

“The Refreshment That Pauses” Philemon 4-7

I. Introduction

-Coca-Cola Advertising slogan 1929: “The Pause That Refreshes”

-Paul “pauses” to reflect on the impact of Philemon’s faithfulness to Christ in order to encourage Philemon toward reconciliation with Onesimus.

-“Cracking the lid” on the main idea: Because the Gospel transforms your relationship with God, you can pursue transformed relationships with others.

-Paul reflects on Philemon’s refreshment with a particular purpose in mind: reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus.

II. Grateful Affirmation (4-5)

-contextually: between introduction and appeal, sets trajectory for the rest of the letter

-thank (eucharisto) is the main verb

-modified by a temporal participial clause: making mention of you...

-modified by a causal participial clause: hearing of your love and of the faith...

-chiasm in verse 5: A-love, B-faith, B'-Lord Jesus, A'-saints (see Col. 1:4)

III. Thoughtful Intercession (6)

-“...notoriously the most obscure verse in the letter.” (Moule)

-sharing (koinonia)-participation, active sympathy, contribution

-may become (genetai)-aorist middle subjunctive

-effective (energes)-active, at work

-full knowledge (epignosei)-experiential and intellectual

-for the sake of/toward (eis)-Christ as the object of “good thing.”

-“All are bound together in a mutual bond that makes our much-prized individualism look shallow and petty.” (Wright)

-“When we act in accord with the blessings we have in Christ, we grow closer to Christ.” (Melick)

IV. Intensified Appreciation (7)

-comfort (paraklesin)

-hearts (splanchna)- bowels, nobler viscera, emotional nature

-have been refreshed (anapepautai)-relieve, rest, refresh. Perfect tense denoting past action with continuing, ongoing impact.

-my brother: strategic placement

-Paul expects Philemon to do the "good thing" because Philemon has a clear track-record of doing the "good thing" previously.

V. Application/Observation

-“The Gospel is the change that changes everything.” (McCarty)

-Recognize the colossal chasm between the culture of truth and the culture of twitter.

-Practice proactivity in your personal relationships.

-Who is resting today under the shelter of your encouragement?

-Are you presently interceding for any “runaways” in your sphere of relationships?

-Your readiness to forgive others inevitably reflects your experience of God’s forgiveness.

-“The arrow shot travels beyond the archer’s eye.” (Maclaren)

VI. Helpful Resources

Hawkins, O. S. *Tearing Down Walls and Building Bridges*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995.

Hendriksen, William. *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

Melick, Richard R., Jr. *New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. Vol. 32. Nashville: Broadman, 1991.

Moule, C. F. D. *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon, CGTC*. Cambridge: University Press, 1962.

Woodhouse, John. *Colossians and Philemon: So Walk in Him*. Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2011.