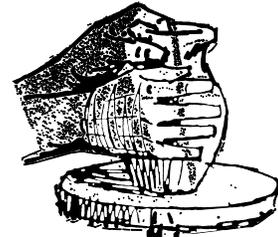


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Isaiah 64:8

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A Model of Courtesy, Charity, and Conversion *by Mark Copeland*

One book in the New Testament has been described as a model of courtesy, a manifestation of charity (love and grace), and a monument of conversion. That book is Paul's epistle to Philemon, the shortest of all of Paul's letters.

The characters of the book are Philemon, who was likely part of the church in Colossae. He was very hospitable, and it is possible he was converted to Christ by Paul's preaching. Onesimus had been one of Philemon's slaves and had run away. Somehow, he had traveled from Colossae to Rome, found Paul, and was converted to Christ. He had become very dear to Paul, and very useful, Col 4:9. Archippus was likely Philemon's son, and he was a minister of the gospel, Col 4:17. Apphia was possibly Philemon's wife.

Paul wrote this letter to Philemon because he did not think it appropriate or right to keep Onesimus with him in Rome, and was therefore sending him back to Philemon. This letter to Philemon is an appeal by Paul for Philemon to receive Onesimus back, now as a brother in Christ, and to

forgive him for wronging Philemon.

Courtesy. Paul's letter is a model of courtesy and tact. He could have commanded Philemon to take Onesimus back, but instead pleaded with him and appealed to him "for love's sake," 8-10. He introduced the subject of his appeal gradually (in the Greek, the name of Onesimus is the last word in the sentence, 8-11). He was gentle. Although Paul had authority as an apostle and as a dear friend of Philemon, he refused to compel Philemon to allow him to retain Onesimus in Rome, but sent him back, 12-14. He even offered to pay Philemon for any wrong incurred by Onesimus, 18-19.

Philemon is also an example of courtesy by his hospitality. He opened his house for the church to meet, 1-2; cf. Rm 16:3-5; 1 Cor 16:19. He refreshed the heart of the saints, cf. 1 Cor 16:15-18, showing his love for the brethren, 7; Eph 1:15; Col 1:4; 2 Thes 1:3. Paul could always depend on him for a place to stay, 22. His model of hospitality should be a characteristic of all Christians, Rm 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9 (8-10). Peter said "Finally,

all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing," 1 Pet 3:8-9. As Christians, we are called to courtesy, blessing others by our words and by our actions.

Charity (love and grace). Paul followed his own admonition in 1 Cor 13 to love both Philemon and Onesimus, and to seek what is best for them both. He believed in the basic goodness of Philemon and was not suspicious of how he would respond, 21; see also 1 Cor 13:6-7. He called both Philemon and Apphia "beloved," 1-2, and greets them by asking the blessing of "grace...and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," 3. He shows his own love by telling them that he thanks God for them in his prayers, 4. He commends them for their love in vs. 5, 7, and 9. Based on their **love**, he is assured that they will receive this
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**"For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother."
—Philemon 7**

runaway slave as a brother, a "be-loved brother," 16, just as they would receive Paul himself. Onesimus was also beloved by Paul. He called him "my own heart, whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel," 12-13. Onesimus was "a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord," 16.

The whole transaction—Paul's sending Onesimus back, Onesimus's going back, and Philemon's receiving Onesimus freely and voluntarily—is one of grace. Paul not only asked God's blessing of grace at the beginning of the letter, 3, but ended his letter, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen," 25.

Conversion. Because both master Philemon and slave Onesimus had been converted to Christ (as well as the apostle Paul and all the people mentioned in the letter), Paul can appeal to their love and grace—and also to their obedience. They serve the Lord, and all of them are slaves to Christ: "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free,

yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants (slaves) of God," 1 Pet 2:15-16. Paul considered himself a slave of God, see Rm 1:1; Gal 1:10; Tit 1:1. So did Peter, 2 Pet 1:1; James, Jas 1:1; and Jude, Jude 1. Paul said that Christ Himself, in His obedience to the Father, "took on the form of a bondservant (slave)," Phil 2:7; cf. Heb 5:8-9. Because Jesus learned obedience through His suffering, He became the author of salvation to all who obey Him. Paul also called Timothy, Ephaphras, and all his traveling companions *bondservants*, Phil 1:1; Col 4:12; 2 Cor 4:5. They sought to please their Master in everything.

Paul also addressed the behavior of slaves and masters in Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; and Tit 2:9-10. Bondservants were admonished to be obedient, as if they were serving Christ, even to harsh masters, 1 Pet 2:18, "doing the will of God from the heart," Eph 6:5-6. They understood that, long with receiving God's grace, servants of God obey Him cheerfully, not with mere "eye-service," but in "sincerity of heart," Col 3:22, and with "good will," Eph 6:7. That means that

they were to be honest, as well as obedient; they were not to pilfer, but to be faithful and honest, Tit 2:10. Their attitude was to be one of honor and respect to their master, 1 Tim 6:1-2, not answering back, Tit 2:9.

Masters were to stop trying to force obedience by threatening, Eph 6:9, and to give their slaves what was "just and fair," Col 4:1. In fact, Paul was asking Philemon to go beyond justice and to show mercy to Onesimus, just as God would treat His own servants.

How are we showing courtesy to others, especially to our brethren? Do we show hospitality? Are we gentle when we ask them to do something that may be difficult? Do we appeal to their charity (love and grace)? And how are we showing love and grace to others? Are we living in such a way to allow the grace of the Lord Jesus to be seen in our lives? Do our lives show that we are truly converted to Christ—that is, changed by Him? Are we obedient? Are we honest? Is our attitude one of cheerful service? Do we serve at all? God has called all of us to demonstrate the godliness shown by Paul, just as Paul called Philemon and Onesimus to be their best selves, that is, to be like Christ.

"A Little While," by Tommy Thornhill

"Then Jesus said to them, 'I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me,'" Jn 7:33. Jesus was facing the cross, and time was short. He knew the Jewish leaders were plotting to kill Him, Jn 7:1, but it was not yet time. A "little while" still remained, approximately six more months, and His enemies would not be able to touch Jesus before that time. Until then Jesus would remain alive to finish His work.

Suppose you learned that you were facing death because of some incurable disease that was ravaging your body. Suppose your doctor told you that you only have a "little while" longer here on this earth. How would you use the "little while" that remained?

HOW DID JESUS SPEND HIS "LITTLE WHILE"?

Forgiving. Part of His "little while" was spent practicing forgiveness. For ex-

ample, He forgave the woman taken in adultery, Jn 8:3-11. Jesus refused to condemn her, and told her to "go and sin no more." He was not condoning sin, but He was not going to condemn her unjustly. During His "little while" Jesus knew Peter was going to deny Him, Lk 22:31-32, yet He forgave him. As Jesus was hanging on the cross, He forgave the Jewish leaders—and all, including us—who put Him there, Lk 23:34.

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”
—Ephesians 3:19

“A Little While,” from p. 2

What about us? Suppose a person does something to hurt us; are we willing to forgive him, or do we carry a grudge against him/her the rest of our lives? Jesus didn't carry grudges against those who hurt Him, He forgave them. Let us not spend our time holding grudges, for we have only a “little while” left. Learn to forgive others as Jesus did. Time is much too short to carry such burdens. We never know when life will come to an end, Pr 27:1.

Teaching the gospel. During His “little while” Jesus continued to teach people. Yet, in doing so He had to dodge the stones of those who didn't like His teaching. When He spoke of the honor due Him because of His eternal existence, Jn 8:58-59, the picked up stones to throw at Him. They had the same reaction when He claimed oneness with God, Jn 10:30-31.

What about us? We never know when our “little while” will come to an end. So we have to be willing to speak the word “*in season and out of season. Convince [reprove], rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,*” 2 Tim 4:2-3. Are we willing to dodge the stones of ridicule, sarcasm, rejection, and hatred as we talk to others about Jesus? After all, we have only a “little while left to teach them, Jn 9:4.

Discipleship Here At Home

Line in the Sand, from p. 4

prayer for the ill and the bereaved. Military chaplains have been told to withhold the consolations of faith to troops en route to die for their country lest unbelievers suffer cramps of the soul. High school valedictorians are warned not to offer the benediction of “God bless you” because it might offend a scruffy atheist-in-training.

The First Amendment is intended to protect religious faith from the state, not the state from religious faith. A mild act of summertime rebellion by Dekker and those who want to worship God on the beach is wholly an appropriate way to celebrate our nation's freedom. Let the fireworks begin.

Serving others. In the “little while” Jesus had left, He took time to help others. He wept with the bereaved during the death of Lazarus, Jn 11:35, and gave them words of comfort and encouragement. He washed the disciples' feet, Jn 13:1-16, showing that He came to serve, not to be served, Mt 20:28. Christians must learn to “*rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*” Rm 12:15. Christians must give of their money, time, and selves to meet the needs of others and must show hospitality, Rm 12:13. Think of the many things we can do to benefit others! Make a list of those in need and how you can serve that need. Get busy serving while there is still time left, Gal 6:10.

Praying. Some of the “little while” Jesus had left was used in prayer. Even though He knew He would soon be back with the Father forever in heaven, He craved spending time to talk with God while He was still on the earth. Christians have only a “little while” left in this world before leaving it, and our time spent talking with the Father in heaven benefits us and others, Col 4:2; 1 Thes 5:17-18. Jesus spent His “little while” continuing to serve God. How are you using your “little while:?”

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Margie Szymanski, Dale's mother—ever lowering O2 levels, serious; **Dale, Lynda, Megan Aki** and girls to see her this week **Mark Campbell**—seizures, in and out of consciousness; CCU at Glenwood Sprgs **Gary Boyd**—lung recovery **Judy Sartin**—pneumonia recovery **Ruth Hice, Pat Campbell's** mother—invasive colon cancer; in rehab at: Legacy Heights Nursing and Rehab, Rm #15, 900 W. 12th St, Russellville, AR 72801 **Frank Savarese**—recovering from flu

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma **Pearl Chapman**—leg pains; pancreatitis **Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain **Rod Green**—thyroid trouble **Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy **Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; needs help around his house **Menards**—aging; **Lloyd,** diabetes; **Virginia,** now legally blind from rapid macular degeneration; high BP **Sandra Perry**—neuropathy from diabetes **Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia **Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

Directory update **Mark Reingrover,** 4615 Simms St, Wheatridge 80033

Job concerns **Andrew Tope, Lorenzo Gonzalez,** and **Frank Savarese** are seeking jobs.

Traveling The **Kory Tope** family is in OR. **Sarah McMurray** is visiting friends in Dominica, Caribbean. **Kaysha Howell** is in NY. The **Lorenzo Gonzalezes** are in Wisc.

BEREAVED **Stacey** and **Lisa Ward's** great grandmother passed away; **Chris Hayes's** grandmother passed away.

Expecting **Amy Vander Kooi**—August **REJOICE** **Justin** and **Marie Carlson** have a baby girl, **Emma Elizabeth,** born 6:23



Exposing current thoughts & trends

A Line in the Sand: Religious Liberty *Washington TIMES*

A Presbyterian preacher on the Delaware coast is drawing a line in the sand on the beach this to celebrate freedom, which was the original point of the Fourth of July. Robert Dekker sought permission from the neighboring city of Rehoboth Beach to hold a series of eight early Sunday morning church services on the beach during the summer tourist season. He application was denied. "I'm sorry to inform you," wrote Rehoboth's city manager, "that I can't grant your request to have church services on the public beach in Rehoboth. I cannot mix church and state. I trust you understand." The preacher didn't, and neither do we.

Dekker doesn't understand how the city could claim this expression as impermissible in a nation founded by men and women seeking to express their religious beliefs in their own way. The preacher does not intend to establish a church on the beach; his congregation worships in a substantial edifice miles away. He asks no municipal sanction on his reading of the Scripture, a few remarks of thanksgiving, and the singing of a hymn or two. Now he plans an act of civil disobedience in an unapproved "peaceful worship service" on the beach "in defiance of tyranny."

The service will likely take place without incident; it's highly unlikely that the town of Rehoboth would be so foolish as to send the cops to break up an innocent religious service. The congregation is likely to leave the beach as clean as they find it. The controversy is how a church service on public property has become the "mixing of church and state."

Daniel Dreisbach, a law professor at American University and author of Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State, says the "wall" is a myth, originating not in 1789 but in 1947 with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Everson v. Board of Education*. The Court was asked to interpret the First Amendment's prohibition on laws establishing a religion. It took cues, or thought it did, from Jefferson's famous 1802 letter to the Baptist Association of Danbury, CT, mentioning a "wall of separation," but his words were twisted out of context. As president, Jefferson demonstrated that his views of religion and the state are nothing like the anti-church, pro-state mindset that 65 years of jurisprudence since *Everson* have given us. The city manager of Rehoboth Beach got his history and civics mixed up with current events. Visceral hostility to religion is the order of the day. The convictions of the millions are held hostage by governments intimidated by tantrums of the very few, who faint at the sound of a hymn to the faith of our fathers or a

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Westside church of Christ

meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 972-0087

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 462-4987
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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This morning: "Spiritual Dry Spells," by Jim Reingrover

A Christian may go through many years of spiritual growth, serving the Lord with zeal and enthusiasm, only to find himself one day feeling sluggish towards God, flat in his faith, having become dull and mechanical. **What can he do?**

This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series

"Introduction and Philemon,"

by Jim Reingrover

Vacation Bible School

July 15-19

"Obeying truth and Putting on the Armor of God"