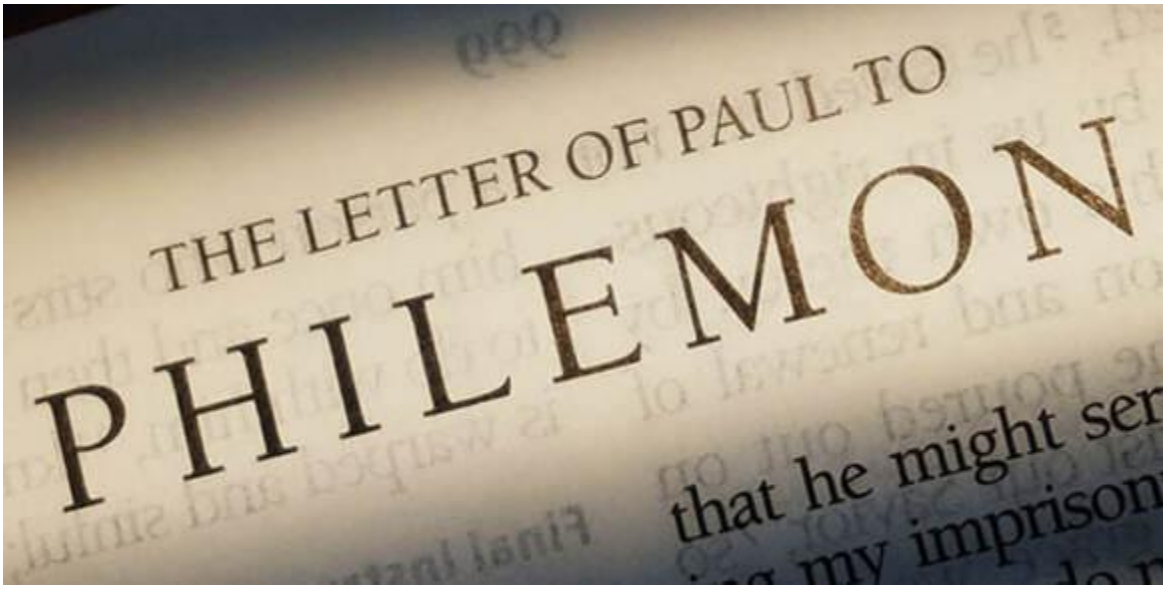


A Study of Paul's Letter to Philemon

Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to answer the Bible Study Questions before meeting together for the Bible Study. Some people like to prepare beforehand whereas others like to think through the Bible Passages in a group setting. It is also not compulsory to answer ALL the questions.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you. Note: this study uses the **NIV Bible version**.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information ***MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL*** ***and*** ***NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP***

Introduction

The Apostle Paul writes to Philemon around 60-62AD during Paul's imprisonment in Rome, addressing issues of slavery and Christian relationships. This short letter is about forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ.

Philemon: A wealthy Christian slave owner in Colossae; he is urged to forgive his runaway slave, Onesimus.

Onesimus: A slave who escaped from Philemon and became a Christian through Paul's ministry. Onesimus represents the transformative power of faith in Jesus.

Paul: The Apostle who intercedes for Onesimus, emphasizing forgiveness, love and the equality of believers in Christ.

Summary

Philemon verses 1-3: Paul greets Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church in their home. This sets a personal tone for the letter, establishing the relationships involved.
Philemon verses 4-7: Paul expresses gratitude for Philemon's love and faith.
Philemon verses 8-16: Paul appeals to accept Onesimus back.
Philemon verses 17-25: Closing remarks. Paul offers final encouragements, requests and blessings. The structure is straight forward, focusing on a personal appeal and emphasizing key themes of love and forgiveness.

Key Themes

Forgiveness and Reconciliation – Paul encourages Philemon to forgive Onesimus and welcome him back as a brother in Christ. This reflects the overarching Biblical message of God's forgiveness towards humanity and the call for believers to forgive one another, highlighting the transformative power of grace.

Christian Brotherhood – The letter emphasizes that all believers are equal in Christ, regardless of social status. The theme mirrors the Bible teachings on unity and equality among believers, illustrating that faith transcends societal boundaries and fosters authentic community.

Faith in Action – Paul highlights the importance of putting faith into practice through love and good deeds. This underscores the Biblical message that faith should result in tangible expressions of love, as believers are called to demonstrate their faith through their actions in everyday life.

Symbolism and Imagery		
Slave and Master Relationship	**Heart**	**Sending Onesimus Back**
The relationship between Philemon and Onesimus symbolizes the transformation that occurs in Christ. It reflects the idea that in Christ, traditional social hierarchies are transcended, and believers are called to treat one another as equals.	Paul refers to his own heart when speaking of Onesimus, illustrating the deep affection and bond formed through faith. This symbolizes the emotional and spiritual connections that develop among believers.	Paul sending Onesimus back represents the act of restoring relationships and making amends. This reflects the broader Biblical principle of reconciliation and forgiveness among believers.

Practical Application

Forgiveness and Reconciliation – Just as Paul urges Philemon to forgive Onesimus, believers are called to extend forgiveness to those who have wronged them.

Embracing Equality in Christ – This letter highlights that all believers are equal, regardless of social status or background. This challenges modern Christians to foster inclusive communities where everyone is valued, supporting the idea that faith transcends societal divisions.

Living Out Faith Through Action – Paul emphasizes that faith must be demonstrated through love and good works. Believers are encouraged to actively seek opportunities to show kindness and compassion, embodying their faith in tangible ways that positively impact those around them.

Study – The Gospel in Action! **Philemon 1-25**

(Sermon on 15th Nov 2026)

Read Philemon 1-3

1. How does Paul describe himself? (v1) What does he mean by that?

Paul describes himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus".
Paul is writing this short letter as a prisoner of Rome.
*As always, Paul did not consider himself a prisoner of Rome, of circumstances, or of the religious leaders who started his legal troubles (Acts 23-24). Paul was **a prisoner of Jesus Christ** for the sake of spreading the Gospel Good News of Jesus!*

2. Who does Paul include in the writing of his letter and how is he described? (v1)

Paul also includes Timothy and refers to him as "our brother". That is Timothy is a brother in Christ to both Paul and Philemon; just like our church family are brothers and sisters in Christ!

3. Who are the recipients of the letter and how are they described? (v2)

*The recipients are **Philemon (philēmōn=one who kisses!)** [dear friend and fellow worker]; **Apphia** [our sister] and **Archippus** [our fellow soldier]*

*To the Church that meets in your home. This means that the church — or a portion of the church — in Colosse met in the **house** of Philemon. The earliest Christians had no property of their own for church buildings. The Jews had their synagogues, but Christians met in the homes of their members. The Christians of a city would be gathered into different "house churches" with a city "bishop" overseeing the different house churches. House churches are also mentioned in Romans 16:5 and Colossians 4:15.*

GUZIK

i. "Up to the third century we have no certain evidence of the existence of church buildings for the purpose of worship; all references point to private houses for this. In Rome several of the oldest churches appear to have been built on the sites of houses used for Christian worship." (Oesterley)

ii. Spurgeon points out that apparently, Philemon had a church that met in his house. This suggests to believers that their homes should also be a church, and that each home can have the characteristics of a healthy church:

- *Consisting of converted, saved people.*
- *Worshipping together.*
- *Together having a bond of unity.*
- *Supplied with oversight.*
- *Teaching always present.*
- *With a heart to minister to those on the outside.*

***Apphia** was probably the wife of Philemon, and **Archippus** was probably his son. This address to family members is unique among the letters of Paul, but it makes sense considering the content of the letter to Philemon. In this letter Paul will appeal to Philemon regarding a runaway slave who has met Jesus and found refuge with Paul. In the customs of that day, Philemon's wife **Apphia** was the supervisor of the slaves in the household, so the letter concerned her also.*

4. What greeting does Paul use in verse 3? Have we seen this elsewhere?

The greeting is "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

*Note: "Grace" is God's undeserved favour which finds its ultimate fulfilment in sending His Son Jesus to bring about salvation. And "Peace" – this is the peace between God and humankind - that Jesus brings through His death and resurrection! Paul gave his customary greeting of **grace** and **peace**, found in each one of his letters. However, this greeting was not directed towards an entire congregation, but to Philemon as an individual. This makes the letter unique among Paul's writings.*

Read Philemon 4-7

5. What is Paul thankful for in verses 4 and 5?

*Paul is thankful to God for Philemon, Apphia and Archippus – and he **remembers them in his prayers** (v4)*

*Paul is thankful because a) he has **heard about their love for all God's holy people [hagios = literally saints – we are all saints in Christ Jesus]** and b) **their faith in the Lord Jesus!** (v5)*

6. What's the substance of Paul's prayer in verse 6?

*Paul prayed for Philemon, desiring that **the partnership in the Gospel that Philemon had would deepen Philemon's understanding of every good thing they share for the sake of Christ**.*

*The Greek word for partnership is **koinonia** [see Acts 2:42] which can mean fellowship, sharing or participation. Christianity is not simply an individual relationship with Jesus. **We belong to a family of believers and share together in the blessings of the Gospel. Hence, here at St. David's we talk about a church family – that's what koinonia is!***

Paul wants Philemon's faith to be active and grow in love for Jesus and for others**. **Hence our vision at St. David's is to "transform the community with the love of Jesus"

GUZIK

*It is possible that Paul means the **sharing** of material things, prompted by **faith**. The ancient Greek word for **sharing** is koinonia, and sometimes Paul used koinonia, which means "fellowship, sharing," to describe giving (2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13; Romans 15:26).*

"The apostle speaks here of the works of charity in which Philemon abounded toward poor Christians." (Clarke)

Paul wants Philemon to appreciate more deeply all the blessings [every good thing] that believers share because of Jesus.

These include:

- *Forgiveness of sins.*
- *Salvation through Christ.*
- *The certain hope of Heaven.*

- *Being adopted into God's family.*
- *The love and fellowship [and blessings] of Christian brothers and sisters.*
- *The sharing [koinonia] of wealth and material things*
- *Our new identity and equality in Christ.*

Forgiveness and equality is particularly important in the context of Onesimus, which we will get to it a moment!

7. What does Paul think of Philemon in verse 7?

Philemon's love has given Paul great joy and encouragement. Why? Because Philemon has refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people!

Read Philemon 8-25

8. What does Paul say he could do and what does he say he would prefer to do in verses 8 and 9? On what basis does Paul say he is doing this?

Paul makes it clear that he could have "ordered" Philemon to do what Paul wanted (v8) but Paul prefers to appeal to Philemon on the basis of Christian love. After all, as Christians, the outworking of our faith requires acts of love! ***A loving appeal is often better than an authoritative command.***

The basis of Paul's request is to appeal to Philemon's sympathies for Paul – and old man and a prisoner of Christ Jesus!

As Guzik puts it: Since Paul will make his appeal based on love, he does what he can to stir up the loving sympathy of Philemon. "Philemon, before I tell you what I need from you, remember that I'm an old man, and a prisoner at that."

9. How does Paul describe Onesimus in verses 10 and 11?

*Paul describes Onesimus as "**my son, Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chain**". Onesimus, like Timothy, is Paul's "spiritual son" and Paul is his "spiritual father".*

***Onesimus** was an escaped slave who escaped from his master **Philemon**. It seems that when **Onesimus** escaped, he fled to Rome and — intentionally or not — met with Paul. Paul, though under house arrest [in chains] by the Romans, led **Onesimus** to faith in Jesus Christ*

GUZIK

*i. It was logical that **Onesimus** escaped to Rome, the biggest city of the Roman Empire. Lightfoot says, "Rome was the natural cesspool for these offscourings of humanity." But at his providential meeting of Paul in Rome, **Onesimus** met the man who had led his master Philemon to Jesus (Philemon 19).*

*ii. When Paul made this appeal on behalf of **Onesimus**, he followed deep traditions in Roman culture. There was an ancient Greek law (inherited by the Romans) allowing any escaped slave sanctuary at an altar. The altar could even be the hearth of a private family home; then the head of the family was obligated to give the slave protection while he tried to persuade him to return to his master. If the slave refused, the head of the family would put the slave up for auction and give the price for the slave to the former master. Paul gave **Onesimus** protection, and now was working the issue out with Philemon.*

Paul (v11) describes Onesimus as formerly useless to Philemon – but now [by virtue of becoming a believer], Onesimus is useful to BOTH Paul and Philemon!

GUZIK

*In some way, Onesimus became **useful** to Paul. Perhaps he served as an assistant to Paul during his house arrest. So, Philemon's runaway slave Onesimus was now **useless** to Philemon since he had escaped. But he had become **useful** to Paul — and by extension, also to Philemon (**useful to you and me**). Since Philemon loved Paul, if Onesimus helped Paul he was helping Philemon also.*

*i. When Paul spoke of Onesimus being **useless** and **useful**, he made a play on a word. The name **Onesimus** means **useful or profitable**. Now that he was a Christian, Onesimus could live up to his name*

ii. "It is significant to note that Paul claims that in Christ the useless person has been made useful." (Barclay)

iii. By making this clear to Philemon, Paul gently hinted that he would like to retain the services of this escaped slave — though he would not command Philemon to do this.

10. What is Paul intending to do with Onesimus in verse 12 and how does Paul describe him?

*Paul is intending to send Onesimus back to Philemon. Paul describes Onesimus as "who is my very own heart". It's like Paul is saying: "Philemon, I know Onesimus has done you wrong and deserves to be punished. But consider him as though he has **my own heart** and be merciful to him."*

GUZIK

Paul obviously wanted Philemon to deal gently with Onesimus. Under Roman law the slave owner had complete and total control over his slave. It wasn't unusual for slaves to be crucified for lesser offenses than escaping.

i. One ancient writer described how a slave carried a tray of crystal goblets, and he dropped and broke one. The master instantly demanded the slave be thrown into a fishpond full of lampreys that tore the slave to pieces. "Roman law… practically imposed no limits to the power of the master over his slave. The alternative of life or death rested solely with Philemon, and slaves were constantly crucified for far lighter offenses than this." (Lightfoot)

ii. Considering the huge number of slaves in the Roman Empire, they thought the harsh punishment against escaped or rebellious slaves was necessary. In an Empire with as many as 60 million slaves, there were constant fears of a slave revolt. Therefore, laws against runaways were strict. When captured, a runaway slave might be crucified, or branded with a red-hot iron on the forehead with the letter "F" for fugitive.

11. What would Paul prefer to do with Onesimus? Why? (v13)

Paul would have preferred to keep Onesimus.

Why?

If Onesimus stayed with Paul

*i. He could serve Paul **on your [Philemon's behalf]**. "Philemon, if you leave Onesimus with me, it's like you serving me, because Onesimus is your rightful servant."*

*ii. Secondly, if Onesimus stayed he helped a man [Paul] in **chains**. "Philemon, I know Onesimus might be of some use to you. Yet I am in **chains** and need all the help I can get."*

*iii. Thirdly, if Onesimus stayed he helped man in **chains for the gospel**. "Philemon, please don't forget why I am here in **chains**. Remember that it is for the sake of the **gospel**."*

12. What concern does Paul have in verse 14?

Yet Paul's concern is not to be presumptuous; he would not do anything without Philemon's consent! Paul made his appeal and made it strong and skillfully. At the same time, he really did leave the decision to Philemon. He would appeal in love, but he would not trample over the rights of Philemon.

13. What providential hand of God does Paul see in Onesimus escaping Philemon? (vv15-16)

Paul explains that perhaps the reason Onesimus was separated from Philemon for a while [separated for a while sounds a whole lot better than escaped or ran away!] was so that Philemon could have Onesimus back forever – but not as a slave but better than a slave; as a Christian brother! That is what the Gospel does – it makes people family and equal in Christ. Philemon and Onesimus' relationship is no longer master/slave but brothers in Christ Jesus!

GUZIK

Paul "re-introduced" Onesimus to Philemon; not as a slave, but as a brother. In this relationship as brothers and not slaves, Paul effectively abolished the sting of the "master-slave" relationship and laid the foundation for the eventual legal abolition of slavery. If a man is a stranger, I might make him my slave. But how can my brother be my slave?

i. This breaking of the distinction between master and slave was an absolutely revolutionary development. It did far more to change society than the passing of a law prohibiting slavery.

ii. "What the letter to Philemon does is to bring the institution into an atmosphere where it could only wilt and die. Where master and slave were united in affection as brothers in Christ, formal emancipation would be but a matter of expediency, the legal confirmation of their new relationship." (Bruce)

iii. The transformation of the individual is the key to the transformation of society and the moral environment. "But mark this word, — the true reforming of the drunkard lies in giving him a new heart; the true reclaiming of the harlot is to be found in a renewed nature…. I see certain of my brethren fiddling away at the branches of the tree of vice with their wooden saws, but, as for the gospel, it lays the axe at the roots of the whole forest of evil, and if it be fairly received into the heart it fells all the bad trees at once, and instead of them there spring up the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together, to beautify the house of our Master's glory." (Spurgeon)

14. How is Philemon to welcome Onesimus? (v17)

*If Philemon considers Paul as a partner [**koinonos**] then Philemon is to welcome Onesimus as if he were welcoming Paul himself! It's like Paul is saying: "If I am your partner in the gospel, then treat Onesimus like you would treat me."*

Paul's appeal is powerful because he stood beside a guilty man and said to the owner of the slave, "I know this man is a criminal and deserves punishment. Yet this slave is my friend, so if you punish him punish me also. I stand beside him to take his punishment." This is what Jesus does for us before our master, God the Father. This is the GOSPEL in ACTION!

15. What restitution does Paul offer in verse 18? Why do you think he offers that?

*It seems when Onesimus escaped he also stole from Philemon. This in itself was a crime which demanded capital punishment. However, Paul asked that the value of what had been stolen be "charged" to Paul's **account**. "Put it on my tab, Philemon." Again, this is what Jesus did – He paid the penalty for our sins! Our debt for our sins was charged to Jesus' account!*

16. What does Paul mean in verse 19 by the phrases: "***I am writing this with my own hand***" and "***I will pay it back***" and "***not to mention that you owe me your very self***"?

Paul wants to stress how serious he is to vouch for Onesimus. He is writing this request to Philemon "with my own hand" – and Paul will repay Onesimus personally "I will pay it back".

*And while "accounts" were being studied, Paul mentioned one more thing. "Philemon, remember that I have a lot of credit on your account, because you **owe me your very self**." Paul could afford to pay Onesimus' expenses because there was a sense in which Philemon owed Paul his salvation! Not that Paul "saved" Philemon but Paul was God's "instrument" in saving Philemon as Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles!*

17. **Ponder**: How is Paul like Jesus in verse 18?

When Jesus died on the cross, it was like he said to God the Father "If person X has sinned – I will pay person X's punishment and die for their sins". Paul was prepared to pay whatever Onesimus owed, just like Jesus was prepared to pay what we owed God!

Martin Luther explains it this way:
"Here we see how Paul lays himself out for poor Onesimus, and with all his means pleads his cause with his master, and so sets himself as if he were Onesimus, and had himself done wrong to Philemon. Even as Christ did for us with God the Father, thus also does Paul for Onesimus with Philemon. We are all his Onesimi, to my thinking." (Martin Luther)

18. What confidence does Paul have in Philemon's response? (vv20-21)

Paul hopes he will have some benefit from Philemon on the basis of Philemon being "in the Lord" (Christian) just like Paul is. Paul hopes his heart will be refreshed in Christ by Philemon's response! (v20)
Paul is that confident in a positive response from Philemon that he is confident that Philemon will not only obey Paul's request but will do even more than Paul asks!

19. What is Paul hoping for in verse 22 and what does this tell us about his relationship with Philemon?

Paul is hoping that Philemon's prayers will be answered so that Paul will be "restored" to Philemon – that is released – so he can visit Philemon – and so Paul asks Philemon to prepare a guest room for him.

20. Who else sends their greetings and how is he described in verse 23?

Epaphras [Paul's fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus]

21. Who else sends their greetings and how are they described in verse 24?

And…Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke [Paul's fellow workers]
Each of these names is also mentioned in the conclusion of the letter to the Colossians (Colossians 4:10-17). This confirms that the two letters went to the same place. Philemon lived in Colosse.

22. What does Paul's conclusion to the letter in verse 25 remind us of?

Paul's final words "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" remind us that everything in the Christian life depends on the ***grace of the Lord Jesus Christ****. We are saved by grace, sustained by grace and enabled by grace to forgive, love and serve others. Philemon would need that same grace in his relationship with Onesimus.*

23. **Ponder**: How is the Gospel at play in Paul's request to Philemon? (cf. Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 7:47)

Matthew 6:14-15 says: ***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.***

Paul implies to Philemon that he was forgiven when he first believed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus and is obliged/commanded to forgive Onesimus. As Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:14-14 - as believers we are compelled to forgive others their sins; otherwise our Heavenly Father will not forgive our sins!

If we think about it; if someone sins against us – we are forgiving ONE sin usually – whereas Jesus died for us so that ALL OUR SINS are forgiven! How could we possibly refuse to forgive ONE sin from someone else, when all our sins are forgiven!

Luke 7:47 says: ***47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.***

A sinful woman anointed Jesus' feet with a whole alabaster jar of perfume. When some people complained about this wasteful extravagance; Jesus explained that the woman's many sins had been forgiven and she demonstrated her appreciation by

showing great love towards Jesus; whereas someone who has been forgiven very little would show little love. Likewise, as a master of slaves – Philemon would have been forgiven many sins and Paul urges Philemon to respond to this forgiveness from Jesus, with great love towards Onesimus! Paul too had experienced the forgiveness of his many sins as he had previously been a persecutor of Christians; therefore Paul knew how to respond with great love!

GUZIK

We see some enduring principles from Paul's letter to Philemon.
i. Paul never called for an overthrow of the system of slavery, yet the principles in the letter to Philemon destroy slavery. The greatest social changes come when people are changed, one heart at a time. In our society, racism and our low regard for the unborn cannot be eliminated by laws; a change of heart must occur.
ii. Onesimus was obligated to return to his master. When we do something wrong, we must do our best to set it right. Being made a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) does not end our responsibility to make restitution; it increases our obligation, even when restitution is difficult.
iii. Onesimus was morally responsible for his wrongs. The letter to Philemon demonstrates that we are not primarily directed by economics, despite the ideas of Marxists and modern liberals. Whether rich or poor, we are to be directed by the Spirit of God, not our economic status.
iv. "No part of the New Testament more clearly demonstrates integrated Christian thinking and living. It offers a blend, utterly characteristic of Paul, of love, wisdom, humour, gentleness, tact, and above all Christian and human maturity." (Wright)

The conclusion of the letter can lead us to ask, "Why is the letter to Philemon in our Bibles?" In A.D. 110, the bishop of Ephesus was named Onesimus, and it could have been this same man. If Onesimus was in his late teens or early twenties when Paul wrote this letter, he would then be about 70 years old in A.D.110 and that was not an unreasonable age for a bishop in those days.
i. "Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, maketh mention of Onesimus, as pastor of Ephesus, next after Timothy. The Roman Martyrologue saith, that he was stoned to death at Rome, under Trajan the emperor." (Trapp)

ii. There is also some historical evidence that the letters of Paul were first gathered as a group in the city of Ephesus. Perhaps Onesimus first compiled the letters and wanted to make sure his letter — his charter of freedom — was included.

24. How do the following passages relate to **Philemon**?

Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers and forgives them for selling him into slavery. Rather than seeking revenge, he recognises God's purposes in what happened and welcomes his brothers with love and affection.
Connection to Philemon: Like Joseph, Philemon has an opportunity to forgive someone who has wronged him. Both passages demonstrate that forgiveness should replace revenge and bitterness. God's sovereignty and grace should shape how we respond to those who have hurt us.

Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph's brothers fear that he will take revenge following their father's death. However, Joseph reassures them, recognising that although they intended evil, God intended it for good, to preserve many lives [Genesis 50:20]
Connection to Philemon: Paul wants Philemon to respond to Onesimus with forgiveness rather than retaliation. Both passages remind us that God's purposes are greater than human wrongdoing and that we should extend grace rather than seek revenge.

Leviticus 25:39-43

God instructs the Israelites not to treat fellow Israelites who become poor and sell themselves into service as slaves, but rather as hired workers. They are not to be treated harshly because they belong to God.
Connection to Philemon: This passage establishes that even in a master-servant relationship, people must be treated with dignity and compassion. Philemon is being challenged to look beyond Onesimus's social status and recognise his worth as someone belonging to God.

Deuteronomy 23:15-16

God instructs Israel not to return an escaped slave to their master. Instead, they are to allow the person to live wherever they choose and not oppress them.
Connection to Philemon: This passage provides an interesting Old Testament background to Onesimus's situation. It highlights God's concern for the vulnerable and oppressed. Paul's appeal is that Philemon receives Onesimus back, not simply as a slave, but as a beloved brother in Christ.
It is worth noting that Paul does not explicitly tell us whether Onesimus had legally escaped or exactly how his departure occurred.

2 Samuel 9:1-13

David seeks out Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to show him kindness because of his covenant relationship with Jonathan. Despite Mephibosheth's vulnerability and family circumstances [being part of Saul's family], David restores his land and gives him a permanent place at the king's table.
Connection to Philemon: David demonstrates undeserved kindness to someone who might otherwise have been overlooked. Similarly, Paul wants Philemon to extend kindness and acceptance to Onesimus. Both accounts illustrate grace that goes beyond what might ordinarily be expected.
There is also a beautiful picture of someone being welcomed into the household and sharing at the table.

Luke 7:41-43

Jesus tells Simon about two people who owe money. One owes 500 denarii and the other 50. Both have their debts cancelled. Jesus asks which will love the moneylender more. Simon correctly answers that it will be the one who had the greater debt forgiven.
Connection to Philemon: Those who understand the magnitude of the forgiveness they have received from God should be willing to forgive others. Philemon [as a master of slaves] himself has experienced God's grace, and Paul is appealing to him to extend that same grace to Onesimus.
This is particularly relevant to Philemon 6 and 17.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Paul explains that God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given believers the ministry of reconciliation. Through Jesus, our sins are no longer counted against us.
Connection to Philemon: God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus, and we are therefore called to be people of reconciliation; i.e. we have a "ministry of reconciliation" through Jesus. Paul is effectively asking Philemon to put the Gospel into practice by reconciling with Onesimus and welcoming him as a brother in Christ.

What's the ***BIG IDEA*** of **Philemon?**
The Gospel changes how we see and treat one another.
OR
The Gospel Good News of Jesus Christ transforms our relationships, calling us to extend the forgiveness, grace and reconciliation that we ourselves have received from God in Jesus.



What light globe moment did you have?

What ***questions*** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?
16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

Finish in prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Gospel of grace in our Lord Jesus. We thank you that through our faith in Jesus' death on the cross, we are forgiven of all our sins, past, present and future. As we are forgiven much – help us to forgive those who have sinned against us. Please foster in us a mindset of grace and forgiveness and enable us to follow the example that Jesus set before us! In Jesus Name, we pray. Amen.