

## The Sunday School Lesson

By Beaul Wilbon

### INTRODUCTION:

We all need acceptance. We have a built-in craving for it. This desire leads us to try to please our friends. This is great if our friends are people of good morals and high values. It motivates us to discipline and improve ourselves. The problem is that we all make mistakes and have faults, and sometimes people of good morals and high values are very intolerant of mistakes and faults. Even Christians can be this way.

As Christians we must accept each other in spite of our errors and weaknesses. We must be forgiving and remember that God accepted us in spite of our sins; therefore we must accept each other, imperfect as we are.

### LESSON BACKGROUND:

The letter to Philemon was written by the apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Philemon lived in Colossae, a city in Western Asia Minor. Philemon became a Christian through the teaching of Paul, perhaps while Paul was in Ephesus.

This letter has to do with a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus belonged to Philemon, but he had run away and made his way to Rome. Somehow, he came into contact with Paul and Paul led him to believe in Jesus. Onesimus remained associated with Paul for sometime and was very helpful to him. Accepting Paul's advice, Onesimus determined to return to Philemon. Paul wrote this brief letter to Philemon to urge him to receive Onesimus as a Christian brother.

### THE LESSON:

"Brother Philemon, every time I pray, I mention you and give thanks to my God. For I hear of your love for all of God's people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. 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. Your love, dear brother, has brought me great joy and much encouragement! You have cheered the hearts of all God's people. For this reason I could be bold enough, as your brother in Christ, to order you to do what should be done. But because I love you, I make a request instead. I do this even though I am Paul, the ambassador of Christ Jesus, and at present also a prisoner for his sake. So I make a request to you on behalf of Onesimus, who is my own son in Christ; for while in prison I have become his spiritual father. At one time he was of no use to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me. I am sending him back to you now, and with him goes my heart. I would like to keep him here with me, while I am in prison for the gospel's sake, so that he could help me in your place. However, I do not want to force you to help me rather, I would like for you to do it of your own free will. So I will not do anything unless you agree. It may be that Onesimus was away from you for a short time so that you might have him back for all time. And now, he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: he is a dear brother in Christ. - - - So if you think of me as your partner, welcome him back just as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to my account. (Read for yourself the book of Philemon-It's only one chapter.)

Paul's letter to Philemon teaches us who are Christians the importance of forgiving and accepting one another. We do not have Christ's spirit unless we are willing to forgive as He forgave. We shatter the unity of the church if we refuse to accept each other. We alienate ourselves from Christ if we refuse to accept those whom He accepts. Faith cannot be separated from love, forgiveness and acceptance.

The Lord is our pattern for forgiveness. He does not insist that we make full payment for our sins before He forgives us. We could not do this anyway. He gives forgiveness as a free gift to all who have, as David said, "a broken and a contrite heart." Can we insist on more?

Forgiveness has no limit. Jesus said, "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says 'I repent', forgive him. (Luke 17: 3-4). This sounds impossible, and perhaps ridiculous, but it is exactly how we desire God to act toward us. Who of us doesn't have some weakness, some sin which we commit time and again, for which we seek God's forgiveness.

Christians do not have the option of refusing to forgive the repentant brother. Jesus made it very clear that we will not be forgiven unless we are willing to forgive. "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

In this one historical event of Paul, Onesimus, and Philemon, we see the place of brotherly love, forgiveness, reconciliation, honesty, generosity, kindness, and humility in the Christian life.

When Onesimus became a Christian he began to live up to his name, which means "profitable." Paul urged Philemon to live up to his name, which means "loving". Let us live up to the name Christian by loving, forgiving and accepting others as Christ accepts us. Amen.

## Malcolm X Conference

WINSTON-SALEM, NC - The Institute for Islamic Involvement in Winston-Salem announces the second annual Conference in honor of Malcolm X (Al Hajj Malik Shabazz) to be held Saturday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Winston-Salem State University Student Union Building, Winston-Salem, N.C.

The conference will inform the general public about Malcolm X, one of the most important black figures of the 20th century, with special focus on the last year of his life--Malcolm's acceptance of Islam.

The public is invited to come and hear national and local speakers: Khalid Abdul-Fattah Griggs, attorney Larry Little,

Benjamin Kareem who introduced Malcolm in New York on the day Malcolm was assassinated, Adib Rashad, writer and lecturer, Sister Muneerah Affia, and others talk about Malcolm's life and times. A special invitation is given to all students to participate in this black history experience.

Special highlight of the conference will be a Third World Bazaar and live entertainment, featuring books, jewelry, food and apparel from around the world; and reggae and rap artists.

The community is invited to come out and enjoy the day on the WSSU campus. Donations will be accepted at the door. For further information, please call 919-724-5554.

## Community Breakfast Planned

The Second Annual Community Prayer Breakfast, hosted by the YMCA of Greater Charlotte, will be held on March 21, 7:30 a.m. at the Charlotte Convention Center.

Dr. Leighton Ford, well-known area evangelist, will deliver the message to 2,200 ministers, YMCA members and the general public.

The Prayer Breakfast concept began in Washington, DC, and is spreading throughout the country as an Ecumenical celebration of prayer and fellowship.

The 1988 community prayer breakfast served 750 people in its inaugural year.

Call 339-0379 or any Charlotte neighborhood YMCA for more information.

# The Condition Of The Deceived Heart

By J. M. Little

We left off in our last message seeing how God broke a proud king and saved him. In this century I have yet to read the testimony, or hear the testimony, of a government official who has been brought down in repentance and Christ revealed to his heart. You almost have to go back to the time of the apostles to find a case where a government official was brought to Christ. I realize that over the last several years many have come out saying they are born-again.

Well, you have to be born-again before you can be saved. But the tragedy is that the multitudes of you who say you are born-again know absolutely nothing about being a lost sinner. Once, our former President Carter said he was a lost sinner. But he knows nothing about what it means to be a lost sinner! The Lord said in Luke 19:10; "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Just because you say you are born-again doesn't mean that you are saved.

When the Holy Spirit gives you the New Birth in embryo form (Eph. 2:1) you see that you are a lost sinner. You can say you are saved all you want to, if you cannot go back to the time you took your place as a lost sinner before God, you know absolutely nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ! I'm just stating facts. The unsaved heart says, "I don't see it like that." I realize you don't. One day I couldn't see it like that. I don't get mad with folks who disagree with the truth I set forth. I realize why you can't agree with it.

A man said to my late pastor, L. R. Shelton, years ago, "When you are preaching I just jump up and click my heels and laugh." Now, he was making a mockery of the truth. Some years later he went to the pastor crying. And when the pastor asked him what was wrong, the man said, "I want what you have." I know the sad and tragical state of everyone of you who is taking issue with the truth. Some of you are in high places, but your high position won't shield you from the wrath of God. I'll give you another truth in passing: "A born-again believer will not fight another born-again believer, and a born-again believer will always take sides with another born-again believ-

er."

Let me give you another truth: "AN UNSAVED HEART ALWAYS TAKES SIDES WITH AN UNSAVED HEART." As an unsaved heart you don't know me, you have to go against me. You'd give ten million worlds to know and understand the Christ I know. I was in New Orleans one time, and I was a lost sinner. I told some of the folks there how folks back in North Carolina were making fun of me. A godly woman from Mississippi spoke up and said; "They'd give ten thousand worlds to know what you know." And I was just an awakened sinner.

You see, she knew what I was going through. You who are criticizing and rearing up in pride like that man who was in my office in the post office don't have the slightest idea what this is all about. But one day soon you are going to appear before the JUDGE, not some earthly judge, THE JUDGE OF THE UNIVERSE. And HE will have the BOOKS opened, according to Revelation 20 (as we printed in our book, "THE GOSPEL IN THE LAST DAYS"), and you will see your entire life on this earth paraded before you, all your hatred and rebellion against the Lord, His Word, His servants, and everything that was true and right. THE JUDGE OF ALL THE UNIVERSE is going to ask you what you did with His Word and His message. You, in your hellish pride, don't believe that now. But you'll be there that day with outstretched hands begging for another chance; but you will not get another chance. You'd give ten million worlds that day, man, just to know Christ! You'll see every opportunity the Lord gave you on earth to repent. When you come close to a born-again believer you come close to the kingdom of God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all abide in the heart of the believer by faith. You'll see the very time you turned the Gospel down. Some poor, despised believer gave you a message, or book. You poked fun and laughed. You didn't know then that every thought, word, and deed were being recorded by heavenly messengers. Some of you here go behind closed doors and slander this servant of the Lord. You can't see that heavenly messenger recording your slander. If you knew what you are doing, you'd rather have your

tongue, hands and feet cut off rather than do it. You are going to give account to God.

Now, I'm less than the least of the saints. If you are a Christian at all, you are a far better Christian than I am. If I had my dues, what I deserve, I'd be in Hell kicking and screaming today. But I thank the Lord He had mercy on me and redeemed me by His precious Blood. Are you redeemed?

Yes, it would be good to see men and women in government service saved. Some of our gracious folks down in New Orleans said they were going to send the messages to our government officials in Washington. Now wouldn't it be grace if all our ruling officials were saved? All the White House saved, all the Congress saved, all the Supreme Court saved, all the officials of the State Houses saved, and the local officials saved, all just rejoicing in the Lord. Now you can make fun of me all you want to.

When my Lord comes back to rule and reign on this earth for a thousand years (Rev. 20) all the government officials will be saved.

I don't know what place or reign of authority He will give me, but I'd be satisfied just to be the janitor there when He sits on David's Throne in Jerusalem. Just to be there to adore Him! My Lord who died for me. Will you be there? I will. All because Christ died for me.

How is it between you and the Lord? If you don't know the Lord, if you are taking issue with these truths, you have a deceived heart. You cannot go on like you are going, if you do you'll go to Hell. Turn to Christ. And please continue to listen to our late Pastor L. R. Shelton with THE VOICE OF TRUTH BROADCAST each Sunday morning at 7:30 over WAGI-FM and at 8:00 over WAGL-AM.

The Prophet's Column is a paid advertisement.

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## POST OBITUARIES

### BEASLEY'S FUNERAL HOME

Mr. John Willeham, of 609 Concordia Ave. died in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held at Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivor is his nephew, Bobby King of Kings Mountain, NC.

Mr. Jimmy Ellison, of 516 A. Arrowhawk Dr. died in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held in Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivors are his children, Mr. James Monroe Ellison, Ms. Gloria Juonne Ellison, Mr. Nathaniel Ellison, Mr. Dwight Ellison, Ms. Sylvia Ellison, Ms. Cordella Harris; sister, Ms. Queen Harris.

Ms. Brenda Gillisp, of 2121 Rozzell Ferry Rd. died in Charlotte Memorial Hospital. Funeral service was held in Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivors are her husband, Mr. Nathaniel Gillisp; mother, Florence Daniel Black; brothers, Mr. Michael Black, Mr. Richard Black.

Mr. Solomon Ledbetter, of 2824 Zublon Ave. died in Charlotte Memorial Hospital.

Survivors are his cousins, Mr. Willie Givens and Ms. Maggie Givens.

Mr. Mack McArthur Caldwell, of 3212 Boyd St. died at his place of residence. Funeral service was held at Beasley's Chapel. Burial was in Beasley Memorial Garden.

Survivor is his niece, Mrs. Shirley Ann Hart.

Mr. David Shannon, of Rte. a Box 1211, Mt Holly died at his place of residence. His body was cremated.

### LONG & SON MORTUARY

Mr. Ulysses Watkins, Sr., of 2415 Newland Rd. Charlotte, died Feb. 14, 1989 - died in Mercy Hospital. Funeral service was held Feb. 18 at Memorial Presbyterian Church. Burial was in Beatties Ford Memorial Gardens.

Survivors are his sons, Mr. Dwight Wayne Watkins of Atlanta, GA, Mr. Ulysses Watkins, Jr., and Mr. Daniel Eugene Watkins both of Charlotte; daughters, Mrs. Brenda Watkins Goodman and Ms. Marilyn Watkins Able both of Charlotte; brother, Mr. Julius Watkins of Baltimore, MD; sister, Mrs. Eleanor Artis of Greensboro, NC; 6 grandchildren.

Mrs. Eunice Brown, of 2814 Toomey Ave., died Feb. 13, 1989 -