

INTRODUCTION.

- A. The apostle Paul's comments to Philemon, found in the scripture reading (Phile. v12-14) gives us much to say concerning how we are to serve God.
- B. Paul says he could "pull rank" and keep Onesimus by compulsion but would rather have him by the free will of Philemon.
- C. God is the same, in His attitude toward us. We serve Him not out of compulsion but because we choose to, out of our own free will.

I. HOW WE RECEIVED OUR FREE WILL.

- A. We as humans have a free will (the power of choice) because God, JC, HS all have a free will and we are made in their image.
- B. God has the power of choice; volition,
 - 1. Moses changed His mind (Exo. 32:9-14).
 - 2. Jesus appealed to His will (Lk. 22:42).
- C. Jesus Christ has the power of choice; volition (Lk. 10:22).
- D. The Holy Spirit has the power of choice; volition (1Cor. 12:11).
- E. Conclusion, since we are made in Their image, we too enjoy the free will, freedom of choice.

II. EXAMPLES OF HUMAN VOLITION.

- A. Pilate wishing to satisfy the multitude (Mk. 15:15).
- B. Decision by the majority (Ac. 27:12).
- C. Moses chose to endure ill-treatment (Heb. 11:25).

III. MAN'S FREE WILL CAN BE GOOD OR BAD.

- A. Bad, that has resulted from choice;
 - 1. Adam and Eve sinning in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6).
 - 2. Those desiring great wealth fall into temptation (1Tim. 6:9).
- B. Good, that has resulted from choice;
 - 1. Joshua and his household (Jo. 24:15).
 - 2. Peter and John chose to obey God rather than men (Ac. 5:28-29).

IV. MAN IS NOT UNDER COMPULSION TO SIN.

- A. Flip Wilson's, "The devil made me do it," is not true. The devil never made you do anything. Two passages disprove this.
- B. First, 1Corinthians 10:13:
 - 1. There are no special cases, no unique situations.
 - 2. There is a decision to be made when temptation is offered.
 - a. We can choose to give in and sin.
 - b. Or we can choose the way of escape.
- C. Second, James 1:14-15:
 - 1. We are drawn into sin by our own lusts (brought on by our own choices.).
- D. All sin is categorized as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1Jn. 2:16).
- E. Conclusion: We choose to commit sin.

V. MAN IS NOT UNDER COMPULSION TO SERVE GOD.

- A. The invitation of Christ shows us that we can choose to serve Him or not to serve Him. If there were no choice, then there would be no invitation.

- B. Jesus lays down the cost of discipleship by showing that we have choice of whether or not to accept it. (Mt. 16:24,25)
- C. Conclusion: God did not make us robots, which have no choice, but to serve Him. We must decide for ourselves whether or not to be faithful.

VI. THE VALUE OF FREE WILL.

- A. Without the power of choice there is no specialness.
- B. This specialness is illustrated by the Fathers' (God's) attitude toward the prodigal son (sinners deciding to follow God) and the other commandment keeping son (those serving under compulsion). See Lk. 15:11-32
- C. The work of Jesus was to glorify the Father (Jn. 17:4) and He did this because He chose to serve God (Lk. 22:42 b).
- D. Mankind can also glorify God when we exercise our power of choice and serve our heavenly Father. God will run to meet us.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Paul would rather have used the services of Onesimus by the free will of Philemon even though he could have had it under compulsion.
- B. God would rather have us serve Him and His Son by our own free will even though he could have it under compulsion.
- C. Let us choose to serve God today!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.