

# **Chapter 40: I Can Do All Things Through Christ**

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## **1. Introduction to Philippians**

“Sent from:	Paul, at Rome, joined by Timothy.
Sent to:	Members at Philippi, in northern Greece, ‘with the bishops and deacons.’
Date:	About A.D. 62.
Purpose:	To thank the Philippians for help and to encourage them to perfect their lives.
Main Themes:	Christ and obedience; progressive salvation.”

Reference<sup>1</sup>

There is some disagreement regarding where the letter was sent from—some suggest Ephesus—most agree that this letter along with Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians were written from Rome.

D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner state,

“Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians are Paul’s “prison epistles,” written during his first Roman imprisonment while he was under house arrest in the imperial capital (see Acts 28:14-31). Three of these

letters—Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians—appear to have been sent at the same time (compare Colossians 4:7-9; Philemon [vs.10]; Ephesians 6:21).<sup>2</sup>

You will recall that Paul first visited the city of Philippi, with Silas, Timothy, and Luke, during his Second Missionary Journey. Here they baptize Lydia and her family.

Duane S. Crowther states,

“Lydia was Paul’s first convert in Europe. She was from Thyatira in Asia’s district of Lydia, a city famous for its garment-dying industry where beautiful purple cloth was prepared. She was a convert to the Jewish faith, and who was a woman of some wealth and position who had servants and children. In areas where there were limited numbers of Jews, they had no synagogue, but worshiped in open-air situations. Paul apparently sought them in their worship setting and converted them to Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

It was in Philippi Paul and Silas were cast into prison after casting out an evil spirit from a young woman. Prior to their imprisonment, they had been beaten. While they were in prison, an earthquake had occurred and all the prisoner’s hands were loosed. The jailer, afraid that the prisoners had escaped, was prepare to commit suicide. Paul cried out, “We are all here.” (Acts 16:25-26). The result was that Paul taught the gospel to the jailer and his family and they were converted to the church. (See Acts 16:29-34).

Paul informed the magistrate of his Roman citizenship and told them that he had been beaten without trial. The official ordered him released. Paul, however, demanded an apology which he received before departing from the city. (see Acts 16:35-40).

Paul also visited the members in Philippi during his Third Missionary Journey. While there, he celebrated the days of the unleavened bread. (see Acts 20:6).

Adam Clarke states,

“[These are] the seven days of the Passover, in which they eat unleavened bread.”<sup>4</sup>

It would be a time of worship and spiritual renewal for Paul with the members in Philippi.

Themes of letter to Philippians: Christ is our example whom we must follow; Gaining salvation is an on-going process; We must always stand firm against persecution and remain true to the faith; and, we should always seek to develop the most admirable qualities in our lives as we continue to strive for perfection.

## **2. Book of Philippians**

### **2.1. Philippians 1**

Philippians 1:1

**1 Paul and Timotheus [Timothy], the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

Paul’s remarks are addressed to three groups: the saints [members of Church]; the Bishops, and, the Deacons.

Bryan Richards states,

"With all the offices of the priesthood, why would Paul refer only to the Bishops and Deacons? While we often describe the organization of the latter-day Church as based on the pattern of the meridian Church (A of F 1:6), the early Church was not as well organized as it is today. The Joseph Smith's revelations regarding church government are actually much more complete and perfected than what was revealed to the meridian saints. With small congregations, large organizational structures were not necessary, and early church government was composed primarily of three offices: bishops, elders or presbyters, and deacons. In particular, deacons took direction from the bishop attending to more temporal tasks. While the deacons tended to be younger (the word origin of deacon actually means *young* just like elder means *old*), many of them were old enough to be married with families (1 Tim. 3:8-13). Hence, in this verse, Paul refers to three main groups of members among the Philippians: "the saints [members [...the bishops, and deacons."<sup>5</sup>

Philippians 1:3-6

**3 I thank God upon every remembrance of you,  
4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,  
5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;  
6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it  
until the day of Jesus Christ:**

Paul began his letter with an expression of gratitude to the saints in Philippi for their faithful obedience to the principle that he had taught him. He also wanted to thank them for their generosity to him.

Acts Through Revelation: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Supplement states,

"This letter is from the grateful apostle to those saints who had sent money to defray his imprisonment costs. The money was delivered by a young church member named Epaphroditus. While on the errand, Epaphroditus became ill and was sent home. [The young man had come to assist in Paul's care and planned to remain with him.] Paul wrote the letter to explain why Epaphroditus was returning and to thank the saints for their generous gift. In a loving way, Paul has woven into this epistle a number of gospel doctrines."<sup>6</sup>

Philippians 1:10-11

**10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;  
11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory, and praise of God.**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The gospel embraces all truth. Every good thing comes from God. If the world has any edifying principle, any sound practice, any true doctrine, it is automatically accepted by the true Church. Converts to the Church never forsake anything they believe which is good and true; they simply gain the added light and knowledge which God has given by revelation to his servants the prophets. Thus we find Joseph Smith, building upon the concept here given Paul, saying... 'If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or a good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.' (Thirteenth Article of Faith.)."<sup>7</sup>

Philippians 1:12, 19-20

**12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen [come] out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;**

**19 For I know that this [imprisonment] shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,**

**20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.**

Paul reminds each of us of the challenges and adversity that come in our lives will work for the good of the gospel, as well as for our own growth and development.

Samuel O. Bennion states,

“Brigham Young once said—so I am informed—that ye cannot hurt Mormonism it is like a rubber ball: every time you kick it, the farther it goes. It is my experience, and is history, that where men persecute the church, or the principles of it, and those who preside in Israel, they often make friends for the Latter-day Saint.”<sup>8</sup>

Joseph Smith was reminded of this truth while he was wrongfully imprisoned in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, March, 1839.

Doctrine and Covenants 122:7

**7 ...know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.**

Philippians 1:27-29

**27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:...that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;**

Philippians 1:28	JST, Philippians 1:28
<b>28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.</b>	<b>28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, <u>who reject the gospel, which bringeth on them destruction, but you, who receive the gospel, salvation; and that of God.</u></b>

**29 For unto you is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;**

In these verses, Paul admonished the saints in Philippi to be steadfast in their obedience to the gospel. It is important they sought unity, among themselves and with others, and avoided contention. They needed not fear persecution, for eventually their enemies would be defeated, and if they remained faithful, they would be blessed.

## **2.2. Philippians 2**

Philippians 2:2-4

**2 Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.**

**3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**

**4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.**

Once again Paul admonished the saints to be “of one mind,” and that nothing be done through strife and pride, but in humility. It is important each member esteem their brother and sister with kindness and consideration and exercise concern regarding their welfare.

Paul admonishes the saints to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who previously had been a God. He, however, condescended to come to earth as a mortal man to be our Savior and Redeemer.

Philippians 2:6

**6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**

Bryan Richards states,

“Paul uses curious language to describe the divinity of Jesus Christ. ‘Jesus...being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.’ Why would Paul use such language? Is he afraid to say that Jesus of Nazareth and Jehovah, the God of Abraham, are indeed the same individual? For our perspective, equating Jesus with God is not difficult. However, in Paul’s day, such a belief was blasphemy. Indeed, the ancient Jews *did* think it was robbery, even highway robbery, for Jesus to make himself equal with God. The orthodoxy of the day made no room for God taking upon himself the form of a man.”<sup>9</sup>

Philippians 2:7-8

**7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

**8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Jesus was born not in a palace, but in a manger. He came not as a king, but as a servant. He came to earth to do the will of His Father, and to be an example to His fellowmen. In all things, including His trials and temptations, He was obedient. He fulfilled the purpose of His mortal birth which culminated with His suffering in the garden and giving His life on the cross for each of us.

Philippians 2:9-11

**9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:**

**10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;**

**11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Jesus Christ having fulfilled the purpose of His mortal birth, now stands with God, His Father, to bring about the salvation and eternal life of mankind. Eventually, every knee shall bow in recognition of His atoning sacrifice and His love for each of us. Even those who have been amongst His most avid enemies, will no longer be able to stand in view of His majesty and glory.

Philippians 2:12-13

**12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

**13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

Dallin H. Oaks states,

“Are Latter-day Saints susceptible to such heresies? The Apostle Paul wrote that we should ‘work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling.’ (Philip. 2:12). Could that familiar expression mean that the sum total of our own righteousness will win us salvation and exaltation? Could some of us believe that our heavenly parentage and our divine destiny allow us to pass through mortality and attain eternal life solely on our own merits?

“On the basis of what I have heard, I believe that some of us, some of the time, say things that can create that impression. We can forget that keeping the commandments, which is necessary, is not sufficient. As Nephi said, we must labor diligently to persuade everyone “to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.”  
(B/M, 2 Ne. 25:23) ...

“Man unquestionably has impressive powers and can bring to pass great things by tireless efforts and indomitable will. But after all our obedience and good works, we cannot be saved from the effect of our sins without the grace extended by the atonement of Jesus Christ.”<sup>10</sup>

Philippians 2:14-15

**14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:**

**15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**

Neal A. Maxwell states,

“In such a climactic time as the last days, we shall see things both wonderful and awful. Joel and Zephaniah prophesied that the last times would be a “day of gloominess” (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:25). Even so, this is all the more reason for us to ‘shine as lights in the world’ (Phil. 2:15). So illuminated, we can better help to gather the Lord’s flock in ‘the last days’ from wherever they have been scattered in the ‘cloudy and dark day’ (Ezek. 30:3; 34:12).

“Yet even as some things clearly worsen in the world, the true Saints will simply get better.”<sup>11</sup>

Just as Paul exhorted the saints in Philippi to be lights in the world, so are his words also applicable to us. As the world becomes darker as a result of the existing, and widespread wickedness, so will their dependence for the light of Christ increase. It is essential we, who have the light of the gospel, reflect it in our daily actions so those who are seeking will yet be able to find the light they will desperately need.

Philippians 2:19-20, 22

**19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to send Timotheus [Timothy], shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.**

**20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.**

**22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.**

Paul alerts the members in Philippi it is his intention to send Timothy to them, if he is not able to come himself. Paul pays special tribute to Timothy whom he likens “as a son with the father” (Philippians 2:22), for his dependability and dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:25

**25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.**

You will recall that Epaphroditus is the young man who came to Rome on behalf of the saints of Philippi to give him means to assist him. It was his plan to remain with Paul and to assist him, but he became ill and had to return to Philippi. Paul admonishes the saints to receive him with joy and gratitude for his service.

Philippians 2:29-30

**29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:**

**30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.**

### 2.3. Philippians 3

Philippians 3:4-8

**4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:**

**5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;**

**6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless,**

**7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.**

**8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,**

Bryan Richards states,

It is “as if” Paul is saying, “If you trust in the importance of circumcision, the Law of Moses, and descent through Abraham, then I must be doing great! If you want to brag about your heritage, fine! I’ll brag about mine. I am as Jewish as you can get. I am as zealous as you can get. I am as obedient to the law as you can get. Still, I am a loser without faith in Christ, for none of these things can save me.”<sup>12</sup>

Hugh Nibley states,

“Compared with [worldly] knowledge, [Paul] says, ‘I count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them as dung, that I may have Christ’ (Philip. 3:8). That is indeed knowledge worth having, and it is to be had only by revelation. It is our happy duty to announce that since the restoration of the gospel [in these latter days], such revelation is again available to mankind, provided they heed the words of the prophet.”<sup>13</sup>

Paul wants to make it clear to all that while he was raised a Jew and was zealous in his obedience to the laws of Moses, including the persecution of the Christians, it availed him nothing. Salvation does not come by obedience to the law, but through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. When he learned of this truth, he gave his all to serving the Lord and preaching His gospel.

Philippians 3:13-14

**13 ...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,  
14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

Many are stuck in the past, being full of regret and disappointment. Those things of which we need to repent, we should do so, and then, like Paul, move forward with our lives, planning for the future, but living in the present. It is Paul’s goal, and hopefully also ours, to return to live with our Heavenly Father in His kingdom.

Philippians 3:17, 20-21

**17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.  
20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:  
21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned [changed] like unto his glories body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.**

Paul reminds the leaders of the church of the importance of being an example to the members in word and action. If each member will continue to be obedient to their covenants, over time, they will lose their desire to do evil. They will then be prepared to qualify for the cleansing power of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:18-19

**18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:  
19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)**

Paul, while weeping, understood there would be those who initially would receive the message of the gospel, but later choose to reject its teachings. They would become worshippers of the God of self-love and pleasure. In this state, they then feel free to act upon their desires and passions without fear of social restrain or moral responsibility. Many would also be numbered among those who would persecute the members of the true church.

## **2.4. Philippians 4**

Philippians 4:3

**3 And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.**

Joe J. and Barbara K. Christensen state,

“Women who are called as missionaries render outstanding service, and they have been doing so for a long time. The Apostle Paul received help on his mission from Lydia and other sisters in Philippi. When he wrote his epistle to the Philippians, he asked them to ‘help those women which labored with me in the gospel.’ (Philippians 4:3.) Early in this dispensation, in the August 1840 *Millennial Star*, Parley P. Pratt emphasized, ‘It is their privilege...to labour with us in the gospel, like the holy women in the days of Paul.’”<sup>14</sup>

Philippians 4:5

**5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.**

We live in a very busy world with many demands upon us each day. It seems that there is nothing we can do except to run a little faster. Sooner or later, we end up in the office of our physician. His armchair prescription for our stress and anxiety will be to slow down. We may then leave his office feeling angry we had wasted our time listening to his simple solution. But in our heart, we know he was right. We have known it for some time. “You can’t keep up this pace,” I had also thought, “and not have it take a toll upon your body.” “Besides,” the doctor added, “if you don’t, someday your body will say, ‘it’s enough!’” “I don’t have to stop doing everything I am now doing,” I thought, “I just need to do less.” If you have had this experience or it hasn’t happened yet, when it does, remember Paul’s advice: Moderation is the answer.

Philippians 4:6-7

**6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

**7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

In order to find peace in the world in which we live, it is essential we begin our day with prayer. A simple prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings we enjoy, followed by our desire for guidance and protection in our lives concluding in the Name of Jesus Christ is a place to begin. God loves us and wants to bless our lives. He will do so if we will seek His help and direction.

Ronald T. Halverson states,

“The gospel of Jesus Christ brings peace of mind, heals the soul, and calms the troubled heart. It gives definition and meaning to the purpose of life, the spiritual reassurance that God lives and Jesus is the Christ.

“Joy and peace of mind [even ‘the peace of God that passeth all understanding’] that truth seekers throughout the world desire to find, can only be found by knowing and living the principles of the gospel.”<sup>15</sup>

Philippians 4:8-9

**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.**

**9 Those things, which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.**

The words of Philippians 4:8 are familiar to most members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for they are similar to the Thirteenth Article of Faith penned by Joseph Smith. On March 1, 1842, Mr. John Wentworth, editor of a Chicago newspaper requested Joseph Smith to share with his readers the beliefs of the Latter-Day Saints. These thirteen Articles of Faith are now included as part of the Latter-day Saint scriptures. (see The Pearl of Great Price, 60-61).

James E. Talmage states,

“In this article of their faith, the Latter-day Saints declare their acceptance of a practical religion; a religion that shall consist, not alone of professions in spiritual matters...but also, and more particularly, of present and every-day duties, in which proper respect for self, love for fellow men, and devotion to God are the guiding principles. Religion without morality, professions of godliness without charity, church-membership without adequate responsibility as to individual conduct in daily life, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals—noise without music, the words without the spirit of prayer.

“The comprehensiveness of our faith must appeal to every earnest investigator of the principles taught by the Church...Within the pale of the Church there is a place for all truth—for everything that is praiseworthy, virtuous, lovely, or of good report.”<sup>16</sup>

Philippians 4:11-13

**11 ...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.**

**12 I know both how to be abased [humble], and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.**

**13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**

Paul learned to be content with his circumstances in life. He learned to be humble and grateful when his means and conditions are limited, as well as when he has abundance. Most of us do better when things are going well; our challenge comes when the comforts and finer things of our life are taken from us. Paul’s strength does not come from his abundance or lack thereof, instead it is based on his inner witness and trust in Jesus Christ. We too must build our foundation upon our testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Nephi, the son of Helaman, adds his witness,

B/M, Helaman 5:12

**12 And now, my sons, remember, remember, that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.**

Philippians 4:18

**18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, and odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.**

As Paul concluded his writings to the Philippians, again he expressed his appreciations to them for their donations. His love and gratitude to the saints at Philippi is great as he rejoiced not only in their generosity, but also in their obedience to the principles of the gospel. No other letter Paul wrote to the saints reflects such love and joy.

### **3. Introduction to Colossians**

“Sent from:	Paul, probably at Rome, joined by Timothy.
Sent to:	Members at Colossae, in west central Asia Minor.
Date:	About A.D. 61.
Purpose:	To strengthen the branch on the return of Onesimus and to correct the false doctrine of ‘worshipping of angels.’
Main Themes:	The Godhead; Errors about Christ, days, and diet; developing celestial qualities.”

References<sup>17</sup>

D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner state,

“Colossae was a small, unimportant town in Phrygia (it’s not even shown on our Bible maps). Laodicea and Hierapolis are two other towns mentioned in this letter (Colossians 4:13); all three are located in the Lycus Valley about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. Philemon and Onesimus lived in Colossae.

“The problems that Paul wrote about were false doctrines concerning the Godhead and worship of angels (Colossians 2:18). Paul knew that apostates would disseminate perverse doctrines to draw away disciples from the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 20:29-30). Some members or apostates were denying the physicalness of the Savior, just as some of the Corinthians denied the idea of bodily resurrection. The basic issue was whether Jesus was God or man (Monophysitism or Arianism) or both at the same time. Great diversity of belief prevailed. Some argued that Christ has one mind (Apollonianism) or one will (Monothelitism), or that he was born a man and became a God (Nestorianism). Where there were two Christians, there were three opinions.”<sup>18</sup>

### **4. Book of Colossians**

#### **4.1. Colossians 1**

Colossians 1:1, 7-8

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus [Timothy] our brother.**

**7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;**

**8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.**

Epaphras, one of the missionaries in the area, came to Rome to give a report to Paul concerning the churches in Colossae and Laodicea.

Duane S. Crowther states,

"[Colossae and Laodicea are] about 10 miles apart in Phryga, in the Roman province of Asia...Paul [then] wrote his epistle to the Colossians, and sent it with Onesimus and Tyhicus (Col. 4:7-9). He also wrote a letter (now lost) to the Church at Laodicea (Col. 4:1)." <sup>19</sup>

Colossians 1:12-15

**12 Giving thanks to the Father,...**

**13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

**14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

**15 Who is the image of the invisible god, the firstborn of every creature:**

Paul wanted the saints of Colossae to understand the relationship God the Father has with His Son, Jesus Christ as he endeavored to address the confusion regarding the Godhead that had come into the midst of their church. It is Christ, under the direction of the Father, who came to earth to redeem us through His blood that we might receive, through our repentance, forgiveness of our sins. He is in the express image of the Father, and is His firstborn son.

Colossians 1:16-19

**16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:**

**17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**

**18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

**19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;**

Under the direction of the Father, Jesus Christ is the creator of "all things," man being the sole exception. He was a God, prior to His coming to earth. In this responsibility, He carried out all the wishes of the Father. He is the head of the Church upon the earth and it bears His name, even the Name of Jesus Christ. Following His crucifixion, He became the first mortal to be resurrected with His renewed and immortal physical body. He returned to the Father where He received the fullness of His Godhood having completed His mortal probation.

Colossians 1:20-21

**20 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.**

**21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, ye now hath he reconciled**

Through Jesus' suffering on the cross, He paid for Adam's transgressions for all mankind, thereby freeing them from the bonds of death and hell. He also has made it possible for each of Father's children, through their personal repentance, to once again be reconcile with Him.

Colossians 1:23

**23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;**

While our resurrection is sure based upon the atonement of Jesus Christ, including our freedom from death and Satan's captivity, our return to live with our Father in Heaven is conditional. For the saints of Colossae, it is dependent upon their remaining "grounded and settled" (Colossians 1:23), in their obedience to the principles of the gospel. The requirement is the same for each member of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"Events and circumstances in the last days make it imperative for us as members of the Church to become more grounded, rooted, established, and settled (see Col. 1:23; Col. 2:7; 2 Pet. 1:12). Jesus said to his disciples, 'settle this in your hearts, that ye will do the things which I shall teach and command you' (JST, Luke 14:28). If not so settled, the turbulence will be severe. If settled, we will not be 'tossed to and fro,' whether by rumors, false doctrines, or by the behavioral and intellectual fashions of the world. Nor will we get caught up in the 'talk show' mentality, spending our time like ancient Athenians 'in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing' (Acts 17:21). Why be concerned with the passing preferences of the world anyway? 'For the fashion of this world passeth away' (1 Cor. 7:31).

"Real disciples absorb the fiery darts of the adversary by holding aloft the quenching shield of faith with one hand, while holding on to the iron rod with the other (see Eph. 6:16, 1 Ne. 15:24; D&C 27:17). There should be no mistaking; it will take both hands!"<sup>20</sup>

Colossians 1:28-29

**28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:**

**29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.**

Delbert L. Stapley states,

"Paul impressively taught the importance of patterning our lives after the Lord Jesus Christ, striving constantly toward perfection. The writings of the apostle Paul can give us answers, direction, and strength, just as they aided the saints in the early church. If we prayerfully ponder not only the words of Paul, but all the scriptures now available to us, our lives can be strengthened and enriched.

"How beautifully and completely Paul encompassed all that would enable us to gain the greatest happiness in this life and exaltation in the life to come!"<sup>21</sup>

Our ultimate goal is to become perfect, "even as your Father in Heaven which is perfect." (Matthew 5:48). We will not obtain this goal during our mortal lives, but as we work toward it, as Paul did, we will come ever closer to achieving our divine potential. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, it is possible to reach perfection.

## 4.2. Colossians 2

Colossians 2:1, 5

**1 For I would that ye know what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh:**

**5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.**

Though Paul has not had the opportunity of ministering to the saints at Colossae or Laodicea, nevertheless he is concerned for their salvation and desires for them to be steadfast in the covenants they have made.

Colossians 2:8-10

**8 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.**

**9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**

**10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:**

There were distracters then, and there are now. They rely on the intellect and only the things they can observe. While the promptings of the spirit have no value to them, they also seem determined to ensure that they also have no value or meaning for others. Those who believe are often viewed by the unbelievers as being “deranged” or “perpetrators of a hoax” in order to discredit their beliefs. If they cannot believe, it seems they are determined that no one else can either.

Colossians 2:12-14

**12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the fruits of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.**

**13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you of all trespasses;**

**14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

Bryan Richards states,

“The Law of Moses was much more than the Ten Commandments. Through Moses were revealed many statutes and judgments which the children of Israel were bound to keep. Paul refers to these statutes and judgments as ‘the handwriting of ordinances.’ Perfect adherence to all these rules was impossible. The Law was a very strict schoolmaster, leaving little room for mercy...

“The curse of this judgment came from Jehovah [Pre-mortal Christ]. He set the standard for just, but he would also be the One to dispense the mercy—by nailing the ordinances, statutes, and judgments of the Law of Moses to his cross—by taking away the curse of the law with his sacrifice—by declaring liberty to those taken captive by sin.”<sup>22</sup>

Paul reminded the saints in Colossae upon entering the waters of baptism, they made sacred covenants with Christ, which enabled them to receive a forgiveness of their sins. These blessings continue as they keep and renew their covenants each Sunday as they partake of the sacrament.

Colossians 2:16

**16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days:**

George W. Crookwell states,

“During Paul’s ministry he was constantly annoyed by the Jews insisting that the converted Gentiles should obey the Laws of Moses with regard to circumcision, but at Colossae they appear to have taken another tack and assailed the Christian Sabbath insisting that the seventh day be observed. Paul dismissed the question with the admonition, ‘Let no man judge you...in respect of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day.’”<sup>23</sup>

Colossians 2:18

**18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,  
19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.**

Richard Lloyd Anderson states,

“[Early heretical] beliefs added Jewish ceremonialism to the gospel, in some way dethroned Christ, and also explained away the divinity of his physical person.

“...Paul explains by building on his earlier testimony of Christ as the ‘head of the body, the church’ (Col. 1:18). ...But false teachers added the ‘worshipping of angels,’ inventing things they had ‘not seen,’ which took away their true ‘head,’ Jesus Christ (Col. 2:18-19). Medieval Christianity added angels to intercede for mortals, whose lowly condition did not allow them to approach God...some first-century Christians taught the more radical doctrine that the physical creation was an inferior act of a lower divinity. And they added angels or divinities above the Old Testament creator. Paul fought such heresies at Colossae, for Christ’s authority as the true creator was being challenged as well as his physical reality. Paul raised the standard of revealed Christianity—of believing in the physicalness of Christ, having the form of the Father.”<sup>24</sup>

Without the oversight of Paul as one of the Apostles who is charged with ensuring that no false doctrine creeps into the churches, one can understand how quickly those who are misinformed or deceitful are able to pollute the truths of the gospel. This continues to be one of the responsibilities of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles today.

### 4.3. Colossians 3

Colossians 3:1-2

**1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.  
2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

There were those within the church then, as there are now, whose priorities were focused on the “things on the earth.” Their desire for worldly wealth and value diverted their view from “things above” (Colossians 3:2). They had forgotten the admonition of the Savior in this regard, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). To those who would ignore His counsel, the Savior pronounced this truth, “No man can serve two masters;...Ye cannot serve God and

“mammon [Worldliness]” (Matthew 6:24). To those who keep their eyes riveted on “seeking...first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:24), while they may be poor as to the things of this world, they will be rich as to the things of the spirit. When we live with the “kingdom of God” being first in our life, regardless of our challenges and adversity, it ensures an inner peace that comes only to those who truly love the Lord.

Colossians 3:3-4

**3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**

**4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“[In other words, ‘having your life hid with Christ in God’ mean] your calling and election has been made sure. [They] shall appear with Christ in glory at his Second Coming.”<sup>25</sup>

Colossians 3:5, 8-10

**5 Mortify [subdue] therefore your members [Rom. 6:13-of unrighteous in sin] which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [intense desire], and covetousness, which is idolatry:**

**8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**

**9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;**

**10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**

In these verses, Paul lists character traits that must be eliminated from our nature before we will be able to put on the new man/woman. If these traits remain unrepentant, they will prevent us from being able to reach our spiritual potential.

Colossians 3:12-14

**12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;**

**13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**

**14 And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.**

Paul now lists qualities that are found in one who is numbered upon the elect of God. These individual qualities, concluding with charity, invite the spirit to become part of one’s life.

Colossians 3:15-17

**15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.**

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

**17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

These qualities, when found within the congregation of members, serve to invite the spirit into the meeting. When the spirit is absent in a meeting, the prayers and talks offered seem to be just a repetition of words given the Sunday before. When the spirit is present, the words of the prayers and speakers find their place into the member's heart with an accompanying witness of their truthfulness. As the individual departs from the meeting, they feel invigorated by their attendance. It is the spirit that makes the difference in the church meeting and its presence can vary from member to member depending on their spiritual preparation.

Colossians 3:18-21

**18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.**

**19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**

**20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.**

**21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.**

Marion D. Hanks states,

"If there is a key for resolving the many great social problems of our time it must be in developing homes that are training places for Christian qualities, families in which the relationship between individuals teach the responsibility to be to good citizens in the home, in the neighborhood where the force is most effectual, and so in the community and the country. The instructions of the epistles demonstrate that the apostles taught with conviction this approach to solving the problems of their ancient world. Christians were expected to have sound marriages and strong families, to be good wives and good husbands, good parents and good children. Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians, and Peter and John in their writings, taught the same truths: wives and husbands must love each other and fill their major responsibilities in the home. Children must obey their parents and honor them. To fathers comes an especially significant invitation: "Provoke not your children to wrath [anger]: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' (Ephesians 6:4)."<sup>26</sup>

These words of admonition given to the wives, husbands, and children at Colossae were as well-founded and applicable to them as they were to those in any of the others congregations in the kingdom. The family unit is the foundation of society and laws need to be enacted for its protection. Any support for the legal definition of marriage, other than being between a man and a woman, signals society's failure to protect the family unit. This action serves to weaken the solidifying forces that hold the society together. The devaluing of the family unit, as history has witnessed, will result in the downfall of that nation and is an offence against God.

Colossians 3:23-24

**23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily [commitment], as to the Lord, and not unto men;**

**24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.**

When we are engaged in building the Lord's Kingdom on earth and serving our fellowmen, we are on the Lord's errand. We, therefore, are entitled to His guidance, direction and blessing.

Colossians 3:25

**25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.**

As the night follows the day, unrepentant sin will bring to the perpetrator the prescribed punishment. The laws of justice cannot be stalled indefinitely. Time may afford the individual the opportunity to repent, but it will not stop the wheels of justice from turning. The day will come when the debt is due in full.

#### 4.4. Colossians 4

Colossians 4:2-3

**2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;  
3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:**

Paul reminded the saints at Colossae of the benefit of prayer as a source of strength and an opportunity for the expression of gratitude for blessings received. He also requested in their prayers; they include his relief from confinement. Currently, he was limited in his ability to travel, to visit the saints in the various churches and to expound the doctrine of kingdom.

Colossians 4:5-6

**5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.  
6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt [emblem of wisdom], that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.**

Paul was truly concerned with the care of the poor of the church. His efforts to gather contributions from the various churches for those in need in Jerusalem went hand-in-hand with his missionary efforts. Not all congregations responded, but each were given an opportunity to assist in the care of those who were less fortunate.

Paul recognized that the tongue can be used to speak words of peace or injury; kindness or rebuke; wisdom or foolishness. He admonished each of us to think before we speak and when we do, to speak words of wisdom.

Brigham Young states,

“It is a shame to a man, who is made after the image of God, not to have control over his tongue, in the moments of passion or rage; let him first overcome and govern his passion, and then trust himself to speak, whether he be in the presence of his family or alone... When we speak, let us speak good words; when we think, think good thoughts; and when we act, perform good acts; until it shall become the delight of every man and woman to do good instead of evil, and to teach righteousness by example, and precept rather than unrighteousness. The men and women who pursue this course are entitled to all the blessings of heaven, both temporal and spiritual, and such blessings will be bestowed upon them as fast as they are prepared to properly apply, use, and enjoy them.”<sup>27</sup>

In Colossians 4: 7-14, the names of those who assisted Paul in his missionary labors are listed.

These include:

Those Who Assisted Paul During His Missionary Labor (Colossians 4)		
1.	Tychicus (vs.7)	“a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord’ whom Paul sent to carry his epistles to the Colossians (Col. 4:7-9) and Ephesians (Eph. 6:21).” [148].
2.	Onesimus (vs.9)	“a brother beloved,’ a slave Paul converted (Philem. 10-16).” [149].
3.	Aristarchus (vs.10)	“a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 19:29; 27:2), who was also a Jew. He accompanied Paul back to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey, and apparently was with Paul as he traveled to Rome and was confined there

		(Col. 4:10; Philem. 23-24) along with Paul.” [143].
4.	John Mark/Marcus [who is kinsman] (vs.10).	“[He] accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25) [and was] ...with Paul at Rome (Col. 4:10; Philem. 1:24).” [(LDS Bible Dictionary /” Mark. 728)]
5.	Jesus or Justus (vs.11)	“a Jewish member present when Colossians was written.” [149].
6.	Epaphras (vs.12)	“‘a fellow-worker’ [who visited Paul in] Rome [bearing]... gifts from Philippians and taking back with him the epistle to the Philippians.” [(LDS Bible Dictionary /” Epaphroditus. 665)]
7.	Luke, the beloved physician (vs.14).	“...Luke was Paul’s fellow-traveler...Luke was with Paul during his second Roman Imprisonment.” [(LDS Bible Dictionary /” Luke. 726)]
8.	Demas (vs.14).	“present when Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written (Col. 4:14; Philem. 24). He later forsook Paul, ‘having loved this present world,’ and went to Thessalonica (2 Tim. 4:10).” [148].

Reference<sup>28</sup>

He also speaks with favor regarding Epaphras, the missionary from Colossae (Colossians 1:7-8; 4:12) who had delivered the information from Colossae to Paul in Rome.

To each, Paul pays tribute and expresses gratitude for their service. Paul is truly grateful for their assistance and recognizes their contribution toward furthering the work of the kingdom.

Duane S. Crowther states,

“Onesimus and Tychicus will deliver by way of Ephesus, Paul’s letter to Colossae and the lost letter to Laodicea (Colossians 4:16). Epaphroditus will deliver the letter to Philippi.”<sup>29</sup>

Colossians 4:16

**16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.**

It was Paul’s request both letters he had written to Colossae and Laodicea be read in each of their congregations. It is assumed the information contained in each letter was applicable for the edification and instruction in both churches.

Colossians 4:17

**17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.**

Paul’s final admonition is directed specifically to Archippus. He is the son of Philemon. [See Crowther, *The Gospel Rolls Forth*, 1999, 152]. It appears that he had been called to a position to serve in the ministry, possibly as a missionary, and had not been diligent is the fulfillment of his calling. Paul reminded him that his call came from the Lord and he was expected to fulfill his responsibility.

## 5. Introduction to Philemon

“Sent from:	Paul, probably at Rome, joined by Timothy.
Sent to:	Philemon, a wealthy Christian living in Colossae, in west central Asia Minor.
Date:	About A.D. 61.
Purpose:	To ask forgiveness for the runaway slave Onesimus.
Main theme:	Forgiveness and just relationships.”

Reference<sup>30</sup>

Lane Johnson states,

“The epistle to Philemon is a special letter of intercession on behalf of the runaway slave Onesimus, who had earlier fled his master Philemon, and possibly taken with him some of the latter’s money or property. Ordinarily, under contemporary law, a runaway slave could be subject to frightful penalties. However, while in Rome Onesimus was converted to the gospel by Paul and had proved himself ‘profitable’ (Philem. 1:10-11); therefore, when Tychicus went to Colossae (bearing the letter to the Colossians), Paul sent Onesimus along, with an appeal to Philemon to receive him in the spirit of forgiveness as ‘a faithful and beloved brother.’ (See Col. 4:7-9).

“Aside from the fact that it is a remarkable example of a tactful appeal, this epistle shows that the gospel of Jesus Christ is an equalizing force in the lives of men regardless of differences in social statues. Because Onesimus had come repentant into the gospel brotherhood, Philemon was asked to receive him, not as a servant, but as ‘a brother beloved...both in the flesh, and in the Lord.’ (Philem. 1:15,16).”<sup>31</sup>

## 6. Book of Philemon

Philemon 1:1-2, 7

**1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,**

**2 And to our beloved Apphia [his wife?], and Archippus [his son?], our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:**

**7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints [members in Colessae?] are refreshed by thee, brother.**

Philemon has a special relationship with Paul. Not only is he one of Paul’s friends, but he is also a dutiful leader in the Colossae Church that meets in his home.

Philemon 1:15, 18-19

**15 For perhaps he [Onesimus] therefore departed for a season,...**

**18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;**

**19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it:....**

Paul acknowledged that Onesimus, one of Philemon's slaves, ran away from his owner. Onesimus arrived in Rome where he was taught the gospel by Paul and became a member of the church. Paul was willing to reimburse Philemon for any indebtedness that Onesimus has incurred.

Philemon 1:10, 12-13

**10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:**

**12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:**

**13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:**

Onesimus had become like a son to Paul since his conversion to the gospel. Paul, returned him again to Philemon, though it was Paul's desire to have him remain in Rome with him.

Philemon 1:15-16

**15 ...that thou shouldest receive him for ever;**

**16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?**

Paul requested that Philemon receive Onesimus, not as a servant, but as a fellow member of the church.

We might ask, why is Paul returning Onesimus to his previous owner? Is he bound to do so under Roman law?

Richard Lloyd Anderson states,

"Slavery was a reality in Paul's world. Cruel war had produced heartless enslavement of enemies, but Paul was on the high end of the social spectrum with the privilege of Roman citizenship. This meant that he was personally untouched by slavery and could have comfortably ignored it. But his Christian convictions did not allow that, for several of his letters command righteous treatment of slaves."<sup>32</sup>

If not on legal grounds, could there be another reason for Paul request that Onesimus return to Colossae to meet with Philemon? One possibility involves the application of important principles of the gospel. It involves both of his brothers in the gospel. For Philemon it is the process of forgiving someone who had wronged him. For Onesimus, it involves seeking personal forgiveness from one whom you have wronged, and then offering to restore, as one is able, the injury or indebtedness they incurred.

Philemon may have suffered a loss when his servant or slave left his household. It may have involved goods that Onesimus took with him as well as loss of his services. The gospel teaches that regardless of the loss sustained, it is incumbent on the part of the one who was offended to forgive the offender.

Colossians 3:13

**13 ...even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**

Modern revelation provides further clarification regarding the role of the one who was offended.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:9-10

**9 Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth [one offended] not his brother [offender] his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.**

**10 I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.**

Forgiveness for another is essential for our spiritual growth. When we do not forgive those who offend us, a symbolic wedge occurs in our spiritual growth, and we are not able to go forward with our progression until the wedge is removed. Only when we truly forgive another, are we free. It is important for us to also understand that we too are daily in need of forgiveness from the Lord for our own sins. He is willing to forgive us. Should we not also be willing to forgive our brother or sister who sin against us?

Onesimus had received baptism under the authority of Paul and had become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Now he had the opportunity to meet with Philemon and to make his repentance complete. This was accomplished by his personally seeking forgiveness from Philemon and then offering to make restitution to him for any loss that Philemon had occurred by his untimely departure. We seek forgiveness from the Lord and His Church through our confession to his appointed leaders for sins committed, and where possible, forgiveness directly from those whom we have previously injured. In conjunction with this process, we offer to those whom we have offended or injured, to make restitution for our actions. Prior to his baptism, Onesimus had sought repentance from the Lord and from the church, through Paul as the authority for Christ's Church on earth, but he had not sought personal forgiveness from Philemon nor offered to make personal restitution to him. It appears that Paul is hereby paving the way for both individuals, whom he loves, to participate in this cleansing and renewing experience.

## 7. Conclusions

### 7.1. Philippians

Our reading of Paul's writings to the Philippians is enhanced as we note the highlights of each chapter.

Philippians Chapter 1: We are reminded the gospel embraces all truth. It is a firm foundation upon which we can mold our lives. It is important for us to remember that while we continue to keep the commandments, we will not be exempt from experiencing adversity in our lives. If, however, we will approach it with firmness and steadfastness in our faith in Jesus Christ, it will work for our blessing.

Philippians Chapter 2: We are exhorted to remember that in all our actions, we should follow the example of Jesus Christ. We must not forget his humility and obedience as he condescended from his throne on high to walk among mortal men in order to show us the way back to the Father. It is important that we follow his example in our interactions with others so that we always reflect the light of Jesus Christ in our lives.

Philippians Chapter 3: Paul stresses again that through the atonement of Christ, the law of Moses has been fulfilled. We do not achieve salvation based upon our works, but through the grace of Jesus Christ, after all we can do.

Philippians Chapter 4: We are reminded of the importance of moderation in our lives. We cannot run fast enough, or long enough, in order to do everything. We must select, therefore, the things that are of greatest importance in our lives. This decision will be best achieved when we seek our direction through prayer.

We are reminded of the Thirteenth Article of Faith. Religion is of greatest benefit to an individual when they make its precepts a part of their daily life, rather than just on Sunday. In the final analysis, Paul reminds us that those things of greatest importance are not our temporal means, but our inner witness and trust in Jesus Christ. Only when we build our foundation on his teachings will we find true peace among the wickedness that exists around us.

## 7.2. Colossians

Paul's message in Colossians is his effort to correct errors in doctrine that had entered into their congregation. These included, among others, the Godhead, misunderstanding regarding the role of Christ and the importance of standing firm in the faith when our belief is tested.

Colossians Chapter 1: Paul reminds the saints in Colossae that the redemption of Jesus Christ was in order to free us "from the power of wickedness" (Colossians 1:13). He came to pay for our sins and to bring us to the Father. Prior to His mortal birth, under the direction of His Father, He served as the creator of all things and creatures, with the exception of man. His coming to earth was in fulfillment of the Father's Plan to serve as the Redeemer of all mankind.

Colossians Chapter 2: We learn that there will be many distracters to the teachings of the gospel who will attempt to bring false teachings into the Church. As we hold firm to the teachings given us by Christ, we will be strengthened.

Colossians Chapter 3: We learn that one of the false teachings that had come into the church involved the role of angels. Some were of the belief that they were higher in authority than Christ. Paul confirms that there is no one higher than God the Father, and Christ sits on His right hand. Paul notes traits that we need to eliminate from our lives [3:5, 8-10] for they prevent us from achieving our spiritual potential. He also lists qualities [3:12-17], we need to incorporate in our lives including charity, that will assist us in becoming the elect of God. He stresses our relationship in our homes giving counsel to husbands, wives, and children. The family unit is truly the basic unit of society. When we are truly converted to the Lord, and do not follow the precepts of man, we will receive our inheritance from the Lord. Those who choose to do wrong, will someday suffer the consequences of their actions.

Colossians Chapter 4: We are reminded of the importance of prayer and the blessing that it can be in our lives. We must also learn to control our tongue for it can be a great benefit to us in our interaction with others.

## 7.3. Philemon

The last writing of Paul that we addressed in this lesson is his letter to Philemon. It was written on behalf of a slave named Onesimus who had run away from a special friend and brother in the gospel named Philemon. Paul had met Onesimus in Rome and after teaching him the gospel, he had joined the Church. Paul writes to Philemon as he has instructed Onesimus to return to Colossae. His letter is to prepare Philemon for Onesimus' return. I believe that one of the purposes for this reunion involves the direct application of the principles of forgiveness and restitution to two special friends of Paul.

In each of Paul's letters we are again taught important gospel principles that can benefit each of our lives and strengthen our faith.

In our next chapter, we address Paul's letters of instruction to two individual's whom he loves, Timothy and Titus. They will conclude our study of Paul's writings in the New Testament.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Richard Lloyd Anderson. *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983, [Second Printing October, 1983], 290.

<sup>2</sup> *New Testament Apostles Testify of Christ: A Guide for Acts Through Revelations*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1998, 187.

<sup>3</sup> *The Gospel Rolls Forth: New Testament Events from Acts Through Revelation*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizons Publishers, 1999, 95-96.

<sup>4</sup> *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, Nineteenth Printing, March, 1991, 1013.

<sup>5</sup> Bryan Richards. [www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/-philippians-1](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/-philippians-1).

<sup>6</sup> *Acts Through Revelation: Gospel Doctrine Teachers Supplement*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975, 79.

<sup>7</sup> *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 2. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971, [9<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1976], 543.

<sup>8</sup> *Conference Report*. April 1913, Second Day—Morning Session, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Bryan Richards. [www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/philippians-2](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/philippians-2).

<sup>10</sup> “What Think Ye of Christ?” in *Ensign*, November 1988, 66-67.

<sup>11</sup> *One More Strain of Praise*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1999, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Bryan Richards. [www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/-philippians-3](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/-philippians-3).

<sup>13</sup> *The World and the Prophets*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. and Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1954, [Third Edition, First Printing April 1987], 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Making Your Home a Missionary Training Center*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985, 86.

<sup>15</sup> “Ye Also Shall Bear Witness,” in *Ensign*, November 1998, 79.

<sup>16</sup> *Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1913, [Forty-second Edition, 1961], 429-430.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Lloyd Anderson. *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983, [Second Printing October, 1983], 244.

<sup>18</sup> *New Testament Apostles Testify of Christ: A Guide for Acts Through Revelations*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1998, 192-193.

<sup>19</sup> *The Gospel Rolls Forth: New Testament Events from Acts Through Revelations*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1999, 149, 151.

<sup>20</sup> “Overcome...Even As I Also Overcame,” in *Ensign*, May 1987, 70.

<sup>21</sup> “Teachings of the Apostle Paul,” in *Ensign*, November, 1976, 94.

<sup>22</sup> Bryan Richards. [www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/-colossians-2](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/content/-colossians-2).

<sup>23</sup> “The Sabbath Day,” in *Improvement Era*, 1915, Vol. XVII. February, 1915. No. 4.

<sup>24</sup> *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983, [Second Printing, October 1983], 254.

<sup>25</sup> *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 3. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973, [9<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1976], 34-35.

<sup>26</sup> “Failing Never: What the Apostles Teach Us About Love,” in *Ensign*, September 1975, 76.

<sup>27</sup> *Journal of Discourses*, Vol.10. London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, [1865], 360-361.

<sup>28</sup> Duane S. Crowther. *The Gospel Rolls Forth: New Testament Events from Acts Through Revelation*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1999, 143, 148-149. \*The additional information is provided in quotes, with page in brackets. see also LDS Bible Dictionary in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 665, 726, 728.

<sup>29</sup> *The Gospel Rolls Forth: New Testament Events from Acts and Revelations*. Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1999, 151-152.

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<sup>30</sup> Richard Lloyd Anderson. *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983, [Second Printing, October 1983], 238).

<sup>31</sup> “New Testament Backgrounds: Philemon,” in *Ensign*, April 1976, 58.

<sup>32</sup> *Understanding Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983, [Second printing, October 1983], 240-241.