



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Philemon

Wednesdays
7.30-8.30PM

- I. Introduction
- II. Opening Greeting (1-3)
- III. Thanks and Prayers for Philemon (4-7)
- IV. Interceding for Onesimus (8-21)
- V. Closing Salutation (22-25)

Other related topics/issues:

- a. Slavery
- b. Restitution
- c. Propitiation
- d. Forgiveness

- Personal Reflection

January 13/20, 2020



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Philemon

Wednesdays
7.30-8.30PM

- **Introduction:** Who are the main characters in this epistle? When and where was this epistle written? What is the central message of this letter (in one sentence or one word)?
- **Opening Greeting** (1-3): How does Paul introduce himself? What are two words used by Paul to greet? How is Philemon's home different from a typical believer's home?
- **Thanks and Prayers for Philemon** (4-7): What are two qualities of Philemon that Paul recognizes? What is Paul's prayer? What is the great complement that Paul gives to Philemon in verse 7?
- **Interceding for Onesimus** (8-21): Who is Onesimus? Did Paul want to keep Onesimus? What does Paul request of Philemon? Could Paul have "commanded" Philemon? How can Onesimus crime & escape be seen of God's greater plan for his life? How is Paul offer of 'restitution' similar to what Christ did for sinners? Why was Paul confident that Philemon will accept his request? What will be new status of Onesimus? How can we be ministers of reconciliation?
- **Closing Salutation** (22-25): Who does Paul acknowledge in his closing remarks?
- **Personal Reflection:** *Philemon refreshed the lives of others ... How can the Lord use you to refresh others?*

Jan. 13, 2020

1. Introduction

Epistles in the New Testament

Who are the main characters in this epistle?

When and where was this epistle written?

What is the central message of this letter (in one sentence or one word)?

Epistles in the New Testament

- Epistle means letter or message
- **Authors of 21 Epistles in the New Testament**
 - Apostle Paul – 13 (see next slide)
 - Apostle Peter (one of 12 disciples) – I and II Peter
 - Apostle John (one of 12 disciples) – I, II, III John
 - James (half-brother of Jesus) – James
 - Jude (half-brother of Jesus) – Jude
 - Hebrews – author unknown
- Other 6 Books in NT: Mathew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Revelation

Paul's 13 epistles

In Chronological Order	Prison Epistles
I and II Thessalonians	
I and II Corinthians	Philemon (1)
Galatians	
Romans	Colossians (4)
Philemon	
Colossians	Ephesians (6)
Ephesians	
Philippians	Philippians (4)
I Timothy	
Titus	
II Timothy	

MAN of God

Born in Tarsus

Tribe of Benjamin

Pharisee, a faithful Jew

Taught by Rabbi Gamaliel

Persecutor of believers

Saved by Christ

Suffered & Died for Christ

MESSAGE

JESUS CHRIST, the Messiah
(born/died/rose again/returning)

KINGDOM of GOD

REPENTANCE

(13 Epistles)

Apostle PAUL

MISSION

Take Gospel to Jews and Gentiles

Strengthen Churches

AUDIENCE

Synagogues

Home Churches

Jewish Council

Marketplace, Prison, Ship

3 Missionary Journeys

Characters

Main Characters: Paul, Philemon, Onesimus

Paul - in prison, advocating for reconciliation

Philemon (means affectionate) - slave master, from Colosse, converted by Paul

Onesimus (means profitable) - runaway slave

Written: around 60 AD

Central Message

What is the central message of this letter
(in one sentence or one word)?

Theme/Word ...

Reconciliation

Forgiveness

Intercession

Love

2. Opening Greeting (1-3)

How does Paul introduce himself?

What are two words used by Paul to greet?

How is Philemon's home different from a typical believer's home?

Paul's introduction

Prisoner of Jesus Christ (not Roman Prisoner or apostle)

- Paul claims this title with joy and pride (not bitterness)
- Paul saw being bound to Christ as the ultimate freedom, not bondage

"Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:13, **Paul**)

"I have been crucified with Christ" (Colossians 2:20, **Paul**)

"departed ... rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name" (Acts 5:24, **Peter** after being beaten)

Christian Greetings

- “Grace” and “Peace” (3)
- Grace and Peace came through Christ
- ✓ God’s grace leads to peace with the Heavenly father + inner peace + peace with others.
- ✓ **God’s grace:** Christ, the Mediator and Reconciler
(Ephesians 2:14-18, Jews & Gentiles;
Colossians 1:20-23, Personal)

Philemon's home ... a blessed place

“and to the church in thy house” (2)

Apphia (maybe wife), Archippus (maybe son) ... a family of worshippers
... “as for me and my house ...”(Joshua 24:15)

✓ Jews met at synagogues, Christians met at homes (other home churches - Romans 16:5, Colossians 4:15)

“Ye are the temple of God” (I Corinthians 3:16, church)

“Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (I Corinthians 6:19, individual)

Philemon's home ... a blessed place

Do we have a church at home? Is our home suitable for a "house church"?

Is God present in our homes and is His name is glorified?

Our homes can be a church (born-again believers practicing Acts 2:42, and a place where sinners can find Christ)

Home fellowship and cottage meetings can grow to a local church
(Bethany Assembly began at home!)

Bethany House of Worship



3. Thanks & Prayers for Philemon (4-7)

What are two qualities of Philemon that Paul recognizes?

What is Paul's prayer?

What is the great complement that Paul gives to Philemon in verse 7?

Two admirable qualities of Philemon

Love for all believers & faith towards Jesus (Faith + works) (5)

Paul's Prayer for Philemon (6)

- Philemon's sharing of faith may be effective
 - Faith must be shared!
 - Our sharing is effective when full gospel is given, our personal life is a blameless, and faith is accompanied by loving works

Paul's great complement

Saints are refreshed by thee (7)

- Philemon's life was fragrant and fruitful
- His life gave great joy and encouragement to others

➤ Are we refreshing others?

“A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:25)

4. Interceding for Onesimus (8-21)

Who is Onesimus? Did Paul want to keep Onesimus?

What does Paul request of Philemon?

Could Paul have “commanded” Philemon?

Why was Paul confident that Philemon will accept his request? What will be new status of Onesimus?

How can Onesimus crime & escape be seen of God’s greater plan for his life?

How can we be ministers of reconciliation?

Onesimus

- Slave of Philemon
- Wronged his master and fled to Rome
- Converted by Paul
- Paul calls him my “my son” “whom I have begotten in my bonds”
- **Paul’s other ‘sons’** (Timothy, I Corinthians 4:17) Titus (Titus 1:4)
Corinthian believers (I Corinthians 4:14), Galatian believers (Galatians 4:19)

Paul's request

Paul does not command (despite his authority) ... instead, he appeals to Philemon (I beseech thee)

- ✓ More can be accomplished through love, than by exercising authority
- Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15) ... our obedience should be motivated by our love for God ... and not by fear, tradition, hypocrisy, or expectation of rewards.
- “For the love of Christ compels us” (Paul, II Corinthians 5:14)

Paul's request

Paul's appeal: Receive back Onesimus, with mercy (12)

- Runaway slaves could be punished by death
- Paul's appeal shows his love for Onesimus, now a brother-in-Christ
- Paul could have kept Onesimus but the right thing to do was to return the slave to his master, and let the master decide (13,14)

Paul's request – start here

Nature of Paul's Appeal: rational, emotional, spiritual

- Onesimus was once unprofitable, but is now profitable (11)
- Onesimus is now a brother (16,17)
- This act will bring joy and refresh Paul (7, 21)
- Paul will repay whatever is due on the account (19)

Paul's confidence in Philemon

- **Why was Paul confident that Philemon will accept his request?**
(Knowing that you will do more than I say, 21)
 - Philemon was converted by Paul
 - Philemon's respect for Paul
 - Philemon's love for the Lord and His saints
 - Philemon's character of 'refreshing others'
- **Onesimus Future?:** If Philemon accepts Paul's request, Onesimus may still remain a slave but will also be a brother-in-Christ in Philemon's household.

God's ways are past finding out: Slavery leads to eternal freedom

Onesimus
becomes a
slave



Wrongs
Philemon



Runs away to
Rome



There is no luck or coincidence in God's plan

New Life:
Slave to Saint



Receives
Gospel



Meets
Paul

5. Closing Salutation (22-25)

Who does Paul acknowledge in his closing remarks?

Closing

Paul's second request: Prepare a room for future visit (22)

- **Mark** – writer of Mark, faithful after early failure (II Timothy 4:11, Acts 13:13, Acts 15:36-39)
- **Aristarchus** – believer from Thessalonica (Colossians 4:10)
- **Luke** – helper until the end (II Timothy 4:11)
- **Demas** (II Timothy 4:10) ... left Paul for the world

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen” (26)

Other related topics

Restitution

Propitiation

Forgiveness

Slave-Master relationship

Paul, the burden bearer

Restitution

- **Meaning** - Compensation or payment for loss or damage caused
- Paul was willing to pay what Onesimus owed to Philemon's ... "put that on my account" (18)
- Christ did the same for us when he died on the cross for our sins

Propitiation

Propitiation means satisfaction

... Christ became a substitute for us and satisfied God's wrath

Why would God be angry & judge His own creation?

... Why would He simply not love & overlook all the sins?

“And love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as the **atoning sacrifice** for our sins” (1 John 4:10)

“And he is the **propitiation** for our sins” (1 John 2:2)

Forgiveness

May not be easy ... but it is the right thing to do

Forgiveness:

How do we respond to wrongs done by others?

Jesus said, “Father, **forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing.” [Luke 23:34](#)

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. [Colossians 3:13](#)

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. **First be reconciled** to your brother, and then come and offer your gift [Mathew 5:23-24](#)

Forgiveness: How many times?

Luke 17: 3 So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them.⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

No limit ... keep on forgiving; even as the Lord keeps on forgiving us

Forgiveness: Is it hard to forgive others and ourselves? Why?

Forgiveness: Consequence of not forgiving

Mathew 6:14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins

Blessing of Forgiveness:

It takes away our bitterness

It gives peace within us and leads to peace with others

It is pleasing to the Lord, and He blesses us

As Believers we do not have a choice ... we must forgive!

Master-Slave Relationship

Does Bible approve Slavery?

In what way is the slavery of 18/19th century different?

What is the expectation of Masters and Slaves/Servants?

Slavery ... Does Bible approve slavery?

Slavery ... Does Bible approve slavery? **No**

- What was the nature of slavery in Rome? What is different about the slavery in the US and Europe in the 18th/19th century?
- “And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 21:16)
- Slave traders ... **contrary** to the sound doctrine (I Timothy 1:10)

Masters must be fair ...

Colossians 4:1

Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Slaves/Servants must obey/be in subjection ...does it apply to us?

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving (COLOSSIANS 3:22-24)

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. 19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. (I PETER 2:18-20)

Slavery, Humility, Promotion

Mark 10:44

“And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all”

James 4:10

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,
and He will lift you up.

Slavery and the Choice before the world

Modern Slavery, John 8:34

Everyone who sins is a slave to sin

We were also once slaves to SIN but the Lord met us with the gospel news ... we have been set free and received eternal life!

The Choice before the World, Romans 6:16

Slaves ... of sin leading to death, or
Of obedience leading to righteousness

Paul – the burden bearer

Reference: 1/10/2021 Sunday message (Mark 2:1-12)

- We are called to **bear the burden of this world**
 - the world is burdened by sin
 - we must connect the world to the gospel news so that they can be liberated from the burden of sin
 - ✓ Paul connected Onesimus to the gospel and lead him to a new life in Christ

- We are called to **bear the burden of believers**
 - ✓ Paul interceded with Philemon on behalf of Onesimus

Personal Reflection

*Philemon refreshed the lives of others ...
How can the Lord use you to refresh others?*



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Philemon

Wednesdays
7.30-8.30PM

- **Introduction:** Who are the main characters in this epistle? When and where was this epistle written? What is the central message of this letter (in one sentence or one word)?
- **Opening Greeting** (1-3): How does Paul introduce himself? What are two words used by Paul to greet? How is Philemon's home different from a typical believer's home?
- **Thanks and Prayers for Philemon** (4-7): What are two qualities of Philemon that Paul recognizes? What is Paul's prayer? What is the great complement that Paul gives to Philemon in verse 7?
- **Interceding for Onesimus** (8-21): Who is Onesimus? Did Paul want to keep Onesimus? What does Paul request of Philemon? Could Paul have "commanded" Philemon? How is Paul offer of 'restitution' similar to what Christ did for sinners? Why was Paul confident that Philemon will accept his request? What will be new status of Onesimus? How can Onesimus crime & escape be seen of God's greater plan for his life? How can we be ministers of reconciliation?
- **Closing Salutation** (22-25): Who does Paul acknowledge in his closing remarks?
- **Personal Reflection:** *Philemon refreshed the lives of others ... How can the Lord use you to refresh others?*

Jan. 13, 20, 2020