 - And His Grace **To** You:
 - And His Grace:
 - At Work **In** You!
 - May It Be - As We Read From:
 - Psalm 115:1 - "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name [be the] glory!"

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
4245 North 200 West
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com