

# Sunday School Lesson

DECEMBER 15, 1940  
By Dr. Paul Caudill.

Topic: Christian Love Builds Brotherhood  
Scripture: Philommon 4-20

Our world is full but yearning for lack of brotherhood. It is true that the wounds of a second World War are being nursed, after a fashion, and that there are to be found everywhere those who, apparently, want no more of war. But deep down within our hearts we who are of Christ know there can be no basis for brotherhood, apart from Him.

The only true hope for freedom and liberty is found in Christ, and those who have been liberated in Him are the only

ones who are capable of practicing the kind of love and brotherhood which the world needs.

In Paul's letter to Philemon we have the practice of Christian love demonstrated in practical fashion. The letter, sent to Philemon by Onesimus, a converted runaway slave of Philemon, along with Tychicus who is bound for Colossae with Onesimus, deals with the problem of slavery in such a way as to lay the foundation for the ultimate freedom of all slaves who are in bondage to men.

**Religion That Refreshes**  
In the opening verses of his letter to Philemon, Paul reminds him that his love and faith had been of such a high order as to bring comfort and joy to his own heart, and that the hearts of the saints had been "refreshed" through him. That is an arresting statement for anyone to make about anybody. A love and a faith that refreshes!

But it is no wonder that Philemon's love and faith were of such compelling quality. The object of his love and devotion was Jesus Christ: "hearing of thy love and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus" (v.5). It is the object of one's faith that gives validity to it. Philemon's faith was valid and effective because it was centered in Jesus Christ—his was a Christ-centered faith. There are plenty of people in the world today who do not accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, but who profess to have a type of faith, yea, even faith in God. But their "faith" does not refresh the heart of the Christian because it is not valid—it does not have as its object the Lord Christ.

There has been much said, in recent years, about "the light that has faded," referring, of course, to the church. And some have been bold enough to declare that the matter of church attendance has no more to do with religion, so far as they are concerned, than the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" or a Fourth of July oration has to do with patriotism. All such criticism, no doubt, has come about because of the pale, sickly cheeks of our love and faith for Christ. We have not demonstrated, as we ought, our love for Him. We have failed to translate into everyday living faithful expressions of our love. Our religion has not been of the kind that refreshes.

**For Love's Sake**  
The foundation for brotherhood is Christian love. That is where Paul began in his message to Philemon concerning his runaway slave, Onesimus: "For love's sake . . . I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (v.9f). In the opening verse Paul had referred to his own self as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus" (apparently used here on purpose rather than apostolos as more effective with Philemon and a more touching occasion of pride as Paul writes with his manacled right hand"—Robertson).

The word Onesimus was a common name among slaves. It is formed from an old word (gr. onesis) meaning to "profit" which from the verb (Gf. onemai) meaning "to profit, to help." Hence Paul's play (pun) on the meaning of the name Onesimus. The one (Onesimus) who by name was supposed to be "useful," but had become "useless," was now become "profitable": "Onesimus, who was once unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me" (v.10). When one becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus there is a new order, a new relation that manifests itself in all dealings with one another. This new order leads us to fulfill our obligations to one another, even when the fulfillment is painful in its demand.

Paul is pleading for Philemon to receive Onesimus back "no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved" (v.16). That was something new for Philemon to consider. He had not been accustomed to thinking of a slave as "a brother," and above all things as a brother "beloved." What a shocking intimation it must have been for him. And yet,

that is exactly what Paul meant. Upon the return of Onesimus, a new relation was to exist between him and his master Philemon—the relation of Christian brotherhood.

According to the Roman law that fostered slavery throughout the empire Onesimus still belonged to Philemon. Paul had no authority to alter that phase of the problem. But it was in his province as an ambassador of Christ and apostle of Christian brotherhood to insist that Philemon receive his runaway slave back as a brother "beloved," because he too was now of the household of faith. Paul even goes so far as to say, "If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself" (v.17). Paul could hardly have made his case stronger: He spoke the last word: "Receive him as myself." "Paul sends Onesimus, the converted runaway slave, back to his legal master, but shows that he expects Philemon the Christian to treat Onesimus as a brother in Christ, not as a slave." (Robertson). In the words of Meyer: "In the flesh Philemon had the brother for a slave; in the Lord he had the slave for a brother."

Paul was speaking, of course, for love's sake—for love alone. He could not force Philemon to do anything apart from the constraining power of Christ's own love. But Paul knew that the love of Christ has a constraining power. He had felt it in his own heart. It was the same love that turned him right-about-face on the Damascus road and changed the whole current of his life forever. It was the love that melted the heart of Zachaeus and gave him a new concept of the stewardship of life.

**The Death-Knell of Human Slavery**  
The words of Paul will remain forever a stirring example of the forceful power of Christian brotherhood at work in a world that sets small value upon human beings. Paul went the second mile. He not only attempted to bring about a reconciliation on a Christian basis, he also offered himself to be used in effecting it: "But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides" (v.18f).

Words throb with life and power when we who plead a cause step out in the vanguard

and offer to be used in its behalf. Man no longer doubt our sincerity, or the reality of our profession. That is why Paul's message is so vital today. Spirited, as he was, he threw his whole life behind his message. He reserved nothing for self, but gave all in behalf of his cause. Fearless of blame or censure, he pleaded the cause of Onesimus, a common slave, and offered to make restitution with his own resources for any damage that had been done.

How long will it be until there will be enough of Christian brotherhood to do away with human bondage in all lands? That we cannot say. One thing we do know however: "These words of Paul's sound the death-knell of human slavery—wherever the spirit of Christ is allowed to have its way. It has been a long and hard fight to break the shackles of human bondage even in Christian countries and there are still millions of slaves in pagan and Mohammedan lands" (Robertson). But the day will come, thank God, even in these men who are now in bondage will far away lands, when Christian conscience will prevail, and when he set free, even as they have been set free in America.

Scientists hope one day to find a drug that will cure tuberculosis. Medical Research on the disease is supported by the National Tuberculosis Association from Christmas Seal funds.

## Baptist Pastors To Meet Monday

Wilkes County Baptist Pastors Conference will meet Monday, December 16, in Rains-Sturdivant chapel. The program will open at ten a. m. with devotional by Rev. John Higgins, which will be followed by a business session. A

separate outline will be given by Rev. Latt Beahers and the inspirational message will be by Rev. S. I. Watts.

"How To Celebrate Christmas" will be the topic to be discussed by Rev. John L. Wells at one p. m. Rev. Woodrow N. Brookshire will lead a discussion on Baptist doctrine. All Baptist pastors are urged to attend.

**SUPPORT THE Y. M. C. A.**

**NEW Spinet Pianos**  
Only 37 Inches High.  
Ready for Christmas Delivery.  
**GARWOOD PIANO CO.**  
Wilkesboro, N. C. Phone 546-R

**CONCRETE WORK**  
No Job Too Large or Too Small  
**FREE ESTIMATES**  
**J. S. MINTON & SONS**  
NORTH WILKESBORO, N. C.  
Hinshaw Street  
Telephone 455M

## A FEW SCARCE ITEMS JUST RECEIVED

We suggest items of this type for practical gifts. Shop early. They will sell fast and be gone before Christmas.

- BATTERY RADIOS
- American made Clothes Pins with sprgs.
- Brass Pull Chain Sockets
- Push-Pull Sockets — Double Sockets
- Insulated Staples
- Duplex Wall Receptacles and Plates
- Toggle Switches and Plates
- Carpenter Squares
- Goodyear Rubbercloth Table Cloths
- Can Fillers
- Galvanized Cold Pack Canners
- Food Graters
- Aluminum and Enamel Dishpans and Double Boilers
- Enamel (only) Teakettles
- Enamel Washpans and Slopjars
- Union Made Roller Skates
- Childs' Wagons, Tricycles, Sleds
- Scoters, Etc.
- Pre-War Popcorn Poppers
- Handsaws
- Deadening Felt and Wallpaper Felt
- Portland Cement (first in stock in 3 months)
- Few Shotgun Shells and .22 Cartridges (For Saturday Only)
- Pocket Knives, Pre-War Quality

## FURNITURE SPECIAL

Drexel Mahogany Diningroom Suite

# JENKINS

Hardware and Furniture Co.  
North Wilkesboro, N. C.

## Drastic Reductions On Fashions You Can Wear Now!

# SPAINHOUR'S SENSATIONAL Sale

**OF WOMEN'S QUALITY**

- COATS
- SUITS
- DRESSES
- HATS

**AT GREAT REDUCTIONS!**

**SELECTED GROUPS OF WOMEN'S SUITS**

Were \$29.95	Now \$23.88
Were \$35.00	Now \$27.99
Were \$39.95	Now \$31.88
Were \$42.50	Now \$33.88

**SELECTED GROUPS OF WOMEN'S COATS**

Were \$21.00	Now \$15.88
Were \$29.95	Now \$23.88
Were \$35.00	Now \$27.88
Were \$39.95	Now \$31.88
Were \$42.50	Now \$33.88

**SELECTED GROUPS OF WOMEN'S DRESSES**

Were \$14.95	Now \$11.88
Were \$17.95	Now \$12.88
WERE \$19.95	NOW \$14.88
WERE \$24.95	NOW 19.88

**SELECTED GROUPS OF HATS**

Values to \$4.95	now \$1.00
Values to \$6.95	now \$2.00
Values to \$8.95	now \$3.00
Values to \$12.95	now \$4.00

**SALE Entire Stock FUR COATS At a Substantial Saving!**

**HOW TO GET KISSED WITHOUT MISTLETOE!**

Give him this **STETSON Gift Idea**

What man wouldn't love a new Stetson for Christmas? Here's a smart, easy way to give him one—with no worry about size, shade, or style!

He just brings us the handy gift certificate and chooses his favorite Stetson.

So if you'd like to rate applause from the man in your life—drop in for this handsome, original gift real soon!

Miniature hat in box with gift certificate he redeems for the Stetson he likes

## PAYNE CLO. CO.

North Wilkesboro, N. C.