

PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON

Lesson 1-May 21, 2023

If you're in the resident congregation turn off your electronic devices and put them away. Let this be a place where you aren't distracted by the world.

Welcome To BARAH MINISTRIES

Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...an intimate, local Christian Church with a worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. Thanks for listening to this Bible lesson!

Why did God the Father create Barah Ministries?

The Father wants you to have a place to learn the truth about His Son...the King of kings...the Messiah...the One the Father sent to rescue both Israel and all mankind from bondage to sin. Is Jesus Christ God? Is He the Jewish Messiah? He seemed to think so...John, Chapter 4, Verses 25 and 26...

JOHN 4:25

The Samaritan woman at the well said to Jesus, "I know that Messiah is coming... He who is called the Christ...and when that One comes...He will explain all things to us about what is to come."

JOHN 4:26

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "I who speak to you am He."

Yes...Jesus is Lord...He is God the Son...and He is the Christ...the Jewish Messiah...and that's why we call Him the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father provides a written account of Jesus' life...it's called the Bible...the inerrant Canon of Scripture...and the Word of God. It is the absolute truth. It contains no errors, and it contains no contradictions. The apostle Peter encourages believers in Christ to follow the Bible's direction...Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verses 17 and 18...

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SECOND PETER 3:17

You therefore, beloved (you divinely loved believers in Christ)...knowing beforehand what is to come at the end of human history...be on your guard...so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men (false teachers)... so you don't fall from your secure position in Christ through doubt...

SECOND PETER 3:18

...instead, be diligent to keep on growing within the sphere of God's grace and keep on growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Knowing the Word of God is knowing Jesus' exact thinking. In the sphere of His grace exists an atmosphere of unconditional love and forgiveness.

God has an enemy, Satan, whom God made 'the ruler of this world' for a designated time period. Satan is like a cockroach, who when he finds food in your house, invites all of his buddies to invade your house as well. When you give Satan an opening through sin, he invades your soul through false teachers with their false teaching, looking to wipe out the confidence you get from the Word of God implanted. He seeks to replace the truth with fear, uncertainty, and doubt. The apostle Paul warns us in Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 27...

EPHESIANS 4:27

...do not give the devil a single opportunity.

If you give Satan an inch, he'll take a mile. Reject his lies at every opportunity.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

What Are You Like When You Have Been Wronged?

LESSON INTRODUCTION

After someone you know has been wronged by another person, you've probably heard them say, "I'll forgive them, but I won't forget." There was a time I didn't think of this as forgiveness. Yet if the truth be told, how can human beings forget the scars of betrayal? The scars of a betrayal were still present on Jesus' resurrection body, and Jesus choose to cancel the debt. In Matthew, Chapter 5, Verses 48...the Lord commands us to forgive this way as well...you are to...

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MATTHEW 5:48

...be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Using God's power in our lives, we can effectively forgive. Let's begin our study of a very short Biblical letter...Paul's letter to one of his best friends...

Philemon...a letter that gives us an example of the power and the process of forgiveness. Today's lesson is an introduction to a very powerful letter.

OPENING SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's hear some music! For a Christian, the sweetest sound in any language is the name Jesus...the One who is a Master of forgiveness. First John, Chapter 4, Verse 9 explains why His name is so special...

FIRST JOHN 4:9

The unconditional love of God the Father was manifested in us believers in Christ...in that the Father has sent His only begotten Son into the world...so that we might live the resurrection life (eternal life) through our union with Him.

Here's June Murphy to explain the wonder of the Lord our God's name in her song COME SEE A MAN.

MUSIC

OPENING SONG

Let's Sing the Lord's Praises

COME SEE A MAN

June Murphy

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Thank you, Father, for leading us to a new letter of study...Paul's letter to his friend Philemon...thank you for the gift of God the Holy Spirit who will open our spiritual eyes and our spiritual ears so we can see and hear the truth...we know we

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are powerless to learn the Word without Your divine power...and we are grateful that You give us God the Holy Spirit to teach us spiritual truths...open our hearts as we study...let the truth of the Word illuminate the areas of our lives which need the mending of unconditional love, forgiveness, grace, and reconciliation...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

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LESSON PART ONE

As we begin the study of a new Biblical letter, questions read us into the context of the letter.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

1

Who wrote the letter we are about to study?

2

Who is the letter directed to?

3

Where do the people live who are receiving the letter?

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

4

What do we know about the author of the letter?

5

When did the author write the letter?

6

Where was the author when he wrote the letter?

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

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7

What was God's purpose in getting the author to write the letter?

8

What does God want the author to communicate to the intended audience of the letter?

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

9

What is the main message of the letter?

10

What relevance does the letter have in our lives today?

Let's answer these questions and then we'll take a look at the passage.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

1

Who wrote the letter we are about to study?

The letter to Philemon is written by the apostle Paul, who is credited with writing thirteen of the twenty-seven New Testament letters...Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus.

At the beginning of each of the letters Paul writes, he gives his epistolic signature...like in Philemon, Chapter 1, Verses 1...

PHILEMON 1:1

Paul...a prisoner of Christ Jesus...and Timothy our brother...to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker...

An epistle is a letter. Three of Paul's letters are known as the pastoral epistles... First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus. Four of Paul's letters are known as the prison epistles because Paul wrote them during his imprisonment in Rome... Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon.

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QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

2

Who is the letter directed to?

The letter is personal, directed to one of Paul's besties...Philemon...a wealthy man who met Paul during his time in Ephesus. He became a believer in Christ and then hosted a church in his home in Colossae. His wife is Apphia and his son is Archippus...also mentioned in the letter. Philemon's name means loving and affectionate...an appropriate name since it was a perfect description of his temperament. He was stoned to death under the Roman emperor Nero's watch.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

3

Where do the people live who are receiving the letter?

They live in Colossae, about one hundred miles inland from Ephesus in modern-day Turkey. Colossae sits near the modern city of Honaz at the base of Mt. Cadmus.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

4

What do we know about the author of the letter?

No one in human history is more in need of forgiveness than the apostle Paul. Here's how he describes himself in Ephesians, Chapter 3, Verse 8...

EPHESIANS 3:8

To me (Paul)...the very least of the saints (all believers in Christ)...this grace was given to me by God...to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of the Christ...

He describes himself again in First Timothy, Chapter 1, Verses 12 to 15...

FIRST TIMOTHY 1:12

I (Paul) thank Christ Jesus our Lord...who has strengthened me...because He considered me faithful...putting me into service...

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FIRST TIMOTHY 1:13

...even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor (against believers in Christ and the Church). Yet I was shown mercy (as an unbeliever...not being given what I deserve) because I acted ignorantly in unbelief...

FIRST TIMOTHY 1:14

...and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant...with the faith and the unconditional love which are found by those in union with Christ Jesus.

FIRST TIMOTHY 1:15

It is a trustworthy statement...deserving of full acceptance...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...among whom I was foremost of all.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

5

When did the author write the letter?

Paul wrote the letter in 62AD, shortly after he finished the letter to the Colossians. He was about sixty years old at the time.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

6

Where was the author when he wrote the letter?

Paul wrote this letter to Philemon, along with letters to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and the Philippians during his first imprisonment in Rome. He was imprisoned for “starting a riot” by teaching about the death and resurrection of the Jewish Messiah...the Lord Jesus...the Christ. The Romans were always overly concerned about “uprisings,” and they were quick to put rebellions down. They imprisoned first, and asked questions later.

When we return from the break, we'll take the offering, we'll finish the last four introductory questions, and then we'll review the twenty-five-verse letter to get us ready for our in-depth study of the letter next week.

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FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

NOBODY

Casting Crowns

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

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OFFERING INTRODUCTION

Because we don't always get to see the impact of the things we do for the Lord, often we think we don't make a difference.

Today, my prayer is that God the Holy Spirit helps you see who benefits from your generosity...that He keeps on creating in your hearts a generous spirit...that He gives you a burning desire to provide your treasure as a habit, to enable the distribution of the gospel message through this ministry so it can be enjoyed by people all around the world. Proverbs, Chapter 19, Verse 17 says...

PROVERBS 19:17

One who is gracious to a spiritually poor man lends to the Lord...and the Lord will repay him for his investment.

Give...so others can receive. Let's welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with one of his always inspiring offering messages.

THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

ROMANS 15:13

Now may the God and Father of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing... so that you will abound in hope by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

OFFERING SONG

THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU

Instrumental Version

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What Are You Like When You Have Been Wronged?

LESSON PART TWO

Welcome back!

We continue our review of the questions that begin the study of a Biblical letter at question seven...

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

7

What was God's purpose in getting the author to write the letter?

The two themes of Paul's letter to Philemon are forgiveness and reconciliation.

As you'll remember from last week, Onesimus, a slave from Colossae who belonged to Philemon, stole money and ran away twelve hundred miles to Rome. It was a place he could get lost and where no one could find him. God found him! He was out living it up and he got arrested. He ended up in a prison cell with the apostle Paul. Of course, God led him to Paul. He is evangelized by Paul, and he becomes a new believer in Christ.

Paul and Onesimus become close, so Paul decides to use the new believer to deliver the letter to the Colossians to the very person from whom Onesimus was running away. In the letter, Paul asks his friend Philemon to live his Christianity by forgiving Onesimus and being reconciled to him.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

8

What does God want the author to communicate to the intended audience of the letter?

The letter communicates many things...but if we are to get to the very bottom of it, there is a message that the forgiven must forgive. In Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verse 32...the Lord commands us...

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EPHESIANS 4:32

Keep on being kind to one another...keep on being tender-hearted...keep on forgiving each other...just as God the Father also, through the Christ, has forgiven all of you.

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

9

What is the main message of the letter?

There are many messages in the letter, but the primary message seems to reveal the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to use those who appear useless. Onesimus' name means useful, and that certainly would not have described him when he was an unbeliever. Yet he, like the apostle Paul, was made useful through God's divine power once he became a believer in Christ. The Lord uses broken people for His purposes...thank God! The Lord is capable of making somethings out of us nothings. Barah!

QUESTIONS TO BEGIN THE STUDY OF A BIBLICAL LETTER

10

What relevance does the letter have in our lives today?

Forgiveness gives you control of your life because it does not require anything of others to be used. What is forgiveness?

FORGIVENESS

It's an intentional decision to let go of a resentment or anger for an offense...for a flaw...for a mistake...or for a betrayal perpetrated against you. It means to cancel a debt....to lessen the power of an act's grip on you by dismissing it without charge even though the scar the act caused may never go away.

Now let's read the passage...a one chapter, twenty-five verse personal letter...
Philemon, Chapter 1, Verses 1 to 25...

PHILEMON 1:1

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker...

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PHILEMON 1:2

...and to Apphia (his wife and) our sister (in Christ)...and to Archippus (Philemon's son and) our fellow soldier...and to all those who meet in the church in your house, dear Philemon...

PHILEMON 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILEMON 1:4

I thank my God and Father....always making mention of you in my prayers...

PHILEMON 1:5

...because I hear of your unconditional love and I hear of the faith you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints...

PHILEMON 1:6

...and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

PHILEMON 1:7

For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your unconditional love... because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

PHILEMON 1:8

Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper...

PHILEMON 1:9

...yet for unconditional love's sake, I appeal to you instead—since I am such a person as Paul...the aged...and since I am a prisoner of Christ Jesus—

PHILEMON 1:10

I appeal to you for my child Onesimus...whom I have begotten in my imprisonment...

PHILEMON 1:11

...who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

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PHILEMON 1:12

I have sent him back to you in person...and it is as if I am sending my very heart...

PHILEMON 1:13

...Onesimus...whom I wished to keep with me...so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel...

PHILEMON 1:14

...but without your consent, I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion...but of your own free will.

PHILEMON 1:15

For perhaps Onesimus was separated from you for a while for this reason...that you would have him back forever (in eternity)...

PHILEMON 1:16

...no longer as a slave...but more than a slave...a beloved brother in Christ...especially dear to me...but how much dearer to you, both in the flesh and in union with the Lord.

PHILEMON 1:17

If then you regard me as a partner, and I'm sure you do, accept Onesimus (back into your home) as you would me.

PHILEMON 1:18

But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, and of course he has, charge that to my account...

PHILEMON 1:19

I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand...I will repay his debt (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self...your eternal future...as well).

PHILEMON 1:20

Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord...refresh my heart in Christ.

PHILEMON 1:21

Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I ask.

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PHILEMON 1:22

At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

PHILEMON 1:23

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you...

PHILEMON 1:24

...as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke...my fellow workers.

PHILEMON 1:25

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

When we are wronged, we are to extend the same forgiveness the Lord gave to us. It's certainly easier said than done. We look forward to seeing how Paul handles a delicate situation.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Good News of Jesus Christ's Salvation Offer to the Human Race

The closing moments of today's lesson are dedicated to anyone, anywhere, who either is undecided or confused about having a relationship with the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want you to know that...

GOD WANTS YOU!

He Wants You Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

Even if you don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you still matter to God. He created you, so you're one of His creatures, and He wants the highest and best for you. Second Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 9 says...

SECOND PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise of salvation, as some accuse Him of...instead, He is patient toward unbelievers...not wishing for any to perish (in the Lake of Fire) but for all to come to repentance (a voluntary change of mind about having a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ).

The bad news is that all of us are born in a state of unrighteousness. We are born physically alive and spiritually dead as ungodly, unrighteous unbelievers. We're

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born on Satan's team. **It's not our fault, but it is our circumstance.** In First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 22, the bible says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:22a

For all in union with Adam at physical birth (and that is every human being who comes to earth) are set to die the second death in the Lake of Fire...

To God's enemy, Satan...the ruler of this world...you don't matter at all. First Peter, Chapter 5, Verse 8 says...

FIRST PETER 5:8

Be of sober spirit...be on the alert! Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

You are the "someone" on Satan's list.

Satan despises you so much he doesn't want you to be saved...he doesn't want you to be with God in heaven when you close your eyes in this life. Instead, he wants you to be with him in the Lake of Fire, and he wants you so badly that he sends false teachers with false teaching to deceive you. In Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 15...the Lord Himself warns about this...

MATTHEW 7:15

"Beware of the false teachers...who come to you in sheep's clothing...but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

When an animal is ravenous it has an insatiable desire to tear you apart. So it is with false teachers who pretend to be for you, yet truly they want you to be twice the sons of hell that they are.

This gospel message offers GOOD NEWS to rescues you from the kingdom of death and darkness you were born into, inviting you to be born again to the spiritual life available in God's kingdom of light. You can choose to be on God's team. John, Chapter 3, Verses 16 and 17 highlight Jesus' mission concerning you...

JOHN 3:16

"For God the Father loved the world unconditionally...and He loved the world so much...that He gave His uniquely born Son (the God-man...the Lord Jesus

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Christ...to be crucified on a Cross) ... so that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but has eternal life."

JOHN 3:17

For God the Father did not send God the Son (the Lord) into the world to judge the world...but the Father sent the Son into the world that the world might be saved through Him.

God wants you to respond positively to the good news of this gospel message so He can save you!

Who is this God who saves you? The apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus Christ...in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (the apostle Paul) delivered to you as of primary importance the gospel message I also received from God...that it was Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Old Testament Scriptures...

If a gospel message makes it sound like you have to work to get to heaven, it's a false gospel message from a false teacher. Romans, Chapter 11, Verse 6 says you don't have to work to be saved...

ROMANS 11:6

...if salvation is by grace (a free gift from God) ... and of course it is...it is no longer on the basis of your works...otherwise, grace (as a free gift) is no longer grace (it is not free).

Romans, Chapter 4, Verse 4 says you CAN'T work for salvation...

ROMANS 4:4

Now to the one who works for salvation, his wage for his work is not credited to

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his account as a favor from the grace of God, but his wage is credited as what is due for the work.

Your hardest work is not perfect enough to earn you a spot in heaven. So relax! You can get to heaven when you close your eyes in this life free of charge. Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31 says...

ACTS 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."

John, Chapter 3, Verse 36 warns...

JOHN 3:36

"He who believes in the Son has the resurrection life right at that moment... but he who does not obey the command to believe in the Son will not see the resurrection life...instead the wrath of God (the Lake of Fire) abides on him."

If you choose, you can spend eternity with God's enemy, Satan, in the Lake of Fire...OR...you can have the free gift of eternal life right this minute! RIGHT WHERE YOU SIT, RIGHT NOW, God can save you if you let Him. You can tell God the Father that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the moment of eternal life for you. In John, Chapter 6, Verse 37 the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, says...

JOHN 6:37

All those that God the Father gives Me will come to Me...and the one who comes to Me (for salvation) ... I ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT cast out (into the Lake of Fire).

Romans, Chapter 10, Verses 9 and 10 exhort you...

ROMANS 10:9

...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord (that He is God) ... and if you believe in your heart that God the Father raised Him from the dead... you will be saved...

ROMANS 10:10

...for with the heart a person believes...resulting in the imputation of absolute

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righteousness by God (your admission ticket to heaven) ... and with the mouth a person confesses (admitting faith in Christ alone) resulting in salvation.

Satan, the enemy of God, who is a very real being, not a concept... sends false teachers to give you a false gospel message. If you've ever had Jehovah's Witnesses come to your door, they are false teachers giving you a false gospel message. If you've ever had members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints come to your door, they are false teachers giving you a false gospel message. But they seem so sincere...so how do you know they are false teachers? Just ask them if they think Jesus Christ is God.

Unfortunately for you, both of those groups are inviting you to spend eternity with them in the Lake of Fire! Neither of these groups believes that Jesus Christ is God. I have family members who are part of one of these religions, and despite my best efforts, even my family members don't want to hear the good news God is offering them through me.

The Lake of Fire...that place we call hell...is real. In Matthew, Chapter 8, Verse 12, the Lord says...

MATTHEW 8:12

"...the sons of (Satan's) kingdom (unbelievers) will be cast out into the outer darkness...in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Many parents are false teachers leading their children to an eternity in the Lake of Fire. Do you want to know if you're a good parent? Just ask yourself a simple question...are you influencing your children to have a relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Sovereign God of the Universe?

He is the ONLY WAY to get to heaven according to John, Chapter 14, Verse 6...

JOHN 14:6

Jesus said to the doubting apostle, Thomas, "I am the way (to salvation), and I am the truth (through the gospel message...the Word of God), and I am the resurrection life...and no one comes to God the Father (in heaven) but through believing in Me."

There's no time to waste! God wants you. If you want to go to heaven when you

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close your eyes in this life, simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved! Take His word for it concerning salvation, and the resurrection life is yours free of charge!

CLOSING SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's close with music! When we're in a jam, true friends will say, "I've got you covered." Jesus is a true friend to all who embrace His friendship. King David, who needed His forgiveness, says in Psalm 32, Verse 1...

PSALM 32:1

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven...whose sin is covered!

Jesus has us covered. June Murphy says in her song...WE'RE FORGIVEN!

MUSIC

CLOSING SONG

Let's Sing the Lord's Praises

WE'RE FORGIVEN

June Murphy

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Almighty God and Father...

Thank you, Father, for teaching us about forgiveness and reconciliation through Paul's letter to Philemon...as we learn, help us to reflect on our relationships so we notice where forgiveness is needed to release us from the prison of expectations... teach us to handle forgiveness as You did...

We ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

DISCUSSING THE LESSON AND PRAYER CIRCLE

Join us Live or on Zoom

Immediately Following the Lesson

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GOT BIBLICAL QUESTIONS?

Ask the Pastor
pastor@barahministries.com

KEEP ON STUDYING THE WORD OF GOD!

Thanks for coming!
Thanks for watching!
Thanks for listening!

www.barahministries.com