

Acknowledge listening to Dr. Vernon McGee of Thru the Bible radio and Pastor Joe Focht of Calvary Chapel, Philadelphia PA.

Philemon

This book demonstrates the **Gospel (forgiveness, obedience, (more than just enough) through action**. It is a prison letter from the Apostle Paul to Philemon. Not sure which prison: (Rome, Ephesus or Caesarea), most likely Rome. Written approximately 60A.D. Delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus to Philemon. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, it is inferred that Onesimus stole money and ran away. There were Sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire, my guess is 10 million citizens. Two issues: running away and thievery. Somehow Onesimus got in contact with Paul and Paul leads him to the Lord and now Onesimus was assisting Paul in prison.

We all dislike thieves don't we. We have had people steal from this ministry, we hate it.

Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our **beloved brother** and **fellow worker**,

Paul's 4th prison letter: Ephesians, Philippians. Colossians and Philemon. Pastoral epistle or letters. Philemon is different because it was written to an individual, Philemon, instead of a church.

How does Paul identify himself: a prisoner, here because of Christ, not because of Rome or others reasons, I am here because this is where God has me. In other letters to the churches he says Apostle. This letter is a personal letter to a friend, Philemon.

Who was Timothy – Church leader in training.

V2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Philemon's family lived in Colosse (Turkey-inland on the trade routes), Philemon's name means friendly.

Apphia – we think she is Philemon's wife. Women usually supervised the slaves, so you can understand why she is mentioned here.

Archippus – we think Philemon's son.

Paul saluted Philemon and his family as:

- 1. Beloved brother**
- 2. Fellow workers**
- 3. Holding a church in their home. Indicates wealth as he had a large enough home to house a home church.**
- 4. First Sunday service here at Throne of Grace was held in this room, 2002.**

V3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **(Greeting used 11 times in the N.T.)**

First, we receive Grace in our Salvation, then peace.

4 I thank my God always, **making mention of you in my prayers**,

We would all like to have the Apostle Paul praying for us! We pray for those sick or in trouble, but we should also remember to pray for those that are doing great.

5 because I hear of **your love**, and of the **faith** which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and **toward all the saints**;

Philemon mentioned for Love, and Faith toward Jesus and the Saints. Guess who is a Saint now?

6 and I pray that the **fellowship of your faith** may become **effective** through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

In KJV fellowship means communication (Greek= Koinonia)

Fellowship (communication of your faith, faith compels works) – Paul hasn't mentioned Onesimus yet, Effective thru every good thing in you: Paul is seeking Forgiveness and acceptance for Onesimus.

7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the **hearts of the saints have been refreshed** through you, brother.

Work of charity either by Philemon or his church brings JOY, comfort, hearts of saints refreshed!

Paul calls him Brother! Which he is, but Paul is getting ready to ask a favor of him, in Love.

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ **to order** you to do that which is proper,

9 yet for love's sake **I rather appeal to you**--since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—

Paul's appeal because of: Order: Paul's authority, for love, for aged Paul, for Paul the prisoner.

The aged, Paul was not that old - mid sixties. But what did he endure:

2nd Corinthians 11:24-28 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches. **Did you ever see photos of the backs of southern slaves? No wonder Paul felt aged.**

10 I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus, (former thief but now forgiven and a brother).

11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

How does Paul ask – he appeals to Philemon. Onesimus's name means profitable. Onesimus was formally unprofitable to you, now he is profitable to you and me. Colossians 4:9 (Onesimus) Faithful and beloved brother.

12 And I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart,

Just receive him as you would have received me. How would Philemon has received the head of the Gentile church?

13 whom I wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;

Wished to keep with me, old Paul, to help him.

14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.

He is your slave and I could not keep him without your approval. But you could send him back if you want.

15 **For perhaps** he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever,

16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

For perhaps, God has a great purpose for the men in this program to get their life in order with God and others.

For Perhaps, God has directed you to this ministry for you to fulfill God's plan for your life. Pastor Al Yusko taught me that sometimes you only get one chance in life. Your chance is now, here in this program. You might not get another one like this. So let's purpose in our heart to succeed.

Not coming back as a slave but a beloved believer. Sort of a crunch of Philemon, lost a worker but gained a brother. Which do you think is more important to Philemon?

17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.

Accept him as you would me – that is the standard for Philemon isn't it!

Isn't that really what Jesus says about all believers, accept him as you would me!

Accepting the men of the Life Center. Jesus would Accept all of us. Jesus says, "You are forgiven, you are healed.

18 But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

Philemon owes Paul something. Maybe he ministered at his home, maybe he led him and his family to the Lord. It doesn't say.

19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well.

Writing in my own hand. Paul had a vision problem and he wrote in large letters. He sometimes has others write his letters.

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

What a wonderful statement, benefit from you in the Lord, refresh my heart. As we see Christ's love and faithfulness from individuals (who we have tried to minister to), it is refreshing. It is exciting.

21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

My favorite verse in scripture: this is what I want Jesus to say about me, I was confident you would obey. Praise God! Isn't that what we all aim for? And if not, start now! Jesus, Pastors Stan and Ruth, I did more than what you asked.

22 And at the same time also prepare me a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

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

Paul names the leadership with him. Well Philemon, many the church leadership are here with me and are hoping for your obedience.

Philemon – wonderful picture of how God accepts us through Jesus sacrifice. Jesus says - Accept these believers as you would me. Accept the Life Center men by the shedding of my blood as you would me.

Philemon – what a wonderful book of the Bible and great example for us.

Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.