

# The Epistle to Philemon

## Lesson One: Chapter 1:1-25

### Introduction of Paul the Apostle's Letter to Philemon

- Authorship: Paul the Apostle
  - Vs. 1a – “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother”
- Where and when written?
  - In Roman prison: One of Paul's Prison Epistle written at the end of his life and ministry while waiting his death by beheading: Acts 28:16-31
    - Vs. 1a – “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother”
    - Vs. 9b – “being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ”
    - Vs. 10b – “whom I have begotten in my bonds”
    - Seven Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Timothy, Titus and Philemon
    - Date of the Epistle: 64-65 AD
      - Acts 28:16 - And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.
      - Acts 28:30 - And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,
- Written to:
  - Vs. 1b – “unto Philemon”
  - Vs. 2 - And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house
- Greeting: Philemon 1:3 - Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - “Grace” – Unmerited favor
  - “peace” - “the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ”
  - True source for both – “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

### Description of Three Individual involved with the letter

- Paul
  - Paul suffered for Jesus Christ and the ministry: Vs 1. – “a prisoner of Jesus Christ”
  - Paul is both mature in the Lord and physically: Vs. 9b – “being such an one as Paul the aged”
  - Paul is a prayer warrior: Vs. 4 – I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,
  - Paul saw the benefit of other Christians: Vs. 13a – “Whom I would have retained with me,
- Philemon
  - Philemon is loved by Paul: Vs. 1 – “our dearly beloved”
  - Philemon is serving the Lord and other believers: Vs. 1 – “fellowlabourer”
  - Philemon is using his possessions for the glory of God: Vs. 2 – “to the church in thy house”
  - Philemon is a man of love and faith: Vs. 5 - Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;
  - Philemon has a great testimony: Vs. 6 - That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.
  - Philemon is ministering to others: Vs. 7 - For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.
- Onesimus
  - Onesimus was saved in Rome while he was incarcerated: Vs. 10b - my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds
  - Onesimus has shown great change in his life since his salvation: Vs. 11 - Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

- Onesimus minister to Paul while he was in bonds: Vs. 13b – “that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel”
- Onesimus is an escaped slave: Vs. 15a – “For perhaps he therefore departed for a season”

#### Paul’s ministry of intercession: Philemon 1:8-21

- Paul’s Method of Beseeking: Philemon 1:8-10 - 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:
  - Authorities Approach: Vs. 8 - Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient
    - Paul’s authority through his apostleship could accomplish his desire more conveniently.
  - Love Approach: Vs. 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. - I Peter 5:2-3
  - Who Paul is beseeking for? Vs. 10a – “I beseech thee for my son Onesimus”
- Paul’s Exhortation to Receive Philemon willingly as a brother in Christ: Philemon 1:12-16
  - Paul returning Onesimus back to slavery: Vs. 12 - Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:
    - Exhortation to rest in being a slave: I Corinthians 7:17-24
    - Reason for being sent back: I Corinthians 12:6-10
    - First Exhortation on how to be a slave: Ephesians 6:5-8
    - Second Exhortation on how to be a slave: Colossians 3:22-24
    - Third Exhortation on how to be a slave: I Peter 2:18-20
    - Fourth Exhortation on how to be a slave: Titus 2:9-10
  - Paul wants Philemon’s actions to be willingly: Vs. 14 - But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.
    - Giving willingly: II Corinthians 9:7-8
    - David testifies of God wanting to test our hearts: I Chronicles 29:17a
    - How God Test our Hearts: Hebrews 4:12
  - Paul wants Philemon’s relationship with Onesimus to change: Vs.15-16 - 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?
    - Our relationship with God changed, so should our relationship with other believers change
    - John 15:12-17; I John 3:1-2
- Paul’s Willingness to be Responsible for Onesimus’ wrong doing: Philemon 1:17-19 - 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.
  - Intercession that more than words
  - Did our Lord intercede for us just in words or with deeds? John 10:11; I John 3:16-18
- Paul’s Reason and Confidence in this act of intercession: Philemon 1:20-21
  - Paul’s hope in his act of intercession for Onesimus to Philemon: Vs. 20 - Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.
    - “have joy”
    - “refresh my bowels” – His heart
  - The reason for Paul’s hope: Vs. 21 - Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. - I Corinthians 8:7-8; Philippians 4:17; II Corinthians 5:10

Closing of the Paul's Letter to Philemon: Philemon 1:22–25 - But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. (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.

- Paul has hope even in prison: Vs. 22 - But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. - James 4:13-15
  - Was Paul released? He was beheaded as a martyr and sent to be with our Lord.
- Paul's fellow-prisoner: Vs. 23 - "Epaphras"
- Paul's fellow-laborers: Vs. 24 - "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas"
- Paul's blessing to Philemon: Vs. 25 - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.