

# New Recording 5

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I'll start off with an honor to getting to stand up and talk to you all tonight. Just introduce myself. My name is Kalen McDonald. I'm a senior at Pitt. And this is my fourth year being part of the cornerstone campus ministry. For the past couple of years, I've been able and blessed to serve on the undergraduate ministry team, formerly known as freshman ministry team. And I've gotten to lead Bible study with some of the individuals that you've seen Martha earlier if you were at any of the earlier services. Also, though, as I pay to keyboard player that we've been playing with in Jackson, our fellow has been working with us this past year to talk to you about spring break trip. But all that is to say it's an honor to be able to stand up in front of you all today.

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Just a little bit about myself. I'm a classics and history student at the University. And I just give that as a little bit of a warning, because that tends to come up in some of my some of my messages that I get whenever I'm leading Bible study, it's a common joke that I find new ways every week to make the underclassmen hate me by making them read poetry and different things in the context of the Psalms, so on and so forth. So we'll see you might be in for a treat when it comes to some of those things. But so today, I want to talk to you all about a couple of things. Conflict is one of the things and I was having conversation about this with one of the other university students, Mike McDonogh, this morning when he asked what I was going to be speaking of. And he said, very poignant, Lee complex. That's, that's not applicable to today at all.

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You can come up with something better than that. So I know, it's a little bit of a stretch to think that we might have conflict in our modern lives, but talk about that, we're going to talk about fear and love. Because even though those two things seem very opposite, they tend to come up in the same context, an awful lot. And beautifully, we have models laid out by scripture on some healthy ways to deal with that. And lastly, we're going to talk about some of the countercultural approaches that are taken throughout Scripture to these conflicts and the in compatibility and coexistence of fear and love, and how Jesus and Paul the Apostle Paul call and call us to kind of deal with these things. We're going to do this through the book of fly Lehman. For those of you that don't know, I Lehman is one of

the shortest books in the Bible. It's one of the letters that Paul wrote. And we're gonna read that really quickly. And you'll see exactly what I mean. And there's some conflicts that come up in there. And Paul takes a very unique approach to how he addresses these.

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So we want to turn to by leaving, and however, you're accessing scripture, listen to me read it, happy to do that, as well.

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Paul, a prisoner for Christ, Jesus, and Timothy, our brother, to file even our beloved fellow worker, and Apphia, our sister, and our purpose, our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house, rice to you, and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

03:09

I think my god, always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear your love, and have the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints. And I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your loves my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

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Accordingly, though, I am bold enough in price Jesus to command you to do what is required. Yep, for love's sake, I prefer to appeal to you, I Paul and old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus, I appeal to you for my child on SMS, whose father I became in my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you. But now he is indeed useful to you and me, I'm sending him back to you sending my very heart, I would have been glad to keep him with me in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel. But I prefer to do nothing without your consent, in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own core. For this, perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bond servant, but more than a bond servant, as a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord? So if you consider me your partner, receive Him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I Paul write this with my own hand. I will repay it to say nothing of your own me even your own self. Yes, brother. I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh.

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My heart in Christ, confidence of your obedience I write to you knowing that you will do even more than I say, at the same time prepared guestroom for me, for I'm hoping that through your prayers, I will be graciously given to you.

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And then of course, it goes on policy as a final little treat me if you'd like to read that go for it. But we're going to be talking about the rest of that. So as you can see, we basically read the entire book is 2224, verses 22. So one chapter, very, very short, but very, very poignant. So just a little, you know, what, what exactly is happening in Philemon, the version that you might be reading or that we have usually at the church, the ESV translates this one word as bondservants. But a lot of the other translations that I've read through and working with Philemon are more exactly slave.

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Because ultimately, the letter Paul tify leaving is about his addressing this, this institution of antiquity, that was contentious at the time and even more so as time went on. But Paul is very much attacking this institution in a unique way.

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And that's what we're going to be talking about, it is not just some casual letter that he's writing, saying, Oh, I'm sending this guy to you, you know, United States. No, it's very much the story of this escaped slave that by leaving was his master and on SMS ran away and possibly stole something in the process. And after a time became reading, became united with Paul very close, and was converted to Christianity and the message of the gospel by Paul. And so after that, after that had occurred, and Paul was in prison for sharing and for spreading the gospel, he sent us on SMS back to file the man

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in a different way, not because he's hoping to restore him into servitude, but hoping that he can be greeted as an equal as a brother in Christ. And so that's what we're talking about here today, have you stopped. So absolutely conflict, as you can see, that we talked about, but in today's day and age, with all of the other types of conflicts that are coming up, the popular culture kind of gives us a general idea of how we should be responding to these things. And I think it would be a little bit interesting, if you think that in all cases, everybody out there that is part of this conflict, and engaging it in different ways that they all if you believe they all do it in a Christ like manner. And certainly, I think we're all guilty of that. Sometimes it's easy to let our passions take control of us in several times, and because of things that are indeed important,

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to lose sight and love that Christ calls us towards. And so the model that Paul provides in fi Lehman is incredibly important, because it gives us this outline for how to center ourselves in Christ in these times of conflict, but at the same time,

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take decisive action,

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and make sure that you are working for change in the earth, at the same time as loving others. And this is why I get up this whole countercultural idea, because the idea of working against others, but still loving them, calling people out when they might be wrong, but still saying how proud you are of them, finding virtues in them. This is something that's a little bit out there and not something that's commonly practiced, but definitely something that God's gospel calls us to do. So the first thing that I want to direct us to and finally even is how Paul even in the introduction of his letter before he said anything else, introduces himself as centered in Christ. And so remember when I said that I'm a classics major, this is where some of that's going to come out. A tiny bit of Greek. In this translation it says, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus. And then that's how he introduces himself, if you look at the original Greek is *polos, Desmos*, police two A's. So a common Greek naming practice that we can see throughout Greek literature is this idea of, instead of in English, we might say, Oh, I am Kailyn, a university student or Kailyn, a classics major, you actually tie these descriptors very closely and attribute them directly to the person that's being talked about so much so that it becomes instead of just a random title that's given to someone it becomes their identity. So an example would be me saying, My name is Caleb McDonald. In the same way, that's how Paul was writing Paul prisoner for Christ Jesus, if we were to translate it, you know, cutting out those those superfluous us and comments that appear in the Bible. It's like he's saying, Paul, of Paul of Jesus, okay, on a captive, almost like it's his last name. It's part of his identity and that

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How he goes into the letter, at the very beginning, rooting Himself in Christ Jesus. And this is something that he does repeatedly throughout all of his letters talking about, he introduces himself as Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus were Paul slave of God. And he goes into this conflict, emphasizing that before anything else, that is where Paul is finding his identity. And it seems kind of interesting, because isn't that kind of what we're called to do as Christians before anything else? We present ourselves in Christ. And it's a wonderful practice to get into, because it changes your whole outlook on everything, how are we responding to conflict, if our identity is in Christ, we can still identify that these things are important and should be addressed. But at the end of the day, Christ is still a part of our lives. At the end of the day, we're still going home to Christ's kingdom, and ultimately, we're working for his ministry on earth. Lots of things change when we change into that method of thinking. And that's exactly what Paul does. When he sets it up. He's like, I'm going to address this problem. It's kind of contentious, but before I do anything, I'm Paul, and I am Paul, a captive for Christ Jesus.

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Now, some of the things that he does, he inserts some thankfulness into this passage into this little letter that he writes, which again, thankfulness when he's bringing up conflict and trying to tear down systems of oppression. Interesting. But we talked about in prayer, I know we've brought this up in Cornerstone several times, taking the opportunity to be thankful and grateful for what God has done. And that's how I view and how Paul seems to intonate. His his message at this in this letter is this idea that even within this conflict, he likes to indicate that he's still grateful for the work that these people are doing. And I'm sure it probably does wonders to make him a little bit more persuasive for this

week. And see in verses four through five, where he writes, I think, like I always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus, and for all the scenes.

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He's still trying to get this guy to do things that he wants and saying, I still don't agree with some of the things that you've done in the past. And in fact, he says, I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do these things, but I'm not going to. But before he gets to any of that he's like, I love you guys. I think I remember, thank God when I remember you in my prayers because of the love and faith that you show to others. Again, we get it this countercultural idea of Paul is introducing thankfulness and gratitude and love into a system of conflict. We can see it later in verse seven, when he says, For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love of my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

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It's definitely an example of showing that Christ like love that Jesus calls us to loving your neighbor, even through times of conflict.

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And so all of this leads up to the main point of what I want to talk about today and let her qualify Lehman and this is this. It's a phrase that I have termed, I have decided to call it active passivity. I'll explain a little bit what that means. But this is my Bible that I use when I'm at home gives a little introduction to each book and the introduction. Then in the introduction to Philemon. It says that what Paul is doing, and what he is addressing is a revolutionary idea.

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And he uses terms to address it to address a former slave, someone that was a convict, somebody that was in some circles, considered a criminal as brother, and a left knee is a term that he uses to actively yet passively tear down these systems of oppression and address these conflicts. And it's perhaps the most countercultural of Paul's techniques that he deploys in this letter. Yeah, you know, he can introduce ideas of thankfulness and all those things. Those are things that we studied, grab that or draw, you know, the compliment sandwich, you know, talk about compliment, and that actually, I want you to do this and then another guy that would compliment and it's it's a nice way to bend people and get them to be more open to some suggestions that you might have get the idea of being active and decisively and divisively active, while at the same time having an air of what some people might call passivity. That is the countercultural idea that Paul's really introduced it here. It's a verse our own expectations of what it means to bring about justice and to effect change.

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One of the best ways that I think that this is illustrated is I remember in my one of my high school classrooms, I can't remember exactly which one. I'm sure you all have heard this quote before, that's commonly attributed to Gandhi. But Gandhi apparently didn't actually say it, but be the change you wish to see in the world. That's kind of what Paul's doing here he is embodying this loving mentality. That's not where he stops, he is taking active steps to go against these systems. And so through that way, he gives us a great model through how to be both active and loving, in a way that almost seems passive. Now, when I talk to people about this idea,

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I tend to find that there's a lot of fear, a lot of fear and uncertainty. And if this model, if that Paul lays out actually can do anything isn't really enough to defend what I care about, what I care about deeply what I find deeply just and righteous, through love and faith alone.

16:06

I think a lot of times we the popular story and popular narrative is no you have to resort to extraordinary feats of heroism, fighting off the bad guy doing whatever you can to progress your cause, do whatever to make the other people see how right you are. And it's all because of that fear and uncertainty that love and faith might not actually be enough. And for that, I've asked you to recall the one of the sections that we read in the first reading that Boaz brought up for us in Proverbs three. So I can read it out loud, I don't expect you to necessarily turn to it. But if you'd like to, you're welcome to. So proverbs three verses 23 through 26, then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. If you lie down, will not be afraid when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror or the ruin of the wicked when it comes for the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught. So the Scripture absolutely supports this idea of there's no need to Phoebe be afraid fear has been done away with because of the grace of God. When we find our identity as Paul does in Christ Jesus, there's no need to have this fear or worry that the love and faith that the gospel prescribes is not going to be enough. So these are just two examples that scripture of where it's directly said, don't be afraid this isn't.

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But if you still need one more example, I have a beautiful example to give you.

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But just to sum up, this is the comfort provided by Scripture that through God, we are justified and through God we are saved when we walk in faith and live by love.

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If you need that one other illustration I have in my notes here, it just says recall Jesus.

18:02

So a nice little reference there. And again, about the whole classics thing. If I don't, a couple people here might have attended my undergraduate Bible study where I forced you to read poetry. And I'm gonna do it again. And I'm gonna read it to you. So hopefully you don't have any too much. But instead of Rita, I mean, it's beautifully outlined by the gospel, but this is a poem called The dream of the room. That is all about the crucifixion of Christ from the process perspective, actually, an interesting idea, but it illustrates some of the points here beautifully, don't worry, I'm not gonna read the whole poem.

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Then this young man stripped himself that was God on like, strong and courageous. He climbed up on the high gallows brave in the sight of many as he set out to redeem mankind. I trembled when the man embraced me. I dare not bowed down to her stoop to the surface of the ground, but I had to stand fast. I was rear to rude I raised up a mighty king, the heavens, Lord, I dare not bow in homage. They drove dark nails into me, the dents of those wounds can still be seen open marks of malice, but I did not dare Maul any of them in return. They mocked us. I was moistens all over with bloodshed from the man side, after he had sent up his spirit. on that mountain, I have endured many cruel happenings. I saw the God of hosts directly stretched out shades of darkness have clouded over the corpse of the Lord, the shining gradients, shadows went forth, dark under clouds, all creation, wet morning, the King's Fall, Christ was on the cross.

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So as you can see here, this poem beautifully identifies the way in which Christ in his you know, the moments that for us is the most important moment of all of history, the moment when Christ was pretty

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supplied to save us all from the wages upset. And yet this poem describes him as being very passive. He was lifted up, he bled, he was nailed. And even from the crosses party point of view, they were both nailed. And through the hands wounded all of these different things, Christ is very passive throughout the crucifixion, having these things done to him.

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Yet, of course, we as Christians identified this as the important as the pivotal moment in all of our own histories. This is the moment in which that active passivity that I've been talking about is beautifully embodied in the most beautiful way it ever could, by allowing the world to be him, scorn him, torture him crucify.

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Christ was actively redeeming our sins. And this was not just something that happened upon Christ by chance, we hear about it. And as he's praying in the garden, we know that he was actively debating this, this was a conscious decision on Christ's part to go forth, and do this. This is the love that Christ showed through that active passivity.

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So all of this illustrates, don't let fear distract you from what the gospel and the story of Christ and proverbs and all of these different passages of Scripture what God has promised, we can see this through how we address conflict. And how do we know that we're living faithfully and loving through conflict, I'm sure that there's many, many different ways to do that. But one way to Paul identifies clearly in his letter to find leaving is through sacrifice. It takes different forms and how we sacrifice of ourselves our assets of all of these different things. Our abilities are gifts to others, by always demonstrates faith and love when we're willing to sacrifice for the sake of God's Church, the people around us, the community, and others, we can see this again and finally met in verses 12 through 14. Through 14, Paul writes, I'm sending him back to you that is an SMS, a slave, sending my very heart,

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I wouldn't have been glad to keep him with me in order that he might serve on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel. But I prefer to do nothing without your consent, in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own accord. Paul says he's sending on se mystify Lehman, his very heart.

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At sacrifice, can you imagine sacrificing somebody so dear to you, knowing that they can affect more good in this world by going out to other places, but it means that you might have to lose them. It's a very hard thing to do a very tangible sacrifice that Paul's making in this situation, especially alone in prison, he's sending one of his closest friends, his brother, his beloved, somewhere else. And we see it again in verse 18. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that and by account.

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So not only is Paul sacrificing His own love, but he's saying that if this isn't enough, if what I've said this love that I'm calling you towards isn't enough, give me those burdens helped me to take those off, for the sake of you, and reconciliation, with this other man, with this other brother in Christ of us. So now, I urge you all to take this model provided by scripture, stand strong and faith, but be the change you want to see in the world. Prioritize peace, love and understanding in the ways that Paul Jesus illustrated, he boldly passive, in the same way that Jesus was boldly passive as he allowed



himself to be crucified in the same way that Paul was boldly passive, as he decided to remain in prison and just write persuasive letters tearing down institutions of oppression as he did so. He boldly passive as your love and faith, shake the community around

24:08

and know the comfort given by the Scripture. That action like this does change the world when we are giving of ourselves and by the grace of God, we are saved from theater. So don't let it control you, and how we give ourselves to others.