

Philemon Lesson 01

Philemon Chapter 1

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Website: <http://www.kjvbiblestudies.net>

Email: mail@kjvbiblestudies2.net

Memory verses for this week: *2 Cor 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

Introduction: We begin and conclude a study on Philemon this week. This is one of a very few books with only one chapter. The book of Philemon is another of Paul's prison epistles written around 64 A.D. Onesimus is the main figure in this book, and he was a slave of Philemon who had robbed his master and fled to Rome.

Philemon is a man well known to Timothy, and Paul was instrumental in leading Onesimus to the Lord here in Rome. The chapter centers around Paul sending Onesimus back with this letter from Paul.

I. Apostolic Greetings

Phile 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

Phile 1:2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

Phile 1:3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This letter is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house. As we have found in our church history study recently, many of the early churches were people who came together in church capacity at a home of one of the members, many times the pastor of the church. It is believed that Apphia was the wife of Philemon and Archippus may have been his son. Paul apparently knew that Archippus was a Christian as he calls him a fellow soldier in verse 2. From Colossians 4:17 we gather that Archippus was a preacher and possibly a pastor there in Colosse.

Col 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

It may be that Philemon was well acquainted with Timothy and highly respected him which is why Paul included his name in the salutation. Paul declares again that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and considered this the exact will of God for His life.

J. Vernon McGee said this about Paul being a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” I have noticed that several of the commentaries try to change this and explain it away by teaching that Paul really meant that he was a prisoner because he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. But that is not what Paul said, and Paul had the ability of saying exactly what he had in mind. He was using the Greek language, which is a very flexible, versatile language. He said he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

If we had been there we might have had a conversation with Paul like this:

“Poor Paul, it’s too bad these Romans put you in jail.”

“They didn’t put me in jail.”

“Oh, we know what you mean. Those hateful religious rulers brought a charge against you.”

“They didn’t put me in jail either.”

“Who put you in jail, then?”

“Jesus Christ. I’m *His* prisoner.”

“You mean to tell me that you would serve Someone who would put you in prison?”

“Yes, when it’s His will for me to be in prison, I’m in prison. When it’s His will for me to be out of prison, I’ll be out of prison. When it’s His will for me to be sick, I’m going to be sick. I belong to Him. Since I belong to Him, I have learned to be content in whatsoever state I am in. Everything is all right. Don’t worry about me.”

Obviously, the letter to Philemon is one of the Prison Epistles. It goes along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

II. Paul’s Praise of Philemon

Phile 1:4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

Phile 1:5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

Philemon was apparently a man of excellent morals and of high character. Paul said he gave thanks for the love and faith exhibited in Philemon’s life. Paul said he remembered to always pray for Philemon. You and I should remember one another in prayer and ask God to give us this kind of love and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. We should be known as people who love the Lord and live such a way as to exemplify Christ in our daily walk.

Phile 1:6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Phile 1:7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Paul prays that Philemon's faith might be communicated to others. Reaching others for Jesus Christ is what every believer of Jesus should be about. We had a fellow out working on our air-conditioner yesterday, and being a young fellow, we could have talked about sports or his family or dozens of other topics.

But I asked him about whether he and his wife and children were in church and tried to share the importance of a good relationship with Jesus Christ and what that means to me. I don't know if he will ever come and visit, but I do think he will realize that unless he takes a leadership role in his family, his children may never come to know Christ as Lord and Savior. What we do affects our children much more than what we say.

In verse 7, Paul recounts how much Philemon had done in the comforting of the persecuted and helping the poor saints. If we truly love the Lord, we are going to love the brethren. When you are about to ask a favor of someone, it is good to remind them of your appreciation for the good they have done in the past.

James 2:14-17

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

III. Paul's Plea for Onesimus

Phile 1:8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

Phile 1:9 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.

Phile 1:10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Phile 1:11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

You might think it unusual that God would record a personal letter from Paul to

Philemon in His Word. But all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and God had a reason for us to hear this letter. I think it exemplifies how that we should be willing to help a brother who can not really help himself, and even go out on a limb to help him as Paul is about to do. Paul recommends Onesimus as one who would make rich amends for the misconduct of which he had been guilty; and on behalf of whom the apostle promises to make up any loss Philemon had sustained.

Another reason God probably recorded this to was to show us what a Christian's attitude towards slavery should be. Slaves were very common in Paul's day, and they were not treated properly as human beings but were more like merchandise bought and sold at will. The common slave was sold for approximately 500 days wages. But a skilled slave might go for ten times that amount. When a slave ran away, the owner could register his name and description with the officials and have him put on a wanted list.

Paul pleads for Onesimus as if he were his own son, and he was his own son in the faith. Paul could have used his apostolic authority and demanded that Philemon deal with Onesimus, but he rather pleads for love's sake. Paul says he is now the aged Paul and a prisoner of Jesus Christ. In verse 10, he mentions how Onesimus had come to know Christ while Paul was imprisoned there in Rome, and how he now has a changed character. When we are saved, the new spiritual man is born and gives us a new reason to live and a desire to serve the Lord.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

1 Pet 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 Pet 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

1 Pet 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

1 Pet 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Pet 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Phile 1:12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

Phile 1:13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

Phile 1:14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Phile 1:15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

Phile 1:16 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?

Phile 1:17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

Paul asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul. Being a fair man, Paul volunteers to give up Onesimus to Philemon that he might be restored. Paul could have desired for Onesimus to stay and minister unto him, but rather he asks that Onesimus be allowed to return to Philemon, not as a slave, but rather as a saved Christian Brother in Jesus Christ.

Phile 1:18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

Phile 1:19 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.

Phile 1:20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Phile 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Phile 1:22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Phile 1:23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

Phile 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Phile 1:25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Paul goes that extra mile for Onesimus when he promises to repay any debt that he might owe to Philemon. When we back our word with our pocket book, that means we mean business. When we built our church, and each of us had to sign our name on that mortgage that we individually agreed to repay that loan, that showed Bro. Scalf that we meant business and did not intend to start a work and not finish it.

And with God's help and blessings due to our faithfulness, the church was totally

paid for in less than five years. God rewards those who are willing to step out on faith.

In the Old Testament, A Hebrew that became very poor could sell himself into slavery. God gave strict orders that this was to last for just a few years and then that person was to be set free.

Deu 15:12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

Deu 15:13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:

Deu 15:14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

Deu 15:15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

So after six years, the Hebrew was to be set free and sent away with enough to begin a new life. If he loved his master, wife, and children, then he could remain a slave forever. Do we love our Master Jesus Christ enough to serve him as a bond slave. There is no greater to serve than our Great Lord.

Paul encourages Philemon to provide lodging for him also that if in God's Will that he be freed, he would come and visit and fellowship with him.

KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at email below.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Website: <http://www.kjvbiblestudies.net>

Email: mail@kjvbiblestudies2.net

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

