

My Favorite Thing About PHILEMON

Philemon v. 7-11

January 15, 2022

Paul was a prisoner in Rome

Philemon was a leader in the church at Colossae and a wealthy slave owner.

Onesimus was Philemon's useless runaway slave who made his way to Rome.

A note on slavery in ancient Rome:

- 85% of Rome's population were slaves.
- Slavery was not based on ethnicity –
 - Some became slaves through conquest.
 - Some sold themselves to pay a debt or improve their financial position (slavery was a way out of poverty).
 - Some were born into slavery.
- Slaves were often better off than freemen - they were assured food, clothing and shelter.
- Slaves were often professionals – MD's, lawyers, teachers, etc.
- Slaves could purchase their freedom.

God saw to it that Onesimus and Paul met and as a result Onesimus was converted and transformed – he went from useless to useful – and he became like a son to Paul. However, even though Paul loved Onesimus dearly and hated the thought of losing him, Onesimus belonged to Philemon, so back to Philemon he must go.

Before sending Onesimus home, Paul wrote a letter, which brings us to **My Favorite Things About PHILEMON ---- Forgiveness & Reconciliation**

Dear Phil,

Grace and peace to you and your family.

I thank God for you and I really value our friendship.

Regarding Onesimus, I could tell you what to do, but I love you and I'm old and in prison, so, I am going to appeal to you instead.

Onesimus is very dear to me. So dear, in fact, that I didn't want to let him go, but I don't have your permission to keep him.

I know he was useless, but he has changed, so I know he is going to be useful to you now, which is why I'm sending him home.

Maybe he left you for a short time, so that when he returned to you, he would no longer be a slave, but a brother in Jesus.

So, if you have any regard for me, you will accept him as if it were me who is visiting.

If he has stolen anything, put it on my account – I guarantee payment. (remember that I saved your life once.....)

I have supreme confidence that you will do the right thing and even more than I ask.

I hope to visit soon, so prepare my room.

The gang says, "Hi"

May the grace of God be with you.

Paul - {RSV – Roshelle's Standard Version}

Under Roman law, Philemon could have had Onesimus executed and no one would have even noticed. But Paul was asking Philemon to do something else – something different – something revolutionary – something Christlike. Paul was asking Philemon to:

- Accept
- Forgive
- Restore

Paul reminded Philemon that once he had also been lost in sin, but through the preaching of Paul, had been reconciled to God and forgiven.

Paul was asking Philemon to live out the practical implications of the gospel: you are forgiven, so forgive.

All of us have sold ourselves into slavery to sin and have run away from our Master.

- **Genesis 3:8** - They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
- **Psalms 14:1-3** - The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. ² The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.
- **Romans 3:23** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- **Romans 5:10** - For if while we were enemies...

We are all God's "*Onesimus*", but when Jesus died for us, our status changed. We are no longer slaves, but are now sons and daughters of God. We are forgiven and restored.

- **Romans 5:8** - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- **1 John 4:10** - In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.
- **Galatians 4:7** - Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Therefore,

We are accepted – Accept

We are forgiven – Forgive

We are restored – Restore

That's why **forgiveness and reconciliation are My Favorite Things About PHILEMON.**