

INTRODUCTION.

WE ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING THE ~ VERY BRIEF ~ LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

▶▶ This little letter, ~ more like a postcard, ~ is the shortest ~ of all of Paul's writings.

▷▷ Not ~ "wish you were here." ⇔⇔ Serious matter dealing with relationships

AS NOTED WHEN WE BEGAN, ~ PERHAPS ~ WE CAN SUMMARIZE THE LETTER ~ THIS way.

▶▶ A runaway slave, ~ Onesimus, ~ has met up with Paul and been converted, ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and Paul sends him back ~ to his former master, ~ Philemon, ~ with a letter, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ explaining ~ how Paul wants Philemon ~ to handle the situation of a returned slave ~ who is now a brother in Christ.

PRESENTLY, ~ WE ARE MAKING OUR WAY THROUGH ~ PAUL'S GENERAL APPEAL ~ ON behalf of Onesimus, ~ verses 8-16.

▶▶ To bring us up to speed, ~ let's review ~ the overall paragraph.

▶▶ In verses 8-11, ~ looked at, ~ Paul makes his general appeal ~ by first ~ describing ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the remarkable change ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that has happened ~ to Onesimus. ¶¶ 1/10

▶▶ In *verses 12-14*, ~ Paul explains ~ how helpful ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Onesimus would be to him ~ in his imprisonment.

↪↪ But Paul knew ~ he should send ~ Onesimus back ~ to reconcile with Philemon.

▶▶ Paul then suggests, ~ in *verses 15-16*, ~ that God ~ has been sovereignly involved ~ in this situation, ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so that ~ Philemon may receive Onesimus back now ~ as a fellow Christian.

▶▶ Today ~ we'll finish up ~ Paul's general appeal ~ on behalf of Onesimus, ~ *verses 12-16*.

AGAIN, ~ IN VERSES 12-14, ~ PAUL EXPLAINS ~ HOW HELPFUL ONESIMUS WOULD BE TO him ~ in his imprisonment.

BUT PAUL KNEW ~ HE SHOULD SEND ~ ONESIMUS BACK ~ ¶¶

▶▶ to reconcile with Philemon.

IN VERSE 12, ~ PAUL INFORMS PHILEMON THAT HE'S SENDING ONESIMUS BACK.

I AM SENDING HIM BACK TO YOU, ~ SENDING MY VERY HEART.

▶▶ The idea here is this.

▷▷ Philemon, ~ I am sending Onesimus back to you ~ as a part ~ of myself.

▶▶ Basically, ~ Paul is saying ~ he is sending ~ his own self ~ to Philemon. ¶¶ 2/10

▶▶ And ~ he expects Onesimus ~ to be treated as such.

▷▷ A fact Paul makes clear ~ in [verse 17](#)

MOREOVER, ~ TO DESCRIBE A SLAVE AS ~ "MY VERY HEART" ~ identifies Onesimus ~ ¶¶

▶▶ within the new frame of reference ~ in Christ.

▶▶ This identification ~ serves ~ to force Philemon ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to accept Onesimus's new status ~ a brother in the Lord.

▷▷ Human social status did not change.

▷▷ But this new relationship supersedes it

▶▶ Additionally, ~ this would force Philemon to realize that now ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he must deal with Onesimus ~ with Christ-like love, ~ not human emotion

THAT PAUL ~ IS SENDING ONESIMUS BACK ~ SHOWS US ~ THE IMPORTANCE ~ OF reconciliation, ~ and ~ of forgiveness.

▶▶ The reconciliation ~ that Jesus achieved ~ between God and humanity ~ ¶¶

▷▷ makes it possible ~ for believers ~ truly to be reconciled ~ to one another.

▶▶ As evidence ~ of being reconciled to God, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ believers are called ~ to pursue reconciliation ~ with others. ¶¶ 3/10

▶▶Rom. 12:18, ~ CSB ~ If possible, ~ as far as it depends on you, ~ live at peace with everyone.

▷▷As noted when began Philemon, ~ we are to be peacemakers, ~ not troublemakers.

▷▷And we are to do all that we can, ~ short of moral and theological compromise, ~ ¶¶

↳↳to live in peace with everyone ~ and ~ to promote peace in our church.

▶▶Pursuing reconciliation with others ~ is so important ~ ¶¶

▷▷that Jesus warns his followers ~ that failure to do so ~ can cause a rift ~ in their own fellowship with God.

▶▶Jesus in sermon on mount.

▷▷If you ~ refuse to forgive others, ~ your Father ~ will not ~ forgive your sins.

▷▷Personal fellowship with God ~ is in view in these verses ~ not ~ salvation from sin.

▷▷A believer cannot ~ ¶¶

↳↳walk in fellowship with God ~ if he refuses ~ to forgive others.

↳↳Is. 59:2 (CSB), ~ But your iniquities ~ are separating you ~ from your God,
~ and your sins ~ have hidden ~ his face from you ~ so that ~ he does not listen.

▶▶That is why ~ in the Lord's Prayer ~ God's people are to pray, ~ ¶¶

▷▷Forgive us our sins, ~ for we also forgive ~ everyone who sins against us (Luke 11:4 NIV). ¶¶ 4/10

▶▶ Since God has forgiven us ~ for our rebellion against him, ~~ we are to forgive others ~ who have wronged us.

▶▶ As Paul says in Colossians, ~ Just as the Lord has forgiven you, ~ so you are also ~ to forgive {Col. 3:13, CSB}.

▷▷ Not optional

▶▶ As noted, ~~ No matter how much ~ a person has done against us, ~~ it does not come close ~ 77

▷▷ to what we had done ~ against God.

↳↳ Yet, ~ through Jesus, ~ God the Father ~ has ~ freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly ~ forgiven all those who

▶▶ Believers are even instructed ~ to seek reconciliation with others ~ before worshiping God.

↳↳ Matt. 5:23-24

▶▶ There is even ~ an implied challenge for believers ~ to forgive those ~ who do not ask for it.

▷▷ Jesus did so ~ on the cross.

▶▶ Father, ~ forgive them, ~ for they do not know ~ what they are doing.

▷▷ And Stephen followed ~ his Master's example ~ as he was martyred.

↳↳ Lord, ~ do not hold this sin ~ against them. 77 5/10

▶▶ To give us a fuller picture of the importance of reconciliation, ~ 4 neg. consequences

▷▷ ① Church divisions ⇔⇔ ② Focus is off the gospel

↳↳ ③ Hurts personal witness ⇔⇔ ④ Open door for Satan

▶▶ Hope picture forming of importance of forgiveness & recon. ⇔⇔ How seriously God

IN VERSE 13, ~ PAUL NOTES HIS DESIRE ~ FOR ONESIMUS ~ TO STAY IN ROME WITH him. ⇔⇔ Read vs. 13

PAUL, ~ AS AN APOSTLE, ~ COULD HAVE THE RIGHT ~ TO CLAIM THIS SERVICE.

▶▶ Nevertheless, ~ he does not want, ~ under any circumstances, ~ to encroach upon the decision ~ ¶¶

▷▷ which only Philemon, ~ as Onesimus' rightful master, ~ can make.

THE APOSTLES ~ WERE NOT ~ SOME OVERBEARING DICTATORS, ~ THROWING THEIR weight around.

▶▶ They never abused their authority.

▶▶ Mk. 10:42-45

▶▶ Models of church leadership.

▷▷ Peter summarizes the leadership model ~ every church leader is to follow.

↳↳ 1 Pet. 5:1-4 ¶¶ 6/10

▷▷Elders and pastors ~ are to lead ~ by example, ~ not ~ by force.

↳↳They are never ~ to ~ abuse their authority ~ or ~ bully or steamroll people.

→→And no believer ~ should submit to any pastor/elder ~ that's abusing his authority.

↳↳Rather, ~ they should get rid of that leader.

IN VERSE 14, ~ PAUL TELLS PHILEMON THAT ~ HE WILL DO NOTHING ~ WITHOUT Philemon's consent.

PAUL DOES NOT WANT PHILEMON ~ TO FEEL ~ THAT HE IS BEING FORCED ~ ¶¶

▶▶to forgive and reconcile with ~ Onesimus.

▶▶No doubt ~ Paul wants him to be encouraged ~ to let Christ-like love ~ do its work.

▷▷For Christlike love ~ will definitely ~ lead Philemon to ~ willingly ~ forgive and reconcile w/ Onesimus.

▶▶This, ~ however, ~ cannot happen ~ if Philemon is compelled ~ to act ~ against his own will.

▷▷Christ-like love ~ can only express itself concretely ~ on the basis ~ of a decision ~ ¶¶

↳↳that is ~ freely ~ arrived at.

AS WE NOTED AT THE BEGINNING, ~ IN VERSES 12-14, ~ PAUL EXPLAINS ~ ¶¶

HOW HELPFUL ONESIMUS WOULD BE TO HIM ~ IN HIS IMPRISONMENT. ¶¶ 7/10

▶▶ But Paul knew ~ he should send ~ Onesimus back ~ to reconcile with Philemon.

THEN IN VERSES 15-16, ~ TO WHICH WE NOW TURN, ~ PAUL SUGGESTS ~ ¶¶

THAT GOD ~ HAS BEEN SOVEREIGNLY INVOLVED ~ IN THIS SITUATION, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ so that ~ Philemon may receive Onesimus back now ~ as a fellow Christian.

▶▶ Verses 15-16

LET'S TAKE THE PHRASE, ~ "HE WAS SEPARATED."

▶▶ Theological passive.

▷▷ Use of the passive voice of a verb ~ ~ with God ~ as the implied agent.

▶▶ IOW, ~ the passive verb for ~ he was separated ~ plainly implies ~ that Onesimus ~ ¶¶

▷▷ was separated from Philemon ~ in the ~ providential and hidden ~ outworking ~ of God's will.

▶▶ TPID, ~ Paul acknowledged ~ that God ~ was at work behind the scenes ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in this separation ~ of Onesimus and Philemon.

NOW, ~ PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND.

▶▶ What Onesimus did ~ was wrong. ¶¶ 8/10

▶▶ But ~ God can overrule wrong ~ and use it ~ to accomplish His ultimate purpose.

▶▶ Rom. 8:28.

▷▷ And we know ~ that for those who love God ~ all things ~ work together for good, ~
for those who are called ~ according to his purpose.

▶▶ In his testimony to ~ the sovereign, ~ providential direction of God, ~ Joseph said this ~
to his fearful brothers.

▷▷ Gen. 50:20, ⇔⇔ CSB ~ You planned evil against me; ~ God planned it for good ~ to
bring about the present result ~ the survival of many people.

PAUL ACKNOWLEDGED ~ THAT GOD WAS AT WORK ~ BEHIND THE SCENES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ in this separation ~ of Onesimus and Philemon.

▶▶ God carried out his hidden purpose, ~ the salvation of Onesimus, ~ even ~ in the apparent
turmoil ~ of human events.

LOOKING AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 15, ~ NOTICE WHAT PAUL SAYS.

▶▶ For perhaps ~ this is why ~ he was separated from you.

▶▶ The word for ~ "perhaps" ~ does not ~ express doubt or uncertainty.

▶▶ Rather, ~ it calls for ~ further deliberation ~ and the need ~ to see beyond ~ what is
apparent.

▶▶ We need to learn this lesson ¶¶ 9/10

AND WHEN WE FACE DIFFICULT TIMES, ~ WE MUST TRUST ~ IN GOD'S LOVING CARE ~
and ~ in his wisdom and power ~ over all events.

▶▶ He may be using the difficulty ~ to bring people to himself, ~ to develop character, ~ and
to help us grow.

▶▶ When thro' fiery trials ~ thy pathway shall lie, ~ My grace, ~ all-sufficient, ~ shall be
thy supply: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ The flame shall not hurt thee; ~ I only design ~ Thy dross to consume, ~ and thy gold
to refine.

LET'S PRAY 10/10