

“A Faith That Changes the Room”

South Sub Church | May 10, 2026 | Devotionals from Philemon 1:1-7

Day 1

A Faith That Can Be Seen

“I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God’s people.” (Philemon 5, NLT)

Philemon’s faith had a reputation.

Paul didn’t say, “I know what you believe.” He said, *I keep hearing about your faith*. That means Philemon’s trust in Jesus was visible in the way he treated people. His love for others wasn’t occasional or selective—it was consistent enough that others talked about it.

This is one of the clearest signs of a gospel-shaped life: faith that can be seen.

The gospel never stays private. It always works its way outward. When someone truly understands the grace they’ve received in Christ, it begins to reshape how they respond to others—especially in relationships that are difficult, inconvenient, or costly.

Before Paul ever addresses the conflict with Onesimus, he reminds Philemon: *this is who you already are*. You are someone whose faith expresses itself through love.

That same question comes to us. Is our faith visible in our relationships? Not just in the easy ones—but in the strained, awkward, or unresolved ones?

Because it’s in those places that the gospel becomes most visible.

Live It Out

Think about a relationship in your life that feels complicated right now. If someone were observing your life, would they “hear about” your faith through how you’re handling it? What is one step you can take today to make your faith visible through love?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for the grace You have shown me. Shape my life so that my faith is not hidden but visible in how I love others. Help me reflect Your love, especially in the relationships that feel difficult right now. Amen.

Day 2

Love for All

“Your love for all of God’s people...” (Philemon 5, NLT)

Paul highlights something that is easy to overlook—Philemon’s love extended to *all* of God’s people.

That word “all” matters.

It’s one thing to love people who are easy, agreeable, or similar to us. It’s another thing entirely to love those who are difficult, different, or have caused us pain.

In the context of this letter, this becomes deeply personal. Onesimus was not just another believer—he was someone who had wronged Philemon. Someone who likely disrupted his life and trust.

And yet, the gospel does not give us permission to limit our love.

Why? Because God did not limit His love for us.

Romans 5 reminds us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Before we were deserving, before we had anything to offer, God moved toward us in grace.

That kind of love reshapes how we see others. It calls us beyond preference, beyond comfort, and into something deeper.

Not because people always deserve it—but because we didn't either.

Live It Out

Is there someone you've kept at a distance—someone you tolerate but don't truly love? Ask God to shift your heart toward them. What is one small, intentional step you can take to move toward them this week?

Prayer

Father, thank You for loving me when I did not deserve it. Help me to extend that same kind of love to others—even when it is difficult. Soften my heart where it has grown hard, and teach me to love like You do. Amen.

Day 3

Faith in Action

"I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith..." (Philemon 6, NLT)

Paul doesn't just celebrate Philemon's faith—he prays that it becomes active.

Faith is not just something we believe—it's something we live. And according to Paul, one of the clearest expressions of faith is generosity.

Not just financial generosity, but relational generosity—offering grace, patience, forgiveness, and understanding.

This is where reconciliation begins.

Because reconciliation is never passive. It doesn't happen by waiting long enough for emotions to settle or hoping the other person will take the first step. It requires movement. It requires action shaped by grace.

Paul is preparing Philemon for that moment.

And the same is true for us. The gospel invites us to move toward others the way Christ has moved toward us—not because it's easy, but because it's faithful.

Live It Out

Where have you been waiting instead of acting in a relationship? What is one step you can take this week—whether it's reaching out, apologizing, or extending kindness—to move toward reconciliation?

Prayer

God, thank You for not waiting on me, but moving toward me with grace. Help me to live out my faith through action. Give me courage to take the first step in relationships where I've been hesitant. Amen.

Day 4

Remember What You've Received

"...as you understand all the good things we have in Christ." (Philemon 6, NLT)

Paul connects action with understanding.

In other words, the more deeply we grasp what we've been given in Christ, the more it transforms how we relate to others.

We have been forgiven.

We have been shown patience.

We have been welcomed into God's family.

We have received grace again and again.

And when we forget that, our relationships begin to shift. We become more critical. More impatient. More

likely to keep score.

But when we remember, everything changes.

We forgive because we've been forgiven.

We extend grace because we've received grace.

We pursue reconciliation because God pursued us.

The gospel is not just the starting point of our faith—it's the ongoing foundation of how we live and relate.

Live It Out

What is one truth about what you have in Christ that you need to remember today? How would that truth change the way you respond to a difficult person or situation?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for all that I have in You. Help me not to forget Your grace, Your patience, and Your love toward me. Let those truths shape how I treat others today. Amen.

Day 5

A Life That Refreshes

"Your love has given me much joy and comfort... because you have refreshed the hearts of God's people." (Philemon 7, NLT)

Philemon was known for refreshing others.

He brought encouragement, relief, and strength to the people around him. His presence didn't add pressure—it brought peace.

That kind of life doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of a heart shaped by the gospel.

Because when we understand the grace we've received, we stop needing to prove ourselves or win every moment. We become more patient. More gentle. More aware of how our words and actions affect others.

And in a world filled with tension, conflict, and complicated relationships, people who bring refreshment stand out.

This is what God calls us to.

Not just to resolve conflict—but to become the kind of people who bring life into relationships.

Live It Out

Think about your interactions this week. Do people leave conversations with you feeling encouraged or drained? Choose one person today and intentionally speak life, encouragement, or grace into them.

Prayer

Lord, make me someone who refreshes others. Help my words and actions bring encouragement, peace, and life. Shape my heart so that I reflect Your grace in every relationship. Amen.