

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



PRINCE
OF PEACE
Called to Connect



Love

November 11 & 12, 2023

The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls Paul, his churches, and now our church to live by the Spirit. Spirit Life that bears the fruit of love. Love that breaks chains. Love that returns time and time again to bring freedom. Love that takes a seat, like a slingshot to the head of Goliath. That kind of love.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: PHILEMON 1:4-17

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Onesimus seeks what we all seek: freedom. So, he breaks free, and finds himself in the only safe place he can think of; with the Apostle Paul, who just so happens to be in prison. Onesimus may not have been able to articulate what freedom looked like, except that it was “away from Philemon,” but what Onesimus was longing for was to be surrounded by the spiritual fruit of love. Love doesn’t enslave. Love doesn’t oppress. Love doesn’t hold down. But for the spiritual fruit of love to last, Paul needs to convince Philemon into living the Spirit Life of love. In the story of Onesimus, we are drawn to the places in our own lives where we are bound or where we bind others. Living the Spirit Life of love frees others through our generosity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- From Pastor Paul Dean’s sermon: *Growing up, my Christian imagination was soaked in the story of Exodus, freedom, and salvation. These themes still resonate deeply with me; they shape my everyday life.* How do the themes of Exodus, freedom and salvation resonate with you? How do they shape your everyday life? What soaked your Christian imagination growing up? How do those things resonate with you and shape your everyday life?
- Pastor Paul said that Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks “were the best examples of a living Christ [he] could find.” Who do you admire as an example of a living Christ? What do you admire about this person? How do they live the Spirit Life of love?
- ***Philemon – the Apostle Paul says – Spirit Life is not found in slave ownership. Spirit Life is more love that creates equality. Spirit Life is more love that creates freedom. Spirit Life is more love that opens new possibilities.*** How can your generosity - and our collective generosity - through the Spirit Life Stewardship Appeal create equality and freedom and open new possibilities at and through Prince of Peace?

CHALLENGE: Ponder this: How do I live the Spirit Life of love to be an example of a living Christ to others?