

Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION

When Paul came to Rome as a prisoner, he was used of God to write four inspired books of the Bible. They are sometimes called "prison letters." They are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemons. It seems that Paul's perspective in these letters is different from what it was when he wrote the letter to the Romans only a few short years before.

One of the joys of a Christian is to have relatives he has never seen. A Christian in America or England knows a missionary, and through the missionary he knows the names, problems, and victories of Christians in far away places. It is an underprivileged Christian who does not share the delights and heartaches of brethren far away.

This is illustrated in Paul's concern for the brethren in Colossae. They seem to have been among those who had not seen Paul's face, yet his concern for them was so heartfelt that he called it a struggle or conflict.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For this lesson we break into the middle of a long sentence, which begins with verse 9. Paul tells of his prayers for his brothers in Colossae. He lists some of the reasons for giving God thanks and then begins to tell about God's Son. He says first that we have redemption in His blood, and then goes on with the words of our text.

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature? For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Colossians 1:15-30).

Usually firstborn means one who is literally born first, but not here. Jesus' human body was born, but His divine nature was not. He always existed. He is eternal, just as His Father is (John 1:1). But in a Jewish family the firstborn son took the father's place as head of the family. As the firstborn, Jesus shares the Father's authority over "every creature" or "all creation." Christ was never created; He is superior to everything that has ever been created. He is God.

Verse 16 explains why Jesus has authority over all created things. He made them. Usually the person who makes a pudding, or a cake or whatever, owns and controls what he has made. Jesus, likewise, owns and controls what He has made.

Paul specifies, in this verse, all the existing power structures: "thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Christ established the authority of parents in the home, (Ephesians 6:1), the authority of elders in the church, (Hebrews 13:17), the authority of government in the nation, (Romans 13:1). Such power may be misused in contradiction to God's will, but Christ created it. Some of the rebellious powers are more than flesh and blood. They include "spiritual wickedness in high places," (Ephesians 6:12). But even though some created things are in rebellion, the fact remains that "all things were created by Him, Christ." Furthermore, all things were created for Him. Nothing was designed for rebellion. Everything was intended to do Christ's will, to serve His purpose, to be a part of His kingdom. Since Christ made all things, certainly He existed before any of the things He made.

Christ is supreme over the whole universe because He created it. No less truly He is supreme over the church, for it too is His creation. "I will build my church," He said, (Matthew 16:18); and He is building it. For building material He has people redeemed by His blood, (1 Peter 1:18, 19). As "living stones" they are built into a spiritual house, (1 Peter 2:4, 5), which is designed to show forth His praises, (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power," (Colossians 2:8-10).

God's purpose to reconcile all things to Himself has already begun to be accomplished. The Colossian Christians had been reconciled, and so have we who are Christians today. Being reconciled, we are forgiven so that we are unrepensible in His sight. But this depends on our being "grounded and settled" in the faith and "not moved away from the hope of the gospel," (Colossians 1:21-23). Paul wants us to realize that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are to be found in Christ, and therefore we should resist anyone who would beguile us with "enticing words," (Colossians 2:3-4).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy." That word has various meanings, but basically it means a search for wisdom in our own study, experiences and observations, and especially in our own reasoning. Our power of reason is a gift from God and is very useful, but if it starts with falsehood it is not likely to lead to truth. We cannot understand the world about us without understanding that God made it. We cannot even understand ourselves unless we realize that God made us, too, and designed us to be like Him.

Follow Jesus. That is all we need to do. He is God, and therefore He is the ideal of every person made in the image of God. Of course, we are to follow our leaders in the church, and we are to obey the laws of the land. But Christ is over all rulers and governments, head of all principalities and power. If ever you have to choose between them and Jesus, follow Jesus. You are complete in Him. Follow Jesus.

Do Employees Like Working Labor Day?

By Loretta Manago
Post Managing Editor

The whole idea behind Labor Day was to give the millions of American workers a well-deserved day off or at least that was the way the principle of setting aside the first Monday of September started. Today, things have changed drastically. Many businesses are open for operation and for those who have to work, Labor Day is business as usual.

Do those employed like the idea of working on the one day that everyone is supposed to have off? While in Freedom Mall, some of those who will be working this Labor Day made these comments: Angela Fee Kearns, a customer service representative at Richway will only mind working on Labor Day if her husband has the day off. "He works at the airport and we never get to spend the holidays together. And sometimes if he is scheduled to have a day off, he is subject to be called back to work. I worked last year on Labor Day, but I won't know until later this week if I'll be working this year. I won't mind working if my husband is working. Besides my husband, my family is not in the city so it wouldn't be very much to do



Torri Kirkpatrick
.....Don't mind working

without them. Mrs. Kearns is the mother of seven year old Stacy.

Also working on Labor Day is Phyllis Flax. She is a salesperson at Stuart's, a women's clothing store. "It doesn't matter to me about working on Labor Day. Somebody's got to do it. I got a little boy at home and someone has to feed him," she teased. Not just Labor Day, Mrs. Flax doesn't celebrate any holidays, emphasizing the fact that she even works on Sundays. "If I had the day off, I'd probably have a cookout or a picnic."

If given the choice, Reginald Boyd, manager of the Junction, a men and women's casual wear store would rather be off this coming Monday. "I wish I didn't have to work. But it's my job, so I do it." What would Boyd rather be doing instead of working? "I'd like to be sitting home with a nice, cold soda," replied the 20 year old. Boyd also commented that if he had anything



Phyllis Flax
.....Somebody's got to do it

to do with it, people who had to work would only work half a day and not a full eight hours. "But business is good that day, since everybody else is off."

A courteous attendant at Richway, Torri Kirkpatrick, worked last Labor Day and really doesn't mind if she has to work again this year. "I really don't mind working on Labor Day as I would the other holidays. So if I'm off, it's okay either way." The only thing that Ms. Kirkpatrick had any complaints about was the fact that business was slower and that made the day longer.

"The only day that I mind working is Christmas," responded James Thornwell, produce clerk at Harris-Teeter. Thornwell, who has worked with this chain of grocers for five years, added that he has always worked on Labor Day.

"For me, it's just another day, besides I get off early on Mondays," he added.



Reginald Boyd
.....It's my job so I do it



James Thornwell
.....It's just another day

Parents Should Return Applications Immediately

Parents who want their children to attend an after-school enrichment program at one of 10 elementary schools should fill out and return applications immediately. Applications are available at any of the 69 elementary schools. Parents should complete applications and return them to the school whose after-school program they have selected. Parents are free to apply to any of the 10 sites. Children who attend private schools during the regular school day also are eligible to enroll.

CMS is urging parents to return applications immediately because schools that do not have a minimum of 20 students registered will not be allowed to start operating their after-school programs September 3, the first day of school. However, each of the after-school sites can accept more than 20 students.

The 10 sites are Cornelius, Devonshire, Dilworth, Hidden Valley, Irwin Avenue, Long Creek, Nations Ford, Newell, Oakhurst and Pineville Elementary Schools. The cost is \$20 per week. CMS does not provide transportation from the home school to the after-school program. However, if a bus from the student's home school travels near the after-school site, it might be possible to arrange transportation.

Parents are responsible for picking up their children each day when the after-school program closes.



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