

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

Philemon

Before we fully get into this letter, do some introductions,

This is a phenomenal little letter filled with very profound truth. And in such a short letter, Paul gives us a whole bunch of names. And that's what we want to talk about this morning. *It is truly a list of The Good The Bad and The Ugly.*

Let's get a quick outline/background of this book...

First, this letter was written to Roman citizens.

These were not Jewish Xians, these were like us. Europeans, Italians, Spanish...

Not a lot of Doctrine in this book. Philemon and these others were not steeped in Jewish history and religion.

Did not have to extricate themselves from the LAW...

They were more like the Roman Centurion and others.

But that makes them more like us...struggling with culture, mindsets, societal pressures

Second, HISTORY.

Philemon was a wealthy Roman citizen, who had a church in his home in Colossae.

He owned slaves, one of which was Onesimus...stole some money and took off for Rome.

Fortunately for him you can run from God, but you can't hide...to Rome, met Paul *and got saved*.

Paul tells Onesimus to return to Philemon.

Then he tells Philemon to accept Onesimus *not as a slave but as a brother*, and to let him go so he could return to Rome and help Paul.

We are going to get into a lot of history and culture in this book, and find out how God wants us to cut across culture and habits and mindsets and allow the Holy Spirit to help us do his work in us.

Let's look at this crew from Philemon. *Since this Communion, let's find out who is at this table...!!!*

Its the good, the bad and the ugly. All the people, with all their problems, flaws, wrong thinking; spiritual short-sightedness, etc.

Paul: Got that, after all, he's the Apostle! Not so fast! We can talk for hours about his good points...

He was arrogant 2 Cor 12.7-10 (lest I should be exalted 2x);

He, too struggled with his flesh, (Rom 7)

He is at this table!

Timothy: Timid Timmy! Stir up the gift! Confront those people! YOU are the pastor!!!

He is at this table!

Aristarchus

- Ac 19.29 Demetrius, Ephesus, so many saved...So they took Aristarchus and Gaius into custody, later released...must have been quite the preachers!
- Find him again on a prison boat to Rome with Paul (Ac 27)
- And again in Col 4.10, a fellow prisoner...

He is at this table!

Epaphras and Luke? The good guys!

- Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers (Col 4.12)
- Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,(Col 1.7)
- Epaphras, my fellow prisoner (Phm 1.23)

He is at this table!

(Easy to understand! Spiritual guys! Apostles--wrote the NT--walked w/ Jesus)

A bit more interesting...with John Mark...

Mark (Ac 13.13; Ac 15.36-41; Col 4.10; 2 Tim 4.11)

"Well, I don't like the way Paul treated me...start my OWN ministry!" Write a tell-all book; go on TBN and tell everybody...Youtube channel...

He STAYED at this table!

Archippus...Col 4.17

And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

But the context is interesting: Col 4.16...

Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans,
and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea...*and tell Archippus...*

Uh Oh. At this point, Arch. is a fellow soldier. Was Archippus beginning to slide into the Laodicea of Revelation?

Colossae and Laodicea were about 10 miles apart.

Arch was staying with wealthy Phm and others

NOTHING WRONG

Meeting in the house of a wealthy Roman

" "

Eating fine meals, best Italian food

" "

Being waited on by servants

" "

But at some point, did he start to slide into the luxury and blindness of Laodicea?

He is at this table!

Demas (Phm 1.24) Col 4.14; 2 Tim 4.10

Here and in Col 4, not much is said other than he faithfully travelled with all the leaders.

But later..."Demas has forsaken me, having loved the world...left me..."

(Sad: the most that was said about you was when you LEFT, not what you did)

He is at this table!

Maybe he left but came back? We hope so!

Here's the point: All these people were part of the Body and were at this table!

All the mistake-makers

Leaders-followers

Big shots-little fire crackers

All the blunderers

Strong-weak

Teachers-learners

All the wrong turners

All the backsliders

All the wanderers

ALL PART of this wonderful table!

No matter who you are, stay at this table!

Here is where you will find cleansing, provision, healing and direction!