

INTRODUCTION. ⇔⇔ TODAY CONTINUE OUR STUDY OF PHILEMON.

THE FIRST SEVEN VERSES, ~ WHICH WE'VE LOOKED AT, ~ WERE INTRODUCTORY.

▶▶1-3, ~ greetings. ⇔⇔ Philemon ⇔⇔ Apphia ⇔⇔ Archippus ⇔⇔ Church (not private)

▶▶4-7, ~ Paul's statement of appreciation ~ for his friend Philemon.

▷▷Genuine faith. ⇔⇔ Christlike love ⇔⇔ Generosity ⇔⇔ Refreshing influence.

▶▶In relation to statement: ~ Ours ~ is very much ~ an action faith.

▷▷When we live out our faith, ~ we will grow spiritually, ~ and we will deepen ~ ∩∩

↳↳our understanding and experience ~ of all the spiritual blessings we enjoy.

IN VERSES 8-16 OF PHILEMON, ~ WE FIND ~ Paul's *general* appeal ~ on behalf of Onesimus.

▶▶And then in *verses 17-20*, ~ Paul gets into ~ *specific* requests.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL BEGIN ~ TO FOCUS ~ ON VERSES 8-16, ~ PAUL'S GENERAL APPEAL ~ on behalf of ~ Onesimus.

▶▶Simple overview.

▶▶Paul makes his general appeal ~ by first ~ describing ~ the remarkable change ~ ∩∩

▷▷that has happened ~ to Onesimus, ~ *verses 8-11*. ⇔⇔ Today ∩∩ 1/11

▶▶ 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 ~ that God ~ has been sovereignly involved ~ in this situation, ~¶¶

▷▷ so that ~ Philemon may receive Onesimus back now ~ as a fellow Christian, ~ [verses 15-16](#).

↳↳ Onesimus will therefore be ~ all the more useful ~ to Philemon.

OK, ~ FIRST, ~ THE REMARKABLE CHANGE ~ THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ONESIMUS, ~ verses 8-11.

VERSE 8; ~¶ CSB, ~ ¶¶

FOR THIS REASON, ~ ALTHOUGH ~ I HAVE GREAT BOLDNESS IN CHRIST ~ to command you ~ to do what is right.

▶▶ The phrase, ~ "for this reason," ~ carries on the thought ~ from [verse 7](#).

▶▶ The implication here ~ no doubt ~ is that ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the love, ~ generosity, ~ and ~ encouragement ~ Philemon had shown to other believers ~ ought to be extended ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to include Onesimus, ~ regardless ~ of what he had done ~ to Philemon. ¶¶ 2/11

▶▶IOW, ~ we are not free ~ to pick and choose ~ which believers deserve ~ ¶¶

▷▷to receive our ~ forgiveness, ~ love, ~ generosity, ~ and encouragement.

▶▶We should extend these things ~ to every believer ~ regardless ~ of what they've done to us.

▶▶Our heavenly Father ~ is our model here of this

THEN PAUL ~ REFERENCES ~ HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

▶▶He says, ~ although ~ I have great boldness in Christ ~ to command you to do what is right/proper.

▶▶This is probably not ~ a veiled threat

▶▶Simply acknowledging that he has this authority as an apostle, ~ but, ~ as we'll see, ~ ¶¶

▷▷he is refusing to use it ~ in this situation.

▶▶Rather, ~ Paul wanted Philemon ~ to draw ~ his own conclusions ~ and to make ~ his own decision ~ ¶¶

▷▷about what is fitting ~ for a Christian to do.

NOW, ~ PAUL DOES NOT SPELL OUT FOR US ~ WHAT HE MEANS BY PROPER HERE.

▶▶But the context indicates ~ what Paul means.

▶▶He wants Philemon ~ to forgive and be reconciled to ~ Onesimus. ¶¶ 3/11

▶▶ So, ~ the proper thing for Philemon to do ~ is forgiveness and reconciliation.

PHILEMON'S CULTURE ~ HAD CONDITIONED HIM ~ TO VIEW SLAVES ~ AS LESS THAN full persons ~ ¶¶

▶▶ who were deservedly consigned ~ to their lot by fate.

▶▶ And Philemon ~ would have been expected ~ to exact revenge ~ on one who ran away.

▶▶ But ~ what was culturally permissible ~ for dealing with a runaway slave ~ ¶¶

▷▷ was at odds ~ with what is fitting ~ in God's kingdom. ⇒⇒ Same today

FORGIVENESS ~ WAS NOT ~ THE NORM ~ IN PHILEMON'S WORLD.

▶▶ But ~ it is ~ a fundamental requirement ~ for Christians.

▶▶ Paul makes that clear ~ in [Col. 3:13b](#).

▷▷ There ~ Paul tells us ~ we are to forgive ~ anyone ~ who offends us.

▷▷ And then ~ he tells us why.

↪↪ The Lord forgave you, ~ so you must ~ forgive others.

▶▶ Not something optional.

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

▷▷ to what we had done ~ against God. ¶¶ 4/11

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

▶▶ And, ~ like his love, ~ his forgiveness ~ doesn't end at conversion.

▷▷ It continues unabated. ⇨⇨ No expiration date. ⇨⇨ When we confess our sins

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ there are ~ no limits ~ on God's forgiveness of us.

PAUL CONTINUES ~ HIS GENERAL APPEAL ON BEHALF OF ONESIMUS, ~ VERSE 9.

YET FOR LOVE'S SAKE I PREFER TO APPEAL TO YOU—I, PAUL, AN OLD MAN AND NOW A prisoner also for Christ Jesus.

▶▶ As noted, ~ although Paul ~ certainly had the authority ~ to tell Philemon what to do, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he preferred ~ not to use his authority ~ in this particular situation.

▶▶ He wanted Philemon ~ to make ~ the final decision.

RATHER THAN APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, ~ PAUL'S APPEAL ~ was on the basis of love.

▶▶ Based on the context, ~ most likely ~ he was talking about ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Philemon's well-known Christ-like love ~ for the believers.

▶▶ Paul is saying that ~ to ~ receive back ~ and ~ forgive ~ Onesimus ~ would be ~ ¶¶

▷▷ a commendable expression ~ of Philemon's Christ-like love ~ to both ~ Onesimus and Paul. ⇨⇨ And would set example ¶¶ 5/11

▶▶ Our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior ~ toward one another ~ are to be ~ ¶¶

▷▷ characterized and governed by ~ ἀγάπη, ~ i.e., ~ Christ-like love.

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ our Christ-like love ~ will cause us ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to always do ~ what is proper ~ in our relationships with other believers.

▷▷ On the other hand, ~ nothing good ~ is produced by ~ thoughts of revenge and hurt feelings.

↪↪ In contrast, ~ love will find a way ~ to do right.

▷▷ Paul understood this

AT THE END OF VERSE 9, ~ PAUL ADDS A PARENTHETICAL COMMENT.

▶▶ Here he describes himself ~ two ways.

▶▶ As ~ an elderly man ~ and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

▶▶ Paul could indeed have been considered ~ an old man ~ because ~ ¶¶

▷▷ he was about sixty or older ~ in a society ~ where the normal lifespan ~ was almost certainly under forty.

▷▷ And the hard life he had lived ~ and the sufferings he had endured for the sake of the gospel ~ ¶¶

↪↪ no doubt ~ had taken their toll ~ and prematurely aged him. ¶¶ 6/11

▷▷ This fact, ~ should cause Philemon ~ to respond in sympathy and love ~ ¶¶

↳↳ for the valiant old warrior ~ who had led him to Christ.

▶▶ If that were not enough to elicit Philemon's sympathy, ~¶¶

▷▷ Paul reminds him ~ that he is a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

▷▷ Philemon could not possibly ~ turn down a request ~ from a believer in such honorable suffering.

▶▶ Age is not respected ~ in this society in which we live

IN VERSES 10-11, ~ PAUL BRINGS UP ~ THE SUBJECT OF HIS REQUEST, ~ ONESIMUS, ~ and describes him ~ two ways.

1st, ~ IN VERSE 10 ~ PAUL NOTES ~ THAT ONESIMUS ~ IS NOW A CHRISTIAN.

▶▶ He met up with Paul ~ and Paul led him to the Lord.

▷▷ He became Onesimus' spiritual father.

▷▷ Paul often used ~ the father/child analogy ~ for those he had led to Christ.

▶▶ But think about this. ~¶ Paul did not have to word it like this

▷▷ Making larger point

2nd, ~ PAUL DESCRIBES ONESIMUS ~ AS TRANSFORMED. ¶¶ 7/11

▶▶ In verse 11. ~ he tells Philemon, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Formerly ~ he was useless to you, ~ but now ~ he is indeed useful ~ to you and to me.

▶▶ In Colossians, ~ Paul calls him ~ our faithful and dearly loved brother.

▷▷ He is no longer that useless slave, ~ he is now ~ useful.

▶▶ He is a new creation in Christ, ~ Paul says.

▶▶ The name ~ 'Onesimus' means ~ 'useful' or 'profitable', ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so ~ with a touch of humor, ~ Paul tells Philemon ~ that Onesimus ~ is finally living up ~ to his useful name.

A SIGN OF GENUINE CONVERSION ~ IS THAT ~ OF A PURPOSEFUL, ~ USEFUL, ~ AND ~ fruitful life.

▶▶ Talked about this recently, ~ and perhaps it bears repeating.

▶▶ Whereas ~ we are most definitely ~ saved ~ by faith ~ and not by works, ~¶¶

▷▷ true faith ~ definitely works!

▷▷ For we ~ are his workmanship, ~ created in Christ Jesus ~ for good works, ~ which God ~ prepared ahead of time ~ for us to do (Eph. 2:10).

▶▶ True Christian good works ~ are not a matter of slavish obedience, ~ but motivated ~ ¶¶

▷▷ from a heart of gratitude ~ for benefits and blessings received. ¶¶ 8/11

COMING BACK TO ONESIMUS, ~ HE IS AN ILLUSTRATION ~ OF THE CHANGE ~ THE gospel makes.

▶▶ From "useless" ~ to "useful."

▶▶ What a wonderful change ~ in my life has been wrought, ~ since Jesus ~ came into my heart', ~ an old hymn says.

▶▶ Conversion ~ makes us ~ children of God.

▶▶ Conversion ~ reconciles us ~ to our Creator.

▶▶ Conversion ~ changes our direction, ~ from eternal death ~ to eternal life.

▶▶ Conversion ~ enables us ~ to live a fruitful life.

▶▶ Conversion ~ motivates us ~ to want to live ~ a life that is pleasing to God.

▶▶ Ezek. 36:26, ~ CSB ~ I will ~ give you a new heart ~ and put a new spirit within you; ~ I will ~ remove your heart of stone ~ and give you a heart of flesh.

▷▷ This happens ~ when we accept Jesus ~ as Savior and Lord.

▷▷ At that moment, ~ God ~ removes our sin-hardened hearts, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ gives us "a new heart," ~ and puts "a new spirit within" us.

▷▷ "a new heart" and "a new spirit," ~ which by instinct ~ ¶¶

↳↳ wish ~ to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve God. ¶¶ 9/11

▶▶ Additionally, ~ in Ezek. 36:27 (NIV), ~ God says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ And I will put my Spirit in you ~ and move you ~ to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

▶▶ Perhaps put this way, ~ our new nature, ~ in conjunction with God the Holy Spirit ~ ¶¶

▷▷ draws us toward holiness.

▶▶ Sin and our sinful nature, ~ no longer wields the power over us ~ they once did.

▷▷ Their stranglehold over us ~ has been broken.

↳↳ There in the ground His body lay, ~ Light of the World by darkness slain. ~~ Then bursting forth in glorious day, ~ Up from the grave He rose again! ~~ ¶¶

→→ And as He stands In victory, ~ Sin's curse ~ has lost Its grip on me; ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ For I am His and He is mine ~ Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

▷▷ Freedom ~ from and death to ~ sin ~ allows us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to offer ourselves ~ as willing servants ~ of the Lord Jesus Christ, ~ ¶¶

→→ who continues ~ to work in us ~ to make us more like Him.

▷▷ And we have this promise. ⇨⇨ Phil. 1:6

↳↳ And I am sure of this, ~ that he ~ who began a good work in you ~ will bring it to completion ~ at the day of Jesus Christ. ¶¶ 10/11

CONCLUSION.

MY . . . , ~ ~ WE ARE ~ NEW CREATIONS IN CHRIST.

▶▶ The old has passed away; ~ behold, ~ the new has come.

LET'S PRAY 11/11