

BIBLE STUDY
September 3-4, 2025

THE TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Wisdom 9: 13-18

Luke 14: 25-33

Philemon 9-10, 12-17

1. Wisdom 9: 13-18

- The Book of Wisdom was written about 50 years before the coming of Christ. The author is a Jew who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. He wrote in Greek but with Hebrew style and thought. He is writing to encourage his Jewish brethren who are being persecuted, the first ten chapters give background to understand the times and the teaching of Jesus. He sues the excellence of Divine Wisdom, the powerful of events like the Exodus, and God's justice to encourage his readers/listeners.
- V. 13: Can anyone understand the mystery of God?
- V. 14: Human beings are fearful and uncertain and cannot know God on their own.
- V. 15: This represents Greek thought that the soul is imprisoned by the body.
- V. 16: Mortals have difficulty understanding the things of earth. How can they then understand the things of heaven?
- V. 17: Human beings can only understand if they receive Wisdom from God's holy spirit.
- V. 18: The gift of God's wisdom helps human beings to follow in God's ways and to please God.

2. Luke 14: 25-33

- After Jesus has stressed the importance of seeking the Kingdom of God primarily, Jesus now makes his most dramatic appeal to put God and the Kingdom first. Like has collected a group of sayings that underscore the need to make everything subordinate to the Kingdom and to strategically prepare for perseverance in discipleship.
- V. 25: Jesus turns to address the great crowds following him and warns them about the cost of discipleship. His turning to face them increases the seriousness of his warning.
- V. 26: Nothing can come before our dedication to serving God. The idiom love/hate means preferring one thing over the other. The first disciples faced family rejection by their decision to follow Jesus. Breaking with family cannot stop them from following Jesus.
- V. 27: Carrying our cross means accepting the things in life that we cannot change.
- V. 28-32: Discipleship requires a plan on how we will persevere in following Jesus. We must be as strategic as a builder constructing a tower and a king going into battle.
- V. 33: This is a major theme in Luke's Gospel: following Christ requires a distancing from one's possessions. We cannot let our possessions control us.

We must be free or detached from them. Their only value is if they draw us closer to Christ. If they hinder our closeness to Christ, we should get rid of them.

3. Philemon 9-10, 12-17

- Paul's shortest letter is a communication with Philemon about his slave Onesimus who escaped. Onesimus was converted and baptized by Paul. Paul is sending him back to Philemon, but he is asking him to receive him back not as a slave but as a brother. The Scriptures including Jesus accept human slavery as an institution of society. Paul is asking for something that is radically different from that society that Philemon receive Onesimus as a brother because of their bond in Christ by baptism.
- V. 9: Paul will not order Philemon but will urge him to do so out of love for Paul, an old man, and a prisoner.
- V. 10: Paul talks about the paternal relationship he has with Onesimus, whom he has baptized.
- V. 11: Onesimus was once only useful because he was a slave, but now he has a new value to both Philemon and Paul because he is a co-worker for the Christian faith.
- V. 12: Paul describes Onesimus as being his own heart, so close was he to him.
- V. 13: Paul wishes that Onesimus could stay with him and help him in spreading the Gospel.
- V. 14: Paul did not want to presume on Philemon. He wanted his decision to be freely made.
- V. 15: Onesimus' absence from Philemon might make it easier for Philemon to receive him back not as a slave but as a brother.
- V. 16: Paul asks Philemon to receive him as a man and a brother, not a slave.
- V. 17: Philemon should welcome Onesimus back as he would welcome Paul as a partner.
- V. 18: Paul will repay Philemon for any debt or injustice.