

## The Letter of Paul The Apostle to Philemon

The Epistle to Philemon, often referred to simply as Philemon, is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to Philemon, a Christian believer and a slave owner residing in Colossae. Here's an introduction to the Book of Philemon:

- **Authorship:** The letter is attributed to the Apostle Paul, who identifies himself as the author in the opening greeting (Philemon 1:1). Paul wrote the letter during his imprisonment, likely in Rome, around AD 60-62.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of Philemon is to intercede on behalf of Onesimus, a runaway slave who had become a Christian believer while in Rome and had come into contact with Paul during his imprisonment. Paul writes to Philemon, urging him to receive Onesimus back as a brother in Christ and to forgive him for any wrongs he may have committed.
- **Background:** Philemon was a wealthy Christian and a member of the church in Colossae. Onesimus was his slave who had run away, possibly after committing some offense against Philemon. While in Rome, Onesimus encountered Paul and became a Christian believer through Paul's ministry.

### Themes:

- **Reconciliation and Forgiveness:** Paul appeals to Philemon to receive Onesimus back not as a slave, but as a beloved brother in Christ. He urges Philemon to forgive any debts or wrongs committed by Onesimus and to reconcile with him in the spirit of Christian love and forgiveness.
- **Christian Brotherhood and Equality:** Paul emphasizes the equality of believers in Christ, regardless of their social status or background. He encourages Philemon to treat Onesimus as a fellow brother and partner in the faith, demonstrating the transformative power of the gospel.
- **Redemption and Restoration:** Paul highlights the redemptive work of Christ in the life of Onesimus and in the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus. He appeals to Philemon to extend grace and mercy to Onesimus, reflecting the mercy and forgiveness they have received from God.
- **Responsibility and Accountability:** Paul acknowledges Philemon's authority as a slave owner but appeals to him to exercise his authority with grace and compassion. He reminds Philemon of his responsibility to act in accordance with the principles of Christian love and justice.

**Structure:** The Book of Philemon is a personal letter from Paul to Philemon, with a focus on reconciliation and forgiveness. It includes: Introduction and Greeting (Philemon 1:1-3), Thanksgiving and Prayer for Philemon (Philemon 1:4-7), Appeal for Onesimus (Philemon 1:8-22), Final Greetings and Benediction (Philemon 1:23-25)

In summary, the Book of Philemon is a poignant and personal letter that illustrates the transformative power of the gospel to reconcile and restore relationships. It challenges believers to extend grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation to one another, reflecting the love and mercy of Christ.

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## Chapter 1

*Greetings; Philemon's Love and Faith; Paul's Plea for Onesimus to be Freed; Obedience is Encouraged; Farewells*

### **Greetings**

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

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.

### **Philemon's Love and Faith**

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.

### **Paul's Plea for Onesimus to be Freed**

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?

### **Obedience is Encouraged**

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.

### **Farewells**

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.

