My name is Jim Fleming and this is Our Sunday School.

Our Sunday School is part of Stuart Heights Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

To prepare for this lesson, please go to oursundayschool.com for a copy of today's handout.

Now, let's get to this week's lesson.

Well, good morning everybody and welcome to Our Sunday School. Glad you guys are with us today.

We are in the Lehman today.

So, if you've got your Bibles, head over there.

Give us a quick rundown of where we'll be today in class.

So, four big sections today.

So, we're going to do the introduction of the handout.

We'll talk about the handout here in just a second.

Brief history of Colossae, even a brief history of the Colossian church.

And if you think I've made a copy-paste error, we believe Philemon was in Colossae.

So, this is a bit of a repeat of where we were at just a little while ago.

And then we'll do the section in the introduction on Philemon 1 through 14.

So, the introduction of the handout.

So, the first thing we need to do is make sure you've got your handout.

Does everybody have your handout today?

Everybody got it? Good, good, good.

So, just a quick review.

If you're a visitor, we'll always loan you a copy in class.

Members get a print edition.

And there's always one available at oursundayschool.com.

So, you can always grab one there.

But before we go too much further, we need to figure out what color this thing is.

Because I have had a lot of different comments about what color it is.

And I need to say a color that is not wildly offensive to all of you.

So, if I said the pink handout, you would go, you should see a doctor, right?

So, we're going to vote on what you think this color is.

Alright, you ready?

So, you've got three options.

Here's your three options.

There's a fourth.

There's always going to be a fourth.

Yes, Darla, what's the fourth?

Just blue.

Just blue, okay, cool.

I said that.

So, I have a blue, I have a second.

All in favor?

It's blue, excellent, great.

Well, we're done with that.

Alright, that was easy.

So, let's go to page two of your blue handout.

Page two of your blue handout.

Now, you'll notice that there are two parts to the handout.

There's a part one and a part two.

And that's because copyright issues.

I can't put the entire text of a book of the Bible in one printed work.

So, I have to split it up.

Alright, so page two, this is my aspirational goal for our class.

And the reason I want to focus on this for a second is that nobody looks at page two.

Everybody just skips past page two because it's like the copyright stuff, right?

No, this is our aspirational goal.

So, to fully know an infinite God is impossible,

but we will strive to as He is worth the effort.

So, as we get into parts of this series and you go,

"This is hard and He is worthy."

Yes, and that is okay.

And that is okay.

So, my prayer for us is that this resource will help us to experience, know, and enjoy God

so that we can make Him known with our words and our works.

And if you think the cover is beautiful, that's because Christian Harper did it.

And if you think the cover is not beautiful,

then get your heart right with the Lord.

Because she is an artist and I am not.

And I am grateful for people who can do all the different things, which is fantastic.

Alright, so page five is about our Sunday School.

If you want to know what we do, why we do it, kind of a big overview, it's there.

All of this stuff is also available at our Sunday School dot com.

So, just a quick review of the website.

If you go to the front page of the website, you can always see what we've most recently done.

So, the last couple of lessons and then the next lesson.

So, this is today's lesson.

In the lower right hand corner, there is a little red circle.

If you ever click on that little red circle, it opens up a window.

And you can always, like right now, if you went to our Sunday School dot com,

and clicked on "Watch this week's lesson", it would take you to the public Facebook page,

where you could watch the live stream that is hopefully happening right now.

It looks like it's happening right now. I'm just hoping it happens right now.

But this is where you can get the handout.

You can subscribe to different things day after day.

Shoot me an email and tell me how terrible it is.

All the things. We've got an about page.

We'll tell you what we do, where we are.

If you want to go back and listen to any of our "This Makes Episode 636"

if I'm able to do it without Dave Barber's assistance this morning.

We miss you Dave. It was so, so hard without you man.

So, you can go back and listen to all the old lessons here.

We've also got a contact. So, we have a public Facebook page,

where you can go and watch things online.

It's a private Facebook group, just for the members of our class,

where we share prayer requests.

Then you can drop me an email if you want.

The Toward book, so the little red book that we're going to reference several times today.

This is available here as well. So, the members get a print edition.

There's a free PDF version up here. You can buy a Kindle edition.

All that kind of jazz.

And then this is our tentative schedule for what we plan to do on the study page.

So, right now we are in Philemon.

I think it's probably going to be March. I've already modified it since I wrote it yesterday.

So, it's okay. We'll see.

But you can always link to the handouts here as well,

so you can see a general idea of where we're going to be and what we're going to do.

All of our old series are here as well in one file zip file, in one-click zip files.

There are 721 lessons.

If somebody ever asks you to teach on the Bible, please come and steal.

Please come and steal. It is just really straightforward.

When you look at the whole thing, each one of these lines is a series that we did.

And it's like, "What? That's kind of crazy."

So, there you go. I think it's neat.

And then you can subscribe to some different things.

So, we have a YouTube channel where all of these things are listed, all of these videos are listed.

We have a podcast. It's available on Apple Podcasts, Android, Audible, Amazon Music, or Spotify.

And then I send out an email once a week-ish, on Sunday afternoons-ish.

It depends on who's playing football that afternoon and whether or not I need a nap.

So, I'll just be very honest with you. This is directionally correct.

So, you can subscribe to all that stuff there.

Alright, so that's the website.

Literally, everything you want to know about our Sunday School class is there.

So, if you have a question, that's your first good option.

So, page 6 about this resource, about the handout.

Three things to note here. I am a color-oriented person.

If you haven't figured this out, hi, my name is Jim. There you go.

So, the red text... I'm sorry, I'll start with the black text.

The black bold text is our source text for our series.

This is the Greek New Testament.

Why do we say the Greek New Testament is our source text?

Because that's the New Testament.

The New Testament that we read is a translation of the New Testament.

There are really good translations, but the Greek New Testament is the New Testament.

So, that's what we want to get as close to as we can.

I'll refer to this often as the NA28.

It's the Nestle-A-Lon 28th edition.

So, whenever you see NA28, just think "Greek New Testament."

That's the way you want to think about that.

The red text is the Christian Standard Bible.

That's our English primary text.

And then the blue text are all the Bible references.

Quick heads up.

If you have been looking for a Bible and you want to get a Bible,

we've been in the Christian Standard Bible for several years.

I'm pretty sure our next series, we're going to transition to a different version of the Bible.

I found one I like a little bit more, because there's always a new one coming out that I like a little bit more.

So, stay tuned for that. I'm still kicking the tires on it. We'll see.

Alright, so this is how the resource works.

Lots of arrows, lots of colors. I want to make sure we understand how it works.

So, for every single Greek word, we go through a very simple process.

There's some analysis that is done.

So, you'll start with a verse number, and there's something missing here,

and Darla and Doug picked up on it in the preview of how this works.

What else happens every time we start a new verse?

Does anybody else know?

There's a little star in the margin, yes, because it's impossible to find otherwise.

Right? Because it just kind of all runs together.

So, I'll put this in the next version.

So, we have a verse number, and then we have the CSB, so the English,

and then the Greek actual word, and then the Strong's number.

We'll get into Strong's numbers as we kind of go along.

The Strong's entry, and then the transliteration.

So, the transliteration is just taking each one of the Greek letters of the alphabet

and turning them into English letters so that we can look at it and go,

"Oh, that kind of looks like Paul."

Yes, that's because it's Paul.

The part of speech is a noun.

The morphological analysis, which is a fancy way to say all the details about the word itself.

So, it's a singular masculine nominative.

The definition, or the glosses.

So, little, Paulus, the name of a Roman apostle.

And then how often it occurs in the, what was the NA28?

Anybody remember? The Greek, right?

So, Paul's name occurs 158 times in the NA28,

and it occurs in Philemon, because that's the book we're in right now.

One, two, three times.

Okay?

And then we have the next English word, which is a prisoner.

And we have "desmeos," the Greek word,

and we go through that exact same process for each one of the words in the Greek New Testament.

And what you'll see every once in a while is that there'll be an English word

that doesn't have a Greek word after it,

and those are words that were added to the English text

to help us smooth out the awkwardness of the Greek

if we just translated every word literally.

It would sound like "Yoda was high."

It's just really, really awkward.

And then you'll have several Greek words that aren't translated into English,

because the same thing is happening that direction.

It's just grammatically oriented things that help the Greek to be correct,

that we don't have an equivalent in English,

and almost always those are just fine.

It'll just be an article here or there, those types of things.

So, that's how the resource itself works,

and we just repeat this for every single word,

and the book is how long the book is, and there we go.

And then pages, at the very bottom of page 7 and then page 8

are some commentaries that I'll be referencing throughout this particular series.

There will be a lot more,

because I have recently become quite familiar with Lagos,

and I am excited about that,

and I'll be showing you guys some of how that works as we go through as well.

Pages 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are some cheat sheets,

so when you hear me say things like, "Well, that's a present active participle,"

and you go, "What are those words?"

All of that is explained in the book on these different pages,

so you can always reference back to those.

And then we've got a picture of kind of where we are in this particular study.

So, we're in Colossae in this study, and so let's talk about Colossae.

Let's go through a little brief history of Colossae.

So, now I'm going to leave the blue book.

I'm so glad you all just said blue.

That is just so wonderful.

So, let me just tell you. Thank you, Darla.

That ministered to me.

So, a brief history of Colossae.

So, Colossae used to be, before Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians into Philemon,

Colossae was a really big, bustling town, a lot going on,

but it was on the decline and kind of at the low point.

It has an earthquake a couple years later, and it wrecks it even more.

It's just a real mess of a city.

But you can think about Colossae as a little bit of everything religiously.

So, the Colossians would say yes to everything,

and they would kind of skim off of the top.

And if you say yes to everything and put it in a crock pot and stir it up,

like, that's what we did for leftovers on Friday nights,

and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't.

Theologically, that's a disaster. Not us, not Julie.

This was earlier in my life.

And I'm praying my mom's not watching right now.

So, love you, Mom. You're awesome.

I was always fed. I was never hungry. Check the boxes.

I was loved.

I have been prayed for every single day of my life.

So, that's pretty cool.

Wikipedia, the best summary of this that I've found that usually happens on Wikipedia,

is this fusion of religious influences.

Like, everything is coming together.

And what do you think Paul's response to that is going to be?

No, it's Jesus.

So, we're going to be solely focused on, in Philemon,

not just the Gospel itself, but the implications of the Gospel.

What does it look like lived out?

All right, this is what Colossae looks like today.

Isn't that exciting?

Careful what we put our hope in.

Right? Be very, very careful.

Remember where our home is.

Remember what country we are citizens of.

And which country we are just passing through.

Because this is going to matter, y'all.

All right, so a brief history of the Colossian church.

To do that, we need to take a trip with Paul.

So, Paul started his missionary journeys in Antioch.

And his first one is found in Acts 13 and 14.

His first one just made a quick trip just into the barely interior regions of Asia Minor.

He didn't get anywhere really near Colossae, so we know he didn't check the box then.

Right? So, his second missionary journey, this is Acts 15 halfway through 18,

again started off in Antioch.

But to the other Antioch, it gets confusing, they didn't really care how many cities had the same name.

Like it was just what it was.

Went north and went all the way up in the Thrace and Thessaloniki and Corinth and then came back via the sea.

But didn't go into the inner regions of Asia.

Right? So, kind of skipped it again.

And then we get to his third missionary journey, 1823 to 2115.

And here he goes from Antioch, he starts off in Antioch again, goes to Antioch again.

This time he cuts through Ephesus.

And in Acts 18 and the beginning of 19, it talks about he hung out there for a while.

And there's a sentence at the very end of Acts 19, 10 that talks about how everybody in this region heard the gospel

because of what they were doing in this area.

They hung out there long enough.

And we believe that's when the Colossian church probably began.

And where these people that Paul is writing to in Philemon heard the gospel and everything kind of got kicked off.

And he's going to have known some of these people, but the letter to the Colossians implies that he did not know everybody at the church in Colossae.

So, he had a few relationships, but not a lot of relationships.

And that will be kind of the mindset that I want us to have in.

I don't know that honestly we need to go too much further than that, so we won't.

So, if you've got your hand out again, let's go ahead over to page 16.

And we'll be on this page for the rest of the lesson today.

So, alright.

So, this is our process that we go through.

And just a reminder, this is just a one-page summary of everything that's in the Little Red Book.

So, I'm going to start us off with praying with others.

And I even wrote down some prayers in the back of the Little Red Book, because they're not bad.

So, let's pray over our series in Colossians.

So, Father, we thank you for your Word. We come fearfully depending on you and expecting wondrous things.

We ask you to help us hear what the Spirit is saying. We ask for the Spirit to illuminate the text.

And we ask you, Father, for wisdom to live out your truth.

And it's in our Lord Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Alright, so let's hear the text.

And I would encourage you, as I'm going to regularly, to not read along while I read out loud.

Something happens in your brain when you are multitasking and it lowers your comprehension.

It actually increases your comprehension when you only do one thing.

And listening is one thing, and reading is one thing, and listening and reading are two things.

And when you are learning how to read, listening to someone say the words and you following along is academically brilliant.

So, if you teach kindergarten or first grade or second grade or fifth grade, and you have your students read along, that's fantastic.

But adults don't need that.

And we are commanded over and over and over in the New Testament, in the Scriptures, all throughout to hear the Word of the Lord.

Let's listen to Philemon being read.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and co-worker. To Sophia, our sister. To Archippus, our fellow soldier.

And to the church that meets in your home.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers because I hear of your love for all the saints and the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus.

I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ.

For I have great joy and encouragement from your love because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right, I appeal to you instead on the basis of love.

I, Paul, as an elderly man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus, appeal to you for my son, Onesimus.

I became his father while I was in chains.

Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me.

I'm sending him back to you. I'm sending my very own heart.

I wanted to keep him with me so that in my imprisonment for the gospel he might serve me in your place.

But I didn't want to do anything without your consent so that your good deed might not be out of obligation but of your own free will.

For perhaps this is why he was separated for you for a brief time so that you might get him back permanently,

no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a dearly loved brother.

He is especially so to me, but how much more to you both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would me.

And if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

I, Paul, write this with my own hand. I will repay it, not to mention that you owe me even your very self.

Yes, brother, may I benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

Since I am confident of your obedience, I am writing to you knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me since I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Isn't that a wonderful letter? It's a beautiful letter.

That's Philemon. And then our next step in the process is to think about these things.

And this is the step in the process that I firmly believe most Christians skip.

Most Christians want to go immediately to, "Well, what does the commentary say about the text?"

And guys, that's like step four.

If we skip over asking God for help, hearing the text, thinking about the text,

and immediately going to what somebody else says about the text, we have missed an opportunity to hear from the Lord.

So we want to think about this. I'll just give you a couple directions here.

So take a second and look at the pericopes that are in, or the pericopes of the different sections,

that are in Philemon 1 through 14. So that's what our first handout covers.

And then, so you've got the greeting in verses 1 through 3.

Philemon's love and faith in verses 4 through 7. And then I had to cut him off halfway through,

and I'm sorry, I just got to stop him somewhere.

So halfway through, an appeal for an anesthemists verses 8 through 14.

So take a second, figure out which one of those your table wants to do,

and then in a second I'll tell you the directions for the next part.

So do you want to do the first, the second, or the third?

The first, the second, or the third?

Because we're going to use this process on one of the pericopes.

So the first, the second, or the third?

Each table, each table, yes. To choose one.

Each table, choose one. Yes.

So Darla's table's got the first one.

You can all do the first one, you can all do the third.

I don't care, you can do whichever one you want.

Alright Julie, what's your table going to do?

My wife's love language is being called on in public, so this is the...

That's awesome, Olivia got read for you there, that's fantastic.

Do you want me to assign you one? Would that be easier?

Or no? Do you want to pick one?

Three, excellent. They've got three?

Three here, and in the back?

Jessica, do you all have a preference?

Two? Excellent, great.

Alright, so here's what we're going to do.

I want you to stare at your text for the next three minutes.

You're going to stare at your text for the next three minutes.

This is not the talking component of today's class,

you're just going to stare at your text, your pericope, for the next three minutes.

Yes, Philemon's love and faith, yes.

Oh, by the way, so let's address this real quick before we start.

Some of you say Philemon, some of you say Philemon, I say Philemon.

You can't make me care about that.

It is phonetically defensible both ways from the original.

So, there you go.

Alright, so let's do three minutes of thinking.

We'll come back at 9.33.

I'll start with that.

Okay.

So, I'll remind us as we go through this.

We're not necessarily looking for answers right now.

We're looking for questions right now,

and we're looking for the how would you go about answering them.

And the last thing we ever want to do in this room is guess.

So, we're not about guessing.

So, we want to make sure that we're just writing the questions

and maybe think about how we would go about answering those.

Alright, let's share those questions.

Let's share those questions.

So, who had the first frickity?

You guys had the first frickity?

Alright, awesome.

What questions did you come up with?

The other people listed.

So, we're in verse two there.

Oh, that's a great question.

So, the question is if the letter is written to Philemon,

why did Paul also address Aphia and Archippus

since Philemon's issue was with Onesimus?

Like, why did we get them involved?

That's a fantastic question.

I will tell you that there's a distinct answer for that.

Like, there actually is an answer.

And understanding the way the family structure worked

in the first century is one of the things

that helps us answer that particular question.

So, that would be almost impossible to answer

from only the text, but having a good perspective

on how families worked and who was in charge of what

would help quite a bit with that.

And we will get into that.

I think very soon into that.

Cool.

Any other questions or observations

on the first frickity?

Cool, good.

Who had the second one?

I never remember.

Excellent, great.

So, questions that you guys came up with

for the second frickity?

Okay.

Yeah, so what's the "every good thing" referring to?

And then, who is the object of his prayers

when he says, "I thank God when I mention you in my prayers."

How would we go about answering that?

Using a resource like the Blue Book.

Like, how would we do that?

Anybody got a recommendation?

Save the whole book.

Save the whole book, but specifically using the Blue Book,

how would we go about doing that?

Look at the Greek text.

Is it a singular "you"?

Is it a plural "you," right?

Which would kind of hone in a little.

So, if it's a singular "you,"

it probably feels like it's going to the author

or the recipient.

If it's a plural "you," it may be the three people

listed at the beginning, it might be the whole church,

but we'll get into that, too.

Good, good, good, good.

Awesome.

Who had the third?

You guys had the third?

Excellent, great.

Questions about the third pre-curricopy?

Just all made sense and everything was great.

My question was, he called Amisimus useless?

He called him what?

Useless?

Yes.

So, was he useless to Bilemon

because he was a runaway slave,

or was he useless before he ran away?

Ah, great question.

Where in the text does it say he ran away?

Do you see how easy it is for us to take

what we have been taught about books

and put it right into the text?

Okay.

Now, it's the most obvious logical explanation

of what happened,

but it doesn't actually explicitly say it that way.

However, you did key in on something

with Anisimus' name, right?

And how did you know what Anisimus' name meant?

Well, in my translation there's a little footnote

that says, "The name is useful and profitable."

And then you see in the text,

he was useful once he was useless to you,

but now he is useful to both you and me.

Paul is playing off Anisimus' name here.

Like he is doing something.

He is making this very, very personal for Bilemon.

And I don't know about y'all,

but when the prophet Nathan looks at Jim

and says, "You are the man,"

he's like, "You killed the little baby."

You're like, "Oh, you made that personal for me.

Thank you so much, Holy Spirit.

I appreciate that."

Right?

And this is, you know,

Paul is bringing this really, really close.

So, yeah, there's a whole lot of that

that's going on in Bilemon.

So, yay.

We can look at the definition of words.

That's really helpful, huh?

That's good. Awesome.

Questions or observations from the back table?

Why does Paul use the Father/Son imagery

to make a relationship with Anisimus?

Why does Paul use the Father/Son language

to describe his relationship with Anisimus?

Good. Good.

How old was Paul?

How old was Paul?

Because he says he's old, right?

Yeah.

How old is old?

Yeah.

Good.

Was Paul guilt-tripping Philemon?

[laughter]

Was Paul guilt-tripping Philemon?

Yes.

My millennial and Gen Z friends

would have some terms for this, right?

This is...

Yeah, they'd call Paul out on this.

But, yeah.

Last one.

Does Paul describe himself as a prisoner also?

Yep.

Who else is a prisoner in Christ?

Excellent.

Great questions.

Good questions.

I love it.

Aren't you grateful we have more...

I'm grateful for Philemon.

Aren't you grateful we have more Bible text

than just Philemon?

This would be tricky

if this was all that we had.

So be grateful for the rest that gives us context

and a broader understanding of what's going on.

Awesome.

Good.

Good, good, good.

Well, I think we will very likely address

every single one of these questions

as we go through the series.

So a couple of things that I need from you.

When you have questions, don't sit on them.

Share them.

Talk about them.

Engage with them.

Bring them up in here.

Let us know so that we can collectively engage

and so that we can collectively invite.

So our role as members of our Sunday School

is to invite members and non-members every single week.

So one of the things that we agreed to

when we became members of this class

is that is part of our process.

And then one last reminder.

Almost every one of the commentaries

that I loaned out for Colossians

is also Colossians and Philemon.

So you've still got those.

Keep trucking through those.

If you're interested in one,

let me know.

And also let me know,

do you want a very light engagement with the text?

Or do you want to be intellectually challenged?

Or do you want to be like the ones that I pick for me

regularly reminded that I am not an expert in these things?

So there's a range of things that we can get you access to.

But if you've got those,

I need those quotes by Thursday night

so that I can bake them into the lesson for Sunday.

And with that, I think we are ready

to move into our prayer time.

So that's our lesson, our first week in Philemon.

Woo-hoo! I'm excited.

Next week we will start, Lord willing,

on page 17 or 18,

whichever one is the next one on the page of text.

But right now, if you would, grab your weekly handout.

Lean in, engage, pray over those prayer requests.

Please make any updates that need to be made.

Those help us keep this relevant and correct.

So when you finish praying,

let's go and worship the One

who made the difference in Paul's life,

in Philemon's life, in the Nesemas's life,

so that Paul could actually have this conversation.

I don't want us to forget

that Jesus is the central character in Philemon.

Because without Christ,

none of this makes sense in any way, shape, or form.

It's just a guilt trip, right?

And that's not what Paul's doing here.

So, all right.

Let's do that, and let's go worship the Lord.

Thanks, guys.

Thanks for engaging,

and don't forget to subscribe to our podcast,

YouTube channel, and weekly e-mail.

You can subscribe to all three of those

at our SundaySchool.com.

Grace and peace to you.