

**A Short Letter
with Big Lessons
Philemon**

Philemon 1:1-3

¹ Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ² and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon 1:4-7

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

Philemon 1:8-11

⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)

Philemon 1:12-14

¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.

Philemon 1:15-16

¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon 1:17-20

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

Philemon 1:21-22

21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

Philemon 1:23-25

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

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

Outline

Author = The Apostle Paul (+ *Timothy* who is with him) v.1

Location = Rome (*likely written while under house arrest*) v.1

Recipients = Philemon (+ *Apphia, Archippus & the church that meets in Philemon's home*) v.1-2

Subject = Onesimus (*a runaway slave, now fellow believer in Christ Jesus*) v.8-22

Tone = Familial & endearing (v.1-3, 17, 20)

Structure

- Introductory greetings (outline) v.1-3
- Paul's prayer for Philemon v.4-7
- Paul's appeal for Onesimus v8-22
- Final greetings (+ a warning!) v.23-25

Paul's prayer for Philemon
(v4-7)

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon (v4)
- because of Philemon's **love for God & His people.**
(v.5)

John 13:34-35

*³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ **By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**"*

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon (v4)
- because of Philemon's love for God & His people.
(v.5)
- Philemon is **an obedient disciple** of Jesus (v.5)

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon (v4)
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(v.5)
- Philemon is an obedient disciple of Jesus (v.5)
- Paul **encourages** Philemon through sharing (v.4-5)

WHO MIGHT YOU PRAY FOR & ENCOURAGE TODAY?

- Send an email, text or letter, or make a phone call.
- Let them know you thank God for them, and for the faith & obedience you see in their life.

Let's be a community of disciples who encourage and affirm one another in the Lord!

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul prays for effectiveness in sharing faith (v.6)

⁶ *I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.*

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon (v4)
- because of Philemon's love for God & His people.
- Philemon is an obedient disciple of Jesus (v.5)
- Paul encourages Philemon through sharing (v.4-5)
- Paul **prays for effectiveness** in sharing **faith in fellowship** (v.6)

Philippians 3:7-8

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

Philippians 3:10

¹⁰ *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death*

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (v.4-7)

- Paul gives thanks to God for Philemon (v4)
- because of Philemon's love for God & His people.
- Philemon is an obedient disciple of Jesus (v.5)
- Paul encourages Philemon through sharing (v.4-5)
- Paul prays for effectiveness in sharing faith in fellowship (v.6)
- Paul **has been refreshed** by Philemon (v.7)

REFRESHING OUGHT TO FLOW IN SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

- Refreshing should be a natural outcome of genuine fellowship in Christ.

(cf. 2 Tim 1:16; Rom 15:32; 2 Cor 7:13)

If you feel dry, don't give up meeting together with God's people. Make this a priority in your weekly rhythms.

Paul's **appeal** for Onesimus

(v8-22)

Paul's appeal for Onesimus (v.8-22)

- based on **love** (not power) v.8-9
- based on **empathy** (not distance) v.9-10
- based on **sacrifice** (not slavery) v.12-14
- based on **the transforming power of the Gospel**
at work in the lives of believers v.11, 15-22

HOW WELL DO WE KNOW EACH OTHER?

- Do we know those who gather on Sundays?
- Do we allow ourselves to be known?
- How might we grow in empathy toward one another?

Remember Christ is all, and in all (Col 3:11) and His love binds us together!

Philemon 1:17-19

17 So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. 18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—

Final greetings + a Warning! (v.23-25)

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. ²⁵ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

2 Timothy 4:10

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.