

Paul's Letter to PHILEMON

Dear Philemon:

What a dear friend and fellow worker for Christ you are! This is Paul, writing to you from jail because of my stand for Jesus Christ. And our brother Timothy joins me in sending you this greeting.

²Greetings also to dear Apphia, and to Archippus, our fellow soldier for Jesus. And greetings to all the members of the church who meet in your home.

³May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ bless and prosper all of you far above what you deserve, and give you great peace of mind and heart.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴My dear Philemon, I always thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers,

⁵because I keep hearing such good reports about how much you love the Lord Jesus and of the love you have for all who are dedicated to Him, and of the faith you have in Him.

⁶As you tell others about your faith and hope, and as you tell of all the good things that Christ Jesus has done for you and in you, and of all that He promises to yet do for you in His Kingdom, may your witness be truly effective.

⁷Your love, dear brother, has given me great joy and encouragement, as I think of all the followers whose minds and hearts have been refreshed by you.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

⁸So although I could be very bold and order you in the name of Christ to do what you should do,

⁹I appeal to you instead to take the right action because of your love. As Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ,

¹⁰I appeal to you on behalf of my son Onesimus, who has become my son in the Lord while I've been here in jail.

¹¹He wasn't worth anything to you in the past, but he's changed, and now he's of great worth to

both of us.^a

¹²As you receive him back to you now, my heart goes with him.

¹³I have wished that I could keep him here with me, so that he could take your place in helping me while I'm in chains because of preaching the Great News.

¹⁴But I didn't want to do anything without your consent, so that any help you gave would be altogether voluntary, not forced.

¹⁵And perhaps God allowed him to leave you for this brief time, so that he would be converted to the Lord, and then return to be with you for good.

¹⁶Now he returns to you, not as a slave, but much more than a slave. He's now a dearly-loved brother. He's especially that to me, and surely more so to you, because he's now not only a man but your brother in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you look upon me as a close friend, welcome him back as you'd welcome me.

¹⁸If he has wronged you or owes you anything, charge it to my account.

¹⁹***I, Paul, will repay you.*** Notice that I've written that with my own hand. But none of this, of course, takes into account the fact that you owe me for all that you now are.^a

²⁰Yes, brother, let me rejoice in what the Lord has done when I hear that you have gladly welcomed home my friend and brother. As you do this, my heart will truly be refreshed with joy in the Lord.

²¹As I write this I have full assurance that you will not only do what I ask, but even more.

²²And by the way, Philemon, prepare a guest room for me, because I confidently believe that in answer to your prayers I'll be restored to you.

²³Epaphras, who is here in prison with me because of his stand for Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings as well.

²⁴My fellow workers, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, also send their greetings.

²⁵May blessings from our Lord Jesus Christ truly abound toward you. So be it!

Your brothers in Christ,
Paul and Timothy

1:11a The name Onesimus means *useful*.

1:19a Philemon had evidently been converted to

Christ thru Paul. So for the joy of the eternal life he now had, he was indebted to Paul.