

Philemon
A Letter to a Friend
Philemon 1-14

I. Paul's Greeting – 1-3

1. Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ – 1
Written from Roman prison
Paul sees himself there as servant of Christ
Timothy is with him and sends greetings
2. Written to Philemon & family – 1-2
Philemon – “our beloved fellow worker” – 1
Apphia – “our sister” (Philemon’s wife?) – 2
Archippus – “our fellow soldier” - 2
Perhaps Philemon’s son? – Pastor? – Col. 4:17
Church met in their home – 2
3. Ties to Church at Colosse
Onesimus – Col. 4:9 “one of you”
Epaphras – Col. 1:7-8; 4:12-13; Phile. 23
4. Grace & peace from God & Jesus – 3
Paul is going to deal with a delicate issue
This family will need God’s grace & peace

II. Paul's Dear Friend – 4-7

1. Thankful & praying for Philemon – 4-6
May have met Paul in Ephesus – Acts 19:1, 10
May have been led to Christ by Paul – Phile. 19
May have heard more recently from Epaphras
Col. 1:7-8
Hearing of his love & faith – 4-5
He loved the Lord & the people of God
Praying also for his effective response - 6
That his faith would be well communicated
Christ-like response to this issue
2. Paul's confidence in his response – 7
Rejoices that Philemon will respond in love
He is known for his love of fellow believers

III. Story Behind the Letter

Onesimus – a slave who served Philemon
His name means “useful” or “profitable”
But he was “useless” to Philemon – 11
He ran away - perhaps stole from Philemon - 18
In Rome – He met Paul, who was in prison
Paul – led him to faith in Jesus Christ – 10
He was transformed by God’s grace
He became useful to Paul – 11-13
Transformed thief becomes a giver – Eph 4:28
Onesimus – must be reconciled to his master
Thus Paul writes this letter to Philemon

IV. Paul's Intercession – 8-14

1. His gracious approach – 8-9
He could come with apostolic authority
But he comes in love beseeching him
As Paul the aged one

As the prisoner of Jesus Christ

2. Introduction of the “new man” – 10-11
My son in the faith – “whose father I became”
“Useless one” is now “useful” to you & me
3. Need for reconciliation – 12-14
I am sending him & asking you to receive him
“Sending my very heart”
I would have kept him -13
He ministered to me as I know you would have
“Serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment
for the gospel”
But I could not keep him – 14
He belongs to you & you must decide
“I preferred to do nothing without your consent”
“That your goodness might not be by compulsion
but of your own accord”