

SECOND READING: Philemon 1:1–21

A reading from Philemon.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, ²to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God ⁵because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. ⁷I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

⁸For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, ⁹yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love — and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. ¹²I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; ¹⁴but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. ¹⁵Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother — especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. ²⁰Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

GOSPEL: Luke 14:25–33

²⁵Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Daily Bible Readings:

These readings are related to the Lectionary readings for this Sunday. Try to take time each day to read the assigned Bible passage.

Sunday	Luke 14:25-33	The cost of being a disciple
Monday	Matthew 10:34-42	The cost of discipleship
Tuesday	Matthew 16:21-26	Taking up our cross
Wednesday	Acts 5:17-41	Suffering for Jesus' sake
Thursday	Philippians 3:7-14	Sharing in Jesus' sufferings
Friday	1 Peter 4:12-19	Suffering as Christians
Saturday	Psalm 101	Choosing God's law
Sunday	Luke 15:1-10	The lost sheep and the lost coin

Scripture Verses for the Week:

"Choose life! Be completely faithful to the Lord your God, love him, and do whatever he tells you. The Lord is the only one who can give life."

– Deuteronomy 30:19b-20a (CEV)

- Cut out & carry with you.
- Say at each mealtime.
- Read at bedtime.
- Commit to memory.

Prayer for this Week:

Lord Jesus, teach me to put you ahead of everything else. Please give me the real life that only you can give. Amen.

(Luke 14:33; Deuteronomy 30:20).

For Throughout the Day:

Lord Jesus, please give me ears to hear your voice today. Amen.

(Luke 14:35)

A Blessing to Share:

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen." (Philemon 3)

Mealtime Refrain:

Let us stay close to God and do what he says:

God is the key to our lives. (Deuteronomy 30:20)

Mealtime Prayer:

For the food we share, for loved ones who care, and for days so fair - we thank you, God. Amen.



SCRIPTURE

Faith Talk:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- What is the best thing about being a follower of Jesus? What is the most difficult thing?
- Jesus said that we must "give up everything" to be his disciples. How do you understand his words?
- What has Jesus given up for you?

Devotional Practices:

St. Paul wrote these words to his friend Philemon: "I always thank God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints" (Philemon 4-5). In your home devotion times this week, pray by name for your Christian friends. Send them cards containing this verse from Philemon.

Service:

St. Paul gave his love, care and support to a young man called Onesimus whom he met in prison. Who in your community is experiencing hard times due to illness, loss of work or separation from family? Choose a couple of people to be "ONES I Must Serve" for your household. Make them a meal, do an act of service for them (e.g. mow their lawn or help clean their home) or offer friendship to them.

Rituals and Traditions:

Jesus said "anyone who does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). This means that in following Jesus we are sometimes asked to do things that we don't want to do or that are hard. Invite household members to think of one "hard thing" they could attempt this week as a follower of Jesus e.g. be friendly to someone who has no friends, make peace with someone they are fighting with, work on a bad habit. Make small crosses out of wire to carry with you this week (e.g. in your clothes pockets) as a reminder of Jesus' words.

Parent Toolbox:**Household Spiritual Goal-Setting**

Many people make plans for their financial future but few approach their spiritual lives in the same way. In Luke 14 we find that Jesus encourages us to think carefully about what it means to follow him and to plan our lives accordingly. Make time this week to talk about your household's spiritual goals. As a community of Jesus' disciples, what would you like to (a) keep doing; (b) stop doing; (c) start doing; (d) do differently? Set one or two goals for your spiritual life (e.g. "We would like to pray together more", "We would like to serve others more"). Brainstorm ideas for working towards this goal and decide on one or more action steps. Print up your goal/s on a poster or large piece of paper and place in a prominent spot in your home. Revisit your goal/s in the coming months.

