

**June 22**

**Scriptures:** Read Philemon

**Key Verse:** “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” (Philemon 6)

## **Overview**

It is obvious, as Paul writes to his old friend Philemon, that he had a great deal of respect and love for the man. Philemon must have been a special sort of person, a “kindred spirit” with whom Paul felt entirely comfortable. He talks with Philemon as old friends talk: kindly but to the point.

Before he gets to the point, however, Paul prays for Philemon; that prayer is the key verse. What is of great interest in the prayer is the linkage between “sharing your faith”, and having “a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” It seems that personal evangelism is more than an end in itself — it is also a learning experience for the evangelist.

Perhaps one of the greatest plus factors in personal evangelism is the fielding of questions. Your friend, workmate or relative will throw all kinds of queries in your direction. Some of them will be smoke screens, others will be sincerely asked, but regardless of the motivation, you’ve got to come up with the answers. Often that will mean saying, “I don’t have the answer, but I’ll find out.” So you’re forced to your Bible, to the library, to your pastor and to whatever else may be available in terms of resources. You learn; and learn some more.

I’ve often said to people, as I reflect on over twenty years pastoring, that the person who learned the most from my preaching was me. Every time I prepare to preach, I learn. As I preach I learn, and as I write this commentary, I learn. The key is to do more than study. Study, of course, is vital, but more vital still is to communicate what you’ve learned. Once you’ve done that, you’ve really learned.

## **Prayer**

Father, Your Word has brought life and peace to our hearts. We desire that others might also share in Your goodness, and we ask for opportunities to effectively share what You have taught us, knowing that as we give it will again be given to us.