

Remnant Life Church  
**Intervention Teaching Series**  
*Servanthood*  
Week 2  
Philemon 8-21  
“The Perfect Servant”

The life of Jesus is a model given to us of living a selfless, God-centered life

- His entire life and ministry was exemplified by serving other people
- The ultimate act of service was laying down His life as the final blood sacrifice for our sins

Jesus proclaimed His earthly mission as one of service to others

- **Matt 20:28** – “...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
  - What we see is one of the many reasons people did not know what to do about Jesus
  - Especially the religious leaders of the day
    - The Pharisees, the teachers, and the rabbis were revered and served
    - The Pharisees made sure they were treated that way
    - Jesus more than all of them – He was the Messiah!
    - But He did not act that way
- **Luke 22:25-27** - *Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*
  - Jesus is speaking to the disciples just after they had been quarreling among themselves about...who was the greatest among them (seriously?!)
  - Servants of God are to serve others not assign themselves a title of honor for what they do (Benefactors)
  - Unfortunately, often the more spiritually astute or learned some people become the harder they are to be around
  - Pastor I was working with said to me once, “I want to teach you something,” my response was, “No, Thank You!”
    - Why? – Pride
  - Jesus, once again, says to them, *I am among you as one who serves*
- Jesus was continually teaching His disciples, not just through His words, but through His actions, the value, importance, and godliness of serving

We then look at the teaching of the apostle Paul to the new churches of Asia-Minor – keys components of serving one another in love

- **Gal 5:13** - *You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*
  - Three primary components of serving
    - It is a choice born out of the heart; free to choose

- Not done in the flesh
    - In other words, not for personal or selfish gain
  - In humility
- **Eph 6:7** - *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people*
  - Paul directly addresses in this verse the motivation for serving
  - Is it to please God, or people?
    - You can actually spot the answer to this pretty quickly
    - If a person gets offended because no one thanked them, the answer as to please people
- **Rom 12:6-7** - *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;*
  - Serve in the way that God has prepared you
  - What someone else does mean that you do that same thing

All of these elements of serving come back to Jesus, the perfect servant, and His final act of serving for all mankind – His death for our salvation

The small book of **Philemon** (only 25 verses) offers a unique look at the heart of love toward a servant, but it is also a picture of the gift of salvation and what Jesus did for each of us

#### **READ – Philemon 8-21**

- Paul is writing to Philemon asking him to accept a runaway slave back into their fellowship
    - Philemon was the host, and perhaps even pastor of this small house church located in Colosse.
    - Onesimus, a slave belonging to Philemon, had not only run away but it appears also stole from his master as Paul offers to pay back anything owed (**Phil 18**)
    - During his time away, he met Paul, became a follower of Jesus, and knows he needs to return to his master
    - Paul asks that Philemon receive Onesimus back not as a restored slave but as a brother in Christ.
    - Philemon served others as the host of the church and Paul knew that how he responded would impact the rest of the believers
  - The story presented in Philemon is a picture of salvation and filled with the heart of selflessness and service
    - The three primary figures, Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul, are representations of the triangle of salvation
1. Philemon is a representation of God the Father
    - a. The offense of sin was present in the running away of the slave and what was taken
    - b. Philemon had every right to require justice for the sin – as did God from His creation

- c. But God the Father, like the father of the prodigal son, never stops searching to restore us to Himself
2. Onesimus is a representative of the sinner – of each of us
  - a. He is a runaway, separated from the master, but desires to be returned
  - b. Once of no value, but now treasured
  - c. Once selfish but now with a selfless heart turned to service
3. Paul is the representation of Jesus the Redeemer
  - a. In this letter Paul (Jesus) is pleading with Philemon (the Father) on behalf of Onesimus (the sinner)
  - b. And like Jesus did for each of us, Paul presents himself to pay what has been lost or taken
  - c. Each and every one of these actions are born out of love

The hearts of the two main characters in this story are changing:

- Onesimus has received Christ and has been changed from within
  - That change of heart is impacting his actions
  - From a runaway slave to returning as a repentant brother in the Lord
- Philemon is being asked by Paul to look beyond the law and expectations of man and see Onesimus with the same love that opens his home to others
  - The love of Christ is forgiving
  - The love of Christ welcomes with open arms the one who has been changed from within
- Where does it begin for us?
  - In church? No –
  - It begins in your home with those you are closest to
  - Do you serve one another in love in your home?
  - That is where you will see the quickest the condition of your heart
- Jesus demonstrated, with His whole life, the heart of a servant
- We will examine more closely some of those specific instances when Jesus showed what it means to serve in a variety of circumstances
- Serving begins in the heart, and the model is seen in the life of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ