

## Key Terms in Philemon

Philemon is one of Paul's letters that is commonly referred to as a "prison epistle." Paul speaks of his "imprisonment" 5x in just 25 short verses. Paul writes this letter to Onesimus as an "appeal" to accept his runaway "slave" Philemon back, no longer as a slave, but rather as a "beloved brother" (v. 16). A key to Paul's appeal is that Paul and Philemon are "partners" (v. 17) in the Gospel, as now Onesimus is also.

# *The Letter of Paul to PHILEMON*

## *Salutation*

- 1 Paul, a **prisoner** of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  
To Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker,
- 2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your 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 always, making mention of you in my prayers,  
5 because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;
- 6 *and I pray* that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.
- 7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.
- 8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you *to do* what is proper,  
9 yet for love's sake I rather **appeal** to you—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a **prisoner** of Christ Jesus—

## *Plea for Onesimus, a Free Man*

- 10 I **appeal** to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my **imprisonment**,  
11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.
- 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,  
13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my **imprisonment** for the gospel;
- 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.
- 15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated *from you* for a while, that you would have him back forever,
- 16 no longer as a **slave**, but more than a **slave**, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
- 17 If then you regard me a **partner**, accept him as *you would* me.
- 18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;  
19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you

owe to me even your own self as well).

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

24 *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

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