



BOOK OF PHILEMON

Author: Paul
Theme: Reconciliation
Date of Writing: A.D. 62

Outline

Christian Greeting (1-3)

- 1) Appreciation for Philemon (4-7)
 - A. An Object of Thankful Prayer (4-6)
 - B. An Occasion of Great Joy (7)

- 2) Appeal for Onesimus (8-21)
 - A. A Righteous Appeal rather than a Command (8-11)
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- 3) Closing Matters (22-25)
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A Summary of Philemon

This month in our School of Ministry as we study the letter from the Apostle Paul to his son in the Lord, Philemon, we will see a beautiful example of the Love of God. As Onesimus, a slave of Philemon's escapes and becomes a runaway could have been executed once captured according to Roman law. But as fate would have it, he comes in contact with Apostle Paul who subsequently leads him to the Lord. Nothing happens by accident. The very plot Satan sets to hinder the Lord can lead you to a place of deliverance. Onesimus is not only led to Paul by the Lord; they also become friends and develop a father-son relationship. Paul realizes that Onesimus has a dilemma because he is a runaway slave he could be captured and executed for leaving his master without permission. As fate would have it, Philemon has been won to the Lord by Paul as well. Paul sends a letter of appeal to Philemon to not only accept Onesimus back without punishing him but to accept him as a brother in the Lord as well. This is a very beautiful illustration of man leaving God for a mean and dangerous world but Jesus comes and pardons us and gives us another chance.

Paul pleaded not only for Onesimus' life but he also interceded on his behalf for anything he may have wrongfully taken. Paul requested that Philemon charge Onesimus' debt to his. Again this lesson will illustrate the powerful love of God working in our behalf as it did for Onesimus.

Background

Paul wrote this "prison letter" (vv. 1-9). As a personal letter to a man named Philemon, most like during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:16-31). The identical names mentioned in Philemon and Colossians indicated that Philemon lived at Colosse, and that both letters were written and delivered at the same time. This letter from Paul concerns two men. First, Philemon who was a slave owner (v. 16) and a church member at Colosse, was probably a convert of Paul. Second, Onesimus, was Philemon's slave who had ran away to Rome to obtain freedom. While in Rome, Onesimus came into contact with Paul who led him to Christ. A strong bond of friendship developed between Paul (the spiritual father) and Onesimus (his son in the Lord) (vs. 9-13). Paul now reluctantly sends Onesimus back to Philemon but with this powerful little letter of appeal. Paul's co-worker – Tychicus accompanied Onesimus on the journey to Colosse and delivered the letter in person to Philemon.

Purpose

Paul wrote to deal with the specific problems of his runaway slave Onesimus. According to Roman law, a runaway slave could be punished by death. Paul intercedes on Onesimus' behalf with Philemon and appeals that he graciously receives Onesimus back as a fellow believer and as Paul's companion, with the same love with which he received Paul himself.

Scripture Lesson

Philemon (King James Version)

Philemon

1: Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer,

2: And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

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

4: I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5: Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6: That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7: For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

8: Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9: Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10: I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13: Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14: But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15: For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16: Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

17: If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18: If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

19: I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20: Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21: Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22: But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

23: There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

24: Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

25: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.