

Philemon 1:1-25

Sunday 12/18/2011

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

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

I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Let us pray. Dear God, Thank You for this time that we get to get together, Lord. Although it is bittersweet, Lord, Bob is not here, Lord. Just be with him and everybody that is in that family, Lord, and the preachers that had such a loss in their life, Lord, this week, but such a gain for You up in Heaven, Lord. Thank You so much for this opportunity that I have, Lord, to stand here and talk about what Christ has done for me and how He has changed my life, and Lord, how I know I can be a profitable Christian, Lord. Help me through this message, Lord, give me the words to say, Lord, and let Your Holy Spirit do the work, and I love You in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

In this book, there are a couple of things. First of all, the doctrine of imputation is found here. You see the doctrine of the body of Christ. You see a lot of practical ideas of forgiveness. You see things that are just everyday things that you and I have all gone through. Things that we all can look at here.

The outline of this, if you could not pick up on it, I guess I should have given you this first, but the outline of this is Paul is writing a letter to a rich Christian named Philemon. Philemon had a servant named Onesimus. Onesimus apparently ran away. I do not know what the deal is. I have known some rich Christians in the past. I do not know if Philemon was bad to him or if Onesimus was bad, but obviously he was not doing what was right, and he left. Philemon did not, so I cannot imagine that is the case. Onesimus left for some unknown reason, and obviously because he probably did not like the church that was in their house in Philemon 1:2, like most Christians run away. Paul basically wins him to Christ here, and in Philemon 1:11, we find the theme of this. It says, speaking of Onesimus, "Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me." That is where we find the theme here in this book: being a profitable Christian.

I. My Testimony as Onesimus

Before I start, I wanted to kind of give you my testimony because I see all of us here as Onesimus. We all at some point in time are unprofitable. We all do things that we know we should not be doing. We all came from a sin background before we were saved. If you are not saved here today, you are living in sin, and obviously we need to get over that. But we are all Onesimus, and even once you get saved, at some point in time, we find ourselves not being profitable. So the great thing that we do here is we have some examples, but before we do that, I want to give you my testimony.

I do not have a great testimony. I really do not, but I am going to give it to you here so you can see a couple of things, a couple of points. The main thing is because when I talk about being profitable, you know me here. Some of you are going to say, "Well, that Joe Christiansen, I have

never seen him be profitable for nothing,” and you are probably right on a lot of those points because I do my own thing. Sometimes I have a large family here. I basically hang out with my own family, and I do not get to make it to everything. I do not get to do everything, but you see my point. So I guess by me telling you my testimony, you see that I do have some kind of a background to be able to preach a message like this. The other thing is for me to show you that I am Onesimus. This is where I am. This is all of us. This is you. This is me.

It starts about 1978, I would guess. My mom and dad moved out to a little country town in Wisconsin. They were saved at that point, but they were really struggling. They got saved out of the Catholic Church where most of my family still is. But they met their neighbor, and their neighbor was a born-again Christian fundamentalist. Nikki asked a question about fundamentalism. Well, my mom and dad went to church, and I am not going to say anything bad about fundamentalists. They are good people. That is why I am dressed like this today. You often wonder why I am dressed this way. I have to look good because this is as deep as I go right here. This is my roots right here. I knew that I would be on Skype, and if my old pastor up in Milwaukee or Mukwonago saw that, if he saw me with a goatee and not a suit on, he would spread all sorts of rumors.

Regardless, we grew up in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, and my mom and dad started going to this church. It was a great deal, but by the time I was four years old, everybody was getting saved, and they believed heavily on infant salvation. Catholics believe in infant baptism. They believe in infant salvation. Let me tell you something, at four years old, it is hard. Bob says that. I know it happens, but it is hard. It is a hard thing to understand if someone gets saved that young. But I went because all my friends were going up, and I went up forward, and I remember the guy, Joe Raines. He took me into the back room, sat me down, and he started praying. I remember as clear as today, he started praying, and I am looking at him. I am looking at the bookshelf because our pastor knew Greek and Hebrew thoroughly. So I looked at everything that I was going to have to learn to be a profitable preacher someday and looked at all that. I thought, “He is praying for my soul.” I think I was picking my nose. I have no idea what I was doing. When I got done, everybody congratulated me for getting saved, and the world went on.

Well, I grew up. At 11 years old, we moved down here to Missouri, and I fell in with a crowd of kids at a Christian school, Christian church. I went to Christian school my whole life, by the way. I fell in with a group of kids, and life was just merry. I went to another church that was very fundamental in its practices. It was not as bad as the church I came from. Our church, boy oh boy. I remember one time I went to a skating party when my mom and dad came down here to scope out Kansas City, and we were having a missions conference. My sister and I got our butch chewed from that pastor for going to a skating party, and you remember that. Well, maybe you know it, you were kind of young, but because kids were holding hands at that skating party, and how dare you miss missionaries? I must have been 9 or 10 years old. How dare you miss missionaries? It was not even a missionary, it was a missionary dinner. Regardless, that is the depth of it, I guess.

So regardless, we moved down here when I was 11 years old, fell into just normal kids, and like Bob was talking about, when you get into that situation, it is just rebellion right away. Rebellion,

rebellion because you see the fakeness in it. You see how goofy it is and just how shallow it is. So I fell in with these kids, and the world grabbed me right away because the devil knew I was not saved. I just did not know it. So all these years, from about 11 to about 15, I started really struggling with life, and the devil got a hold of me big time. Even in a Christian school, I would go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night. Most of the time, we would have something in the afternoon on Sundays. We would go to Wednesday night church service, whatever it was. Thursday night was usually like a visitation day. Fridays, I think we got paroled on Fridays. Saturdays was usually a workday. Do not forget workdays. Workdays are important. You have to work on Saturday. And then Sunday, obviously, we are back to church.

By the time I was 14, 15 years old, I was sick of it. I was absolutely sick of it. I remember my evil day. I remember I was in a Pizza Hut, and there was a cigarette laying there. I started smoking cigarettes right there. My buddies dared me to do it. I did it. Not too shortly after that, we started drinking. At 15 years old, I remember I got hammered drunk. I am not saying this because I am bragging about it. This is just where I was. I was totally unprofitable. From that point on, I was it. By the time I was 18 years old, I was totally done with church, totally done with everybody at church. I was nice to them. I had friends still that I knew and everything. But totally done with the church concept, totally done with everything. So by the time I was 18 until the time I was about 30, I was totally gone. Gambling, drinking, just totally gone. Everything that the world wanted me to do, I was there for them. Everything God wanted me to be there, church, my family, everything else, I was a jerk.

But in the back of my mind, I kept telling myself, “You got saved at four years old. Do not worry about it. This is just how people live. This is just how it is. You are just dealing with some sin issues right now. You are saved. You go to Heaven. No problem.” Well, I had kids. I had my first kid. I did terrible things with him. I thought it used to be funny to give him a little sip of my beer to see his face go crazy. Just terrible, stupid stuff like that. I was just a total jerk. I wish I could cuss behind the public because I would call myself a lot worse name. But it was terrible.

The good thing is I saw that little boy, and I thought to myself, “There is no way at that age that he could understand what Christ did for you on the cross. There is no way you understood that, Joe.” The Holy Spirit started working at me. Totally unprofitable. Now I was profitable for the world, but I was absolutely unprofitable for anything holy, righteous, good, and godly. Totally gone. Nothing good in me.

My dad started coming to church here. He was begging me, “Come to church, come to church, come to church.” I was like, “No, Dad, forget it. I am done with it. I want nothing to do with it. There are the same crazy people,” and some of you are that I dealt with all that time. I will not name names, but I am looking at you right now. Regardless, I remember Dad gave me a CD on Bob preaching about aliens. I thought, “Seriously, Dad, we grew up in this. I am done with it. I am done with it. Seriously?” Well, I listened to it, and I started getting convicted.

I remember Memorial Day. I was on the SWAT team at that time. This is the real wake-up call I got. We got called out on a subject that was shooting at the police, and obviously I was there to clean that up. I had to go take care of that, being on that team and on that unit. After about 24

hours of a standoff, they sent me and seven other guys in there to get him because he was not coming out. I will spare you the details. It did not end up good. But that day, that day was the day. That day was the day. I saw someone go to hell that day, and it really started bothering me. It really started bothering me. Now I am not scared to do my job. I am not afraid to do it, but that was the day.

I remember from that point on, the Holy Spirit grabbed a hold of me and said, “You are not being profitable.” He threw me under the bus every chance he got. I remember about two weeks later, they sent me to a call. I forget what call it was. I was on patrol, armed disturbance, double toned it, calling Joe Christiansen to go handle it. Nobody else was around, and there was nobody else to send. I thought, “My soul was totally unsettled. There is nothing, I am in trouble. If I go to this disturbance, I am in trouble if something happens.” I remember getting so sick to my stomach, 39th and Phelps, I will tell you the spot, there is Fire Station Number Two right there. I got so sick, I lost it. I was nervous. Mainly because I like throwing up at fire stations because it makes me feel good. Sorry, I forgot I have two firefighters in the room; they are going to really attack me. But the Holy Spirit was working on me nonetheless. I knew right there and then that this was no good.

I came to church, and I heard two or three messages Bob was preaching. I remember getting under such conviction right there and then. I knew, I have been in church my whole life. I knew right away before he was going to happen, I knew he was going to give an invitation. I raised my hand before he even said anything. I wanted to get it settled, and we did. I am very thankful for that. I say that because in a message like this about profitability, I tell you what, I have not been a Christian, acting Christian like I should be my whole life, but I have been around Christianity. I have been around since I was three years old. I have seen the Christian school movement. I have seen fundamentalism. I have seen, and do not get me wrong, I have seen some great people in that timeframe. I remember some great men. I remember my old pastor, Ron Roberts. Boy, he would be up here, and he would be preaching. You think Bob is bad. This guy would have been up on the pulpit jumping around, grabbing his chandeliers, flying around. If you were sleeping, he would come up to you and say, “Wake up! God has something for you! Come on!” He would get on. It was, you could not do it. I tell you what, if there was a baby crying in the background, he would say, “Ma’am, get that baby to the nursery! That important work from God right here.” You remember it. But, neither good nor bad, I have seen it all. I have seen it.

Now, I have not been a pastor like Bob has. I am glad of that. I have not been a preacher for that long, but I have seen it. I have been there. So, I do know a couple of things about being profitable as far as the examples that I have had in my life. Those guys, a lot of those guys, have been very profitable for me.

II. Three Examples of Profitable Christians

When we read the book of Philemon, you see three different people in this book. This is what I want to concentrate on today. I do not know how long I am going to keep you here, but I know we have a lot going on. I know we have a lot going, but I thought this was a good message, and it was fitting from where we are at today. A lot of this stuff that I am going to talk about, Bob has

been preaching about it for two weeks. He talked about some stuff last week. I thought, “Oh, I can say that. Now, I have got to say it again. Everybody is going to get bored and fall asleep. I am going to have to go out there and wake them up and scream at them.”

There are three people in here that I want to discuss because I think it is good for us no matter where we are at in life and where we are at, especially in the ministry with everything that we have got going on right now with Restart and the City Union Mission and just everybody that is involved in people’s lives. It is about being profitable. When you talk about being profitable, all it is is being good for something. That is being profitable, being good for something. God is not always going to ask you to do every detail. He is not always going to ask you to do everything and be the man and be the leader in everything, but being profitable, being good for something, being the right man at the right place at the right time, as Bob always puts it. That is what we are going to study today.

There are three people in here, and they are not specific people, but God always does this for you. He gives you a point and a theme, especially in a book like this. He is going to give you examples and examples to figure out how to be profitable. When you do this, when you look through here, we find three different people that that is what I want to give you. I did write down some verses. I am not going to kill you with verses today. I am just going to be honest. The Bible says to confess your sins to one another. I am as shallow as they come. When we get into this, when it comes to the Bible, I wish I had a memory for stuff like that. Bible verses do not roll off the tip of my tongue. I wish they did, but when we get into it, I will tell you how I remember things. But God does give us some samples. Some of the verses that we can use here for that, if you want to study on your own, I will give them to you.

- 1 Thessalonians 3:9
- 2 Peter 2:6
- 1 Corinthians 10:11
- 1 Thessalonians 1:7
- 1 Peter 5:3

It just shows that this is what we are. We are going to study three fellows here in this passage today. I will get you out of here and go on your way today. I know there is a lot going on, so I want to keep it as short as I can, but still give you something hopefully that you can use.

III. Being a Fellow Soldier

The first one is found in Philemon 1:2. It says, “And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house.” The first one I want to talk about is being a fellow soldier, being a soldier for Christ. Now I am going to give you my disclaimer. I am not a soldier. Never have been. Probably never will be unless World War III hits, and we see a lot of... I am almost 40 years old now, and I do not think I am going to be good for much as far as coming down to the Army and fighting people. So I am going to tell you right now, if I say something that you that are in the military do not like, I would tell you, stand up and correct me right here and right now, because I am talking from studies. I am talking from things that I read. I am

talking from examples. So if I say something out of line, I expect you to shoot me down just like a drill instructor. All right, Bill? You got me? Get up there and say something.

Now soldiers are talked about a lot in the Bible. They are described all the way down to what they wear. They are the most described, probably, profession in the Bible as far as I am concerned. There is a lot on them.

2 Timothy 2:3-4

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

It says, “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life.” That should just be the verse right there. It is just highlighted right there. But that he may please him who had chosen him to be a soldier. The first part, we are just going to study these guys, these occupations, lives out to prove and show you how to be profitable. Like I said, it is not a hard message. It is just what God gave me to show me how to be profitable.

➤ Enduring Hardness and Being Courageous

The first thing is enduring hardness and being courageous. As a soldier, like I said, I have never been a soldier, but as a soldier, there are three things at root level that a soldier does. He obeys orders. He suffers. He gets wounded and dies, or dies. That is the job of a soldier. Maybe not so much anymore. I know that happens a lot, and I do not know if Shane is here today, but it is different nowadays than it was back in the wars past, Civil War. You talk about the Revolutionary War. You talk about World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam. There were major, major casualties in one day. The soldiers back then, in my opinion, and not taking anything away from the soldiers now, my goodness, you are unbelievable. But it was just a different mindset on battle tactics. People just got slaughtered by the thousands in one day. It was just Confederate Army against the Union Army standing up right on top of each other. Bam, shooting at each other. Just point blank, these people gave their lives for a cause that I do not know. Unless I was put to the test, I do not think I could do it.

I remember my granddad, really both of my granddads, they were unbelievable soldiers. One of my granddads was in the Battle of Pearl Harbor. He was on the USS West Virginia when it sank. Took a piece of kamikaze plane propeller in his leg, cut the back of his calf. He had that scar forever. My other granddad, who I am going to talk about just briefly here, but he gave me this book when he passed away this year. It outlined basically everything the 2nd Marine Division did. It is awesome. Just looking through the pictures, it is awesome. But these guys were unbelievable, courageous. I remember my granddad telling me stories. There is no way I could do these things. I know some of you here that have fought in some of those major battles. I cannot even fathom it. I am part of the generation that I just cannot fathom what you went through. But looking through this and finding this kind of stuff out, it is pretty neat. But these are courageous guys.

I am going to read you a little bit out of this book that my granddad gave me. This is basically the start of the 2nd Marine Division. Just listen to it. Now, it has some cuss words in it, and I am going to bleep those out. I am going to censor them because I have to. I know you do not want me to. I will tell you what the words rhyme with if you want me to. But regardless, it says, "The historic 6th was an ideal father to the new regiment. It not only provided them with a corps of seasoned troopers on active duty since 1937, but it brought the traditions of Chateau-Thierry and Belleau Wood," two battles in World War I. "At Chateau-Thierry in World War I, the French lines were collapsing under savage German attacks when the 6th and 5th Marines organized in a brigade arrived on the front. A frightened French soldier." Go figure. If you are French, I am sorry. I had to throw that in. You know why you always buy French guns, Steve? You know why you always buy French guns? Because they have only been dropped once and they are not used. Sorry. Regardless, if you are French, I forgive you. I know why you wear white t-shirts all the time too, because that way you have got something to rip off and surrender real quickly. Regardless, okay.

"A frightened French soldier, his eyes hollowed by fatigue and terror, appealed to the young Marine captain to join the retreat. The captain's answer still rings in the records and memories and the character of the 6th and the 2nd Marine Division." Some of you wear this shirt. You got him from World War I. It says, "Retreat, hell!" He said, "We just got here." That is courage, man. I could not do it. I know. I am totally, I lack courage in every way, shape, or form.

"Less than a week later, the Marines fought for insecure Belleau Wood. It was in this battle of unquestionable ferocity, the American forces drove forward into mass machine guns. In a frightful 24 hours, the Marines saw 31 officers killed and 1,056 men died in that battle in one day. 24 hours." Does anybody know what we are up to right now in the Iraq War? How many casualties? Like 1,600 maybe, I think? Is that right? Is that something? 4,500? Okay. Well, still, 24 hours, a quarter of those people that we lost in the entire 10-year war over there were killed or wounded. Once again, not taking anything back. I am just making the point that it is just a different kind of battle here.

"In the midst of this battle, the American attack faltered. For an eternal moment, the issue was in doubt that they were all nervous about what happened. Suddenly through an awful noise of battle, a cry came out of an immortal sergeant of the 6th Marines." Boy, he says he plunged forward at the head of his squad. He says, "Come on, you [expletive]! Do you want to live forever?" You know what? You just do not hear that courage anymore. I know it happens. I know guys do it, but it is just an unbelievable thing and a courage. Another guy said, I think it was Captain Fox said one time, "You cannot get medals for hiding in the trenches. Follow me." That is the whole theory behind this book. His name followed me. These guys knew what they were doing, and they fought.

For me spiritually, I cannot even talk. Sometimes I cannot even get up in front of a group of two or three people at work and have enough courage to tell them, "Hey, you know what? You are a Christian. You tell me you are a Christian. You say, 'Hey, you are doing good. You go to church every Sunday morning,' and you are talking like this and you are acting like this and you are being like this." Sometimes I do not even have enough courage to say, "Hey, straighten up."

When I do, “Do not judge me. Do not judge me. Do not judge me.” It is ridiculous. But I do not have the courage often to do that kind of stuff. I guarantee you if the day came for me to spiritually be what these guys were on the battlefield, I do not know if I would have the courage to do it. I am an absolute coward. I am an absolute coward. But you want to be profitable for Christ? Just be courageous one time in front of somebody that does not want you to be courageous. You will see how quickly it gets bad.

I do not know. There are a lot of things. I guess, before I got saved, I got saved when I was 30 years old. So I lived the life of sin for quite a while. People knew me from the time I was 21 until the time I was 30. All of a sudden, I was 30 years old, and I am not going out and doing the things that I was doing before. Where once I would have no problem going to the bar and spending all night and doing whatever I want to do or go out and go gambling. Gambling was my big thing. What a waste. There is so much time and so much energy and so much... I thought I was going to be profitable. Seriously, this is stupid. I thought I was going to be on World Series of Poker at one point in time. Is that... It is stupid. That was my mindset. That is what I... God put me on this earth, raised me up in a Christian home so that I could be on World Series of Poker. Like I said, I am shallow. I am shallow.

But just one time, just say, “You know what, no guys, I am not going to the bar with you tonight. I am not going to the casino with you. I am not going to the clubs that I should not be going to with you tonight. I am just not going to do it.” “Oh, why?” “Well, because I am a Christian. I got saved. I want to be an example for you. I want to be a light in this dark world.” People do not care. You know what they do? “Come on, let us go.” They leave me, come back. I hear it from other people. “Hey, Bible Thumper.” “Hey, Christian boy.” It is not easy to be courageous all the time. It really is not. But you want to be profitable? Just stick up for Christ. Be courageous like these guys here. Hit those battle lines with everything you have got, man. Just be absolutely courageous for them.

➤ Being Observant

The next point that I want you to see on this is being observant. For us, a soldier has to see and be observant of the enemy. A Christian, to be profitable, has to do the same thing. You have got to be able to see the enemy coming. Just like a good soldier sees that, us as Christians, we have got to be observant just as much. The example here is obviously the thing that we get pounded in our heads time and time again. Look ahead, look around, look behind. Look, look, look, be observant. If you do not see the enemy coming, you are in trouble.

Basically how we deal with this and how we should deal with this, once again, if you are paying attention, Bible principles, biblical principles. Get your biblical principles ready. Have them ready. Like I said before, I do not have a mind to remember those Bible verses. It is an excuse. Once again, it is an excuse. I am lazy. I am telling you that right now. Biblical principles get me through though. I remember the first time, one of the first times I went and met with Bob, he was trying to explain his biblical principle thing to me. Once again, I am still thinking, “I could be on World Series of Poker right now.” He is making some money. So he is trying to explain biblical principles to me, and it is just not sinking in. It took me a good year, year and a half to even

understand what in the world he is talking about with biblical principles. So he finally says, “You know what? Go over to Proverbs 18:13.”

Proverbs 18:13

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

I do not have that verse memorized. But there is a biblical principle there. The biblical principle is, “Hey, moron, there are two sides to every story.” If you think you have got the answer after hearing one person’s side of it, you are a fool. Now I remember that. I remember that every time someone says something to me or someone says, “Hey, I have got this problem.” There are always two sides to the story. Unless you are fighting with my wife, and then it is just one side of the story. And then I am a fool for him saying that. Why did I even say that? But no, there are two sides to every story. I do not have that verse memorized. You ask me afterwards, I am going to have to look down on this and say it, but I know the principle.

Here is the example. You cannot just hang yourself as a good soldier. A good soldier just does not have one weapon going to battle and say, “Kapow, gotcha.” He does not do that. A good soldier has multiple. The example I have for that is when I am working as a police officer and I have to go into a basement of a house or somewhere dark, even if it is daylight, and Scott knows this. You have to have your proper tools. Just like spiritually as a Christian, you have to have your proper tools. I remember one time I went into a basement looking for some guy. Pitch black. “Oh, no. Hey, dude, come here. It is daylight. I forgot my flashlight.” I could not see nothing in there.

The same thing is true of biblical principles. You go into a dark world and you do not have your biblical principles down. You are going to be like, “Hold on, I know someone. Hey, Bob, I am in trouble. I am in a dark basement all by myself. Someone is attacking me. I cannot see him. I can hear him. I need your help. Hold on. I am putting you on speakerphone. Light it up.” You cannot do it. You have to have it yourself. My principle for flashlights now is one is none and two is one. If you do not have more than one flashlight, you are in trouble. For me, it is not about the bad guys getting me. I do not care about that. I would rather be shot. I am not really afraid of zombies. My wife knows that. I could care less. I used to have a little patch on my thing. It said zombie hunter. That is true because I hate zombies. I hate sharks too. So I stay out of the water. In my job, I have got to go into dark basements, places where Freddy Krueger hangs out, things like that. I could care less about the bad guys, but zombies scare me to death. So I learned you have to have a flashlight.

The same thing is true as a Christian. If you do not have your biblical principles down, you are hunting zombies in a basement without a flashlight. You are not profitable. You are good for nothing. You are good for absolutely nothing. If you want to be a profitable Christian, just good for something. Just good for something. Here is what you need to see. You need to see your enemy. You need to see the offensive attacks of your enemy. You need to see his defense. You need to see his weaknesses. But you are not going to see any of that if you are not observant. If you are not looking ahead, looking behind, and looking around, you are not going to see any of these things.

The problem is for me, and I know the problem is for you because I have these same issues, and I know if I have them, you have them. We see the enemy coming, and we do not care. We just think, "Ah, I can get away from that one. I can get away from that sin. I can get away from that. I do not need to be totally prepared. I do not need to have an example of this or that. I do not need to have a biblical principle down. I can run out of this dark basement before that zombie eats me." It is not going to happen. The problem for you and the problem for me is we are not observant at all about this. Once again, as a good soldier, you want a good example of that? You want to learn the primo example of being observant? Just study Pearl Harbor for two seconds. They saw the enemy coming. They knew they were coming. They just thought it was something else. They just decided to turn the other way and say, "Hey, this is nothing. This is not going to harm us." It is just formation flyovers or whatever they thought it was, and all of a sudden everybody is dying. You have got to be observant. Be observant of that enemy.

➤ Being Prepared

The third part of this as a fellow soldier is being prepared. You have served in the military. What did they prepare you for? What is the base thing as a soldier, as a foot soldier, they prepared? What is the base thing? Be ready for that enemy. There you go. Be ready, Bill, be ready for what? To tickle the enemy? Kill them. Kill them. Kill them all. Let God sort them out, right? You have got to be prepared. Just like you have got to be prepared, and I know somebody is going to play this tape now, and they are going to think I am a homeland terrorist, but I am not talking about that. I am talking about spiritually. We have to... We are all going to die, just you first. That is the mentality. That is being prepared. It is. It is being prepared. You have got to be prepared to kill the enemy.

What do they do in boot camp to prepare you to kill that enemy? They teach you to hate the enemy, do they not? Did anybody say anything good about the Vietnamese people in boot camp when you went to Vietnam, Gary? Nothing. I guarantee they did not say anything good about it. The reason I know that is because I have got a picture right here. This picture was in this book when I got it from my granddad. It is a picture of the Battle of Tarawa. I wish I had something I could throw... No, I am sorry. Battle of Tarawa. My granddad there was in the Battle of Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Guadalcanal. He fought in all five of those battles over about two and a half years. This picture here is what they would show them preparing them to kill the enemy like a good soldier. I know you cannot see that, but there are probably a thousand, two thousand Japanese corpses on that beachhead. On the back of it, you have got to have the mindset, right? This is a Marine. This is a tough, hardened Marine. I guarantee it went both ways. I guarantee the Japanese had pictures like this too, but it says, "A beach at Tarawa and a few good Japs. Dead ones." That is what it says. That is what it says. That was a mindset. This man was prepared. He was prepared for the enemy. He was prepared to kill the enemy.

Just like we as Christians, we have got to be prepared to kill the enemy when we see him spiritually, the devil and his crowd. I think I just said devil. Did I really? Did I say devil? I am getting third. Devil. I went Bobby Boucher there, straight Bobby Boucher. We as Christians have to be prepared. We have to be prepared to kill the enemy spiritually. You want to be, here is what we do though. This is what I do. I see the enemy coming, and I say, "Pow." There is the sin of

whatever I have. There is the sin of drinking. “Pow.” There is the sin of, just right between the eye, drop them like a bad habit. “Pow.” There is the sin of, just right between the eye, drop them like a bad habit. “Pow.” There is the sin of whatever, gambling. “Pow.” There is the sin of pornography. “Pow.” There is the sin of greed or whatever it may be. But there is always one that you see that you are just not prepared to kill yet. It always comes forward to you, and you are like, “Pow, I got that one. Got that one.” You are fighting in the foxhole. “Pow, I got that one. Did not see that one yet. He is still coming. Oh wait. Shoot him in the big toe. Just stop him for a second.” That is what we do. That is what I do. The sins that I love to keep, the sins that I just want to just sometimes just play around with, I just boom, shoot it in the big toe and say, “I can handle that one later because he is not that good. He is not that prepared.”

You want to be profitable as a Christian? Your sins, just like a soldier, you ought to shoot them all right between the eyes. Just put them down like a bad habit because I guarantee, like Bob says all the time, you give the devil an inch, he is going to become the ruler. That is just how it is. But that is, as a soldier, we do not prepare ourselves like that. You know how you prepare yourself? You use your tools and you use your weapon that God gave you. Once again, Bible principles. You have got to get those down. You want to be profitable? You have got to get it down.

You know what a good soldier does? A good soldier keeps ranks. This is to be prepared. He can fire expert with more than one weapon. If I am lying, guys that are in the military, let me know. He knows how to clean and fire enemy weapons. He knows battle tactics according to the situation terrain. He can cross natural obstacles while carrying weight. He can fire a weapon using either hand. He can identify insignia, planes, trains, ships, troops, etc. He can withstand military bombardment, bombing, and battle fatigue.

I did not talk about my Uncle Mike at all, but my Uncle Mike is a hardened, he fought in Vietnam, fought a couple of years in Vietnam. He was one of the first of the 44th in the Army. Those guys saw a lot of action. He is a Purple Heart winner, and he is an absolute hero in my mind. My Uncle Mike was so prepared when he was in Vietnam. He said when he was in the jungle, he could hear gunfire coming at him, and he would know exactly what round it was. He said he could hear mortars coming over the hill, and he would not even get nervous because he would know they would be so far away. He said you could judge that stuff. You knew right away. He said, “I was prepared. I knew what to do.” He said, “The ones I did not like the most were the missiles.” He said the missiles crackled like this. You did not know when they were going to explode. So he said you just stood there, and like he said, “Someone is going to die, just you first.” That is how that is the mentality it was.

But you know why we need to be prepared?

Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

We have got to be prepared. You want to be profitable? Be prepared.

IV. Being a Fellow Prisoner

I am going long. We have two more. Fellow prisoner. In Philemon 1:23, it says, “But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus.” The second example it gives us here is a prisoner looking at that. I know a little bit about this. This one touches me close. But being a fellow prisoner, you can learn a lot from a prisoner. You can learn a lot how to be profitable from a prisoner.

➤ Separation

Separation, that is the first thing I think of as a prisoner being separated. As a Christian, we ought to be separated from this world, immediately separated from this world. When we study the seven things that change about you the day you got saved, every one of those things instantly, whether you know it or not, separates you from this world. Every one of them. You now have a new nature. You now have the ability to love God. That separates you from this world. Your citizenship changed, your conversation changed, you are now seated in heavenly places. You have the ability to set your affections on things above. You are now an ambassador for Christ. If these things do not automatically separate you from this world, then you might check your salvation pulse there because I do not know what else would. This is the doctrine of sanctification setting you apart.

2 Corinthians 6:14

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Bottom line, you know what the problem is? I think there are thousands of examples for this. There are thousands of, almost everybody in the Bible is an example of this in some way, shape, or form. But God can use you, and I am not going to get into this very much because like the last two weeks, Bob has been talking about this nonstop about suffering for Christ and about doing those things that God wants you to do. But I just want to make this point with this one: a saved man can be joined to this world just as much as a lost man can. You can be unprofitable. This world can get you back just like that. Just because you are saved does not mean that you are just totally oblivious and totally impenetrable to the forces of the devil and his crowd. It is going to happen. It happens to me. That is why I am saying I know it happens to you. It has to. A saved man will not be profitable when he is living in this world. The example here would be Abraham. Look how long he was unprofitable. The Bible took out what, 18, 19 years of his life. It did not even say anything about him when he was in fellowship with God. I guarantee there was not much to talk about. That is why God just kind of skipped over it between the chapter passages there. The book of Proverbs is a whole book of one man teaching his son how to be profitable. Giving him advice. Telling him, “Hey, do this, my son, my son, my son, my son.” Be profitable. Do what you should be doing. Separated from this world. Just like a prisoner, you are separated from this world.

➤ Being Broken, Persecuted, and Suffering

The second part of this is being broken, persecuted, and suffering. That is one thing we can learn on how to be profitable from a prisoner, a fellow prisoner. Being broken, persecuted, and suffering. We have been talking in 2 Corinthians, if you have been paying attention, 2 Corinthians we have been talking all along about the sufferings, the sufferings, the sufferings, the sufferings. I am going to urge you, like Bob said, I am not going to ask you who does this, but one thing that I am good about, I have told you, I am totally un-courageous. I have hardly any courage in me at all when it comes to doing what I should do and knowing what I should do. But one thing I do, do. I said it. One thing I do is I read the books that Bob tells us to read. I would urge you to read those too.

In these books, I have learned life lessons. Some of these books that I have read, Fox's Book of Martyrs, you would not even believe the suffering and the persecution that these people go through. Bob does not even tell you the half of it. He brought up that book, Tortured for Christ, by Richard Wurmbrand. Last week when he told you about that, I brought that book in case you look for it on the internet and you want to see what it looks like. Tortured for Christ, it is like 99 pages. I like to read it maybe once a year if I can. It is unbelievable what this man went through. He suffered for Christ like none other. I guarantee you if I had to suffer for Christ like that, and if you had to suffer for Christ like that, I guarantee there would probably be about 10 or 15 people in church, and I cannot say for sure I would be one of them. I have never been put to the test. I do not know. You have never been put to the test. You do not know. Not like these guys have. You say, "Oh, I suffer for Christ. I do these things. I do that." Not even close. This guy in Tortured for Christ got thrown in the lowest parts of the dungeon for years. His wife was taken from him. Never heard from her again. What would you do? What would you do? I do not know what I would do. I would go crazy. You say, "Well, being put in the lower parts of the dungeon, that does not sound like much, really." When you have 50 people in a 20 by 20 cell, they have got to go to the bathroom somewhere. The rats have got to crawl somewhere, and that is where he stayed. Just because he disagreed with doctrine of the time. Just because he took a stand. He suffered. He suffered.

I want to read for you out of Fox's Book of Martyrs because this story kills me. It kills me. It is the last story in Fox's Book of Martyrs. This is suffering. This is suffering. If anybody thinks they have suffered for Christ because they could not find the right gift for their kid this year, for Christmas, I am sorry. You do not even know what suffering is. Trust me because I do not know what suffering is. I say that to myself because I am not talking down to you. I am terrible.

This is a story about John Fetty. I gave this to my prayer group the other day. So you can sleep for a little while if you want to. It says, "After John Fetty had laid in the prison by the space of 15 days, hanging from the stocks, sometimes by one leg and one arm, sometimes by the other and otherwise by both, it happened that one of his children, a boy about the age of eight or nine years old," you know my boy Riley? That is him. "Came to the bishop's house to see if he could get leave to speak with his father. At his coming thither, one of the bishop's chaplains met with him and asked him what he lacked and what he would have. The child answered that he came to see his father. The chaplain asked again, 'Who is your father?' The boy said, and pointing towards Lollard's Tower." If you do not think this is a true story, Google that. "Showed him that

his father was in prison. The priest says, 'Why? Thy father is a heretic.' The child being bold and quick in the spirit and also godly brought up and instructed of his father in the knowledge of God answered and said, 'My father is no heretic, but you are a heretic. You have Balaam's mark.'" Sounds like something Riley probably would say. "And with that, the priest took the child by the hand and carried him into the bishop's house." You know, probably to take care of him because his father is in jail now. "And they amongst them did they shamefully and without all pity so whipped and scourged, being naked, this tender child that he was all in a gore blood." They beat him, beat him until he was dripping blood off of his heels because he told a priest that he was the heretic and his father was innocent. "And they carried the child in his shirt unto his father with blood running down by his heels. At his coming unto the father, the child fell down upon his knees and begged him blessing. The poor man then, beholding his child and seeing him so cruelly arrayed, cried out for sorrow and said, 'Alas, Will, who has done this to thee?' The boy answered that he was seeking how to come see his father." All he wanted to do is see his dad. That is all he did. "And a priest with Balaam's mark told him to go to the bishop's house and there he was so handled. Clooney therewith violently plucked the child away from his father's hand." That sounds rational to you, does it not? "And carried him back into the bishop's house where they kept him for three days." If I know anything, it probably was for more beating and not just physical beating if I know that, but use your imagination there. "Bonner, thinking of himself of the danger with the child was with their whipping and what peril might ensue thereupon, thought better to discharge the said Fetty. So they are smart. Willing him to go home and carry his child with him, which he did so and that with a heavy part to see his poor boy in such extreme pain and grief. Both in 14 days after the child died." That is suffering. That is suffering.

I tell you what, that is nothing. You read that book, you hear people that they would put in, they would heat up a piece of metal, light it up as hot as they could get it, lay them on there, take another piece of hot metal and pour it, put it to them like a grilled cheese sandwich. These people when they pull it off, their face would be sticking to the metal, their arms would be sticking to the metal. They would lose limbs, and they would get out. That did not kill them. That is suffering. That did not kill them. They would get in jail so they can get infection, and the slow infection could get them. The whole time they would sing praises to Jesus. That is suffering. That is suffering. I would urge you to read those books. When Bob says that, he is just not talking just to hear himself talk. There are absolute lessons to learn there being a prisoner, being broken, being persecuted, and suffering for Christ. In the last two weeks, if you have not been paying attention, I suggest you pay attention. You want to be profitable? Just endure a little bit of suffering for Christ. Just stand up and say, "Hey, you know what, guys?" Next time someone is doing something you know is not right, especially if he is a Christian. My God, a Christian, someone that says they love the Lord and they are not doing right, tell them. I have learned that lesson. I promise you I will not keep my mouth shut the next time that happens. You have got to tell them. Stand up for Christ. I do not care how much suffering you get, how much persecution you get. Tell them.

➤ Being Outcasted and Rejected by Society

The last part of that is being outcasted and rejected by society. That is something you can learn on how to be profitable. The problem is the world looks at Christians in the same way they look at prisoners. Good for nothing, but they are wrong. They are wrong. The problem is I am a Christian, and I am good for the things of God. The world wants me to be profitable for the things of this world, but they look at you differently. They treat you differently. They act like you have committed the worst crime of your life, and they segregate you and treat you terribly. You want to be profitable? Mess up at work one time as a Christian. Mess up one time as a Christian at work, and you will hear about it. I did. I was mad. I lost my temper. Some guys said something, and I said something that I regretted. The second I said it, the whole room of 25 guys, "Oh, Christian, you are a Christian?" They look at you differently. Whether you like it or not, they look at you differently. They expect different things out of you.

V. Being a Fellow Laborer

The last person that you can look at and study how to be profitable is found in Philemon 1:24-25, and that is being a fellow laborer. Once again, I do not consider what I do for a living a physical laborer job. I do not. Some of you work very hard for what you do in whatever field you are in, construction or factory work and things like that. It is tough work. But I have learned through three different things on how to be a laborer.

As an employer, Bob, you are an employer. You are somebody that hires and fires people or some people in here that do that. What do you look for in a fellow laborer? What do you look for in a laborer? Even in the world standard, you look for three things that I have found, and that is being consistent, being dedicated, and being trustworthy.

➤ Consistency, Dedication, and Trustworthiness

The other thing is none of those words are found in the Bible. Dedicated is, but it is a different kind of dedicated. Dedicated is I give my life to God. I do something for God. I do a work for God. That is being dedicated. We say, "Oh, you are dedicated for a cause." Now that is because the world wants you to be dedicated for that cause. It has nothing to do with what the Bible says dedication is. Consistent and trustworthy, not even mentioned in the Bible, but you can find those things when you study out how to be profitable. When you study this book, you learn and you can see that, and it just takes common sense on how to figure it out.

I am not, just like you are not most likely, as profitable as you can sometimes. Like I said before, it is not always being in charge of everything. It is not always being the top dog in everything. It is not always trying to show up or do better than the next guy. It is not always trying to... God is just being there. It is just doing something. It is just doing something. I know we all screw up, and we cannot all do it all the time perfectly right 100% of the time. It is just doing something, and God will use you.

VI. Conclusion

In the conclusion of this, as a fellow soldier, I learned when I want to be profitable as a fellow soldier that I get strength for God. As a fellow prisoner, you can remember to suffer for God, and as a fellow laborer, to be a steward for God. But be something for God. Your life is a waste. Your life is a waste if you are not doing something for God. You can always do more, but you do not always have to be the best. You do not always have to be the lead man. You do not always have to be just... The example there, the doctrine is the church body. Everything that we do as a church, we are profitable for Christ together. It does not have to be me. It does not have to be you. It does not have to be him. We all get the glory and the credit and the honor out of it in God's eyes when we do it as a church. This Restart mission is a perfect example of that. So, you want to be profitable? Just get up and do something for God. Just be there. Be ready when God calls you. Be ready for when God says, "Hey, I want you to do this today." That is all I have got.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You for this time that we can...