

PHILEMON: The Reconciling Power of the Grace of God**3. Paul is willing to be a SUBSTITUTE for ONESIMUS – to enable reconciliation. Phil 17-25**

- Verse 17 Paul asks Philemon to **receive** Onesimus **AS** Himself.
 - a. As many as receive Jesus are received by God the Father as Christ Himself – John 1:12
 - b. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ – 1 John 1:3
 - c. Jesus said that the things done to His children are done to indirectly to Him – Mt 25:40
- Verse 18 Paul asks Philemon to **put** the wrongdoing and debt on His **ACCOUNT**.
 - a. Jesus Christ willingly became our substitute – and was delivered for our offenses – Rom 4:25
 - b. Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God) became our once and for all passover sacrifice – 1 Cor 5:7
 - c. Jesus Christ became our sin and our curse on the cross – 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3
- Verse 19 Paul is willing to **repay** Philemon for **ALL** that is owed to him.
 - a. Jesus nailed the sins and crimes against Almighty God of all men to His cross – Col 2:13, 14
 - b. Jesus bore our griefs and carried our sorrows and paid our fine with His blood – Isaiah 53:4-7
 - c. Jesus Christ is the propitiation (satisfactory payment) for the sins of the world – 1 John 2:2
 - d. Jesus Christ, after paying the price for our sins, said, “*It is finished!*” (Paid in full!) – John 19:30
- Verse 20 Paul encourages Philemon’s **OBEDIENCE in the Lord**.
 - a. Paul told the Philippians, “*Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded*” – Phil 2:2
 - b. Paul told the Thessalonians, “*For ye are our glory and joy*” – 1 Thess 2:20
 - c. It is good for us to obey God and do all things “*in the Lord*” and as to Him – Col 3:20-25
- Verse 21 Paul uses **encouraging words** and gives Philemon the **BENEFIT** of the doubt.
 - a. Paul told the Galatians that he had *confidence in them through the Lord* – Gal 5:10
 - b. Paul told the Thessalonians that he had *confidence in the Lord touching them* – 2 Thess 3:4
 - c. Paul told the Corinthians that he had *confidence in them in all things* – 2 Cor 7:16
- Verse 22 Paul **trusts** that God will answer Philemon’s **PRAYERS** and bring him again.
 - a. Paul told the Philippians that he trusted God that he would come to them shortly – Phil 2:24
 - b. Paul told the Romans that he trusted God to see them in his journey – Rom 15:4
 - c. It is good for us to pray for one another – 2 Cor 1:11; Phil 1:19; Jas 5:16
- Verse 23 Paul includes a salute greeting from **Epaphrus** – a fellow **PRISONER**.
 - a. Epaphras was a faithful minister of Christ – Col 1:7
 - b. Epaphras was a Colossian who cared for and prayed for the Colossians believers – Col 4:12
 - c. Epaphras was a fellowprisoner with Paul for the sake of the Gospel and our Lord – Col 4:10
- Verse 24 Paul **adds** greetings from **MARCUS**, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas – fellow **labourers**.
 - a. Marcus (John Mark) – Barnabas’ nephew who wrote the book of Mark – Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11
 - b. Aristarchus – Paul’s companion in travel from Thessalonica – Acts 19:29; 27:2; Col 4:10
 - c. Demas – included in Colossians, but forsook Paul in the end loving the world – 2 Tim 4:10
 - d. Lucas (Luke) – the beloved physician and companion of Paul to the end – 2 Tim 4:11
- Verse 25 Paul ends by **commending** the **GRACE** of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with his spirit.
 - a. It was common for Paul to close letters in this manner – Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18
 - b. Paul’s last words to Timothy were “*The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.*” – 2 Tim 4:22

PRACTICAL APPLICATION – “How do I use Philemon in my own life?”

1. We are all to be like “Paul” in a world of **un-reconciled** people!
 - If you have been born again by faith in Christ alone, you are to be a “*reconciler*” of people.
 - God has given us the “*ministry of reconciliation*” according to 2 Corinthians 5:18.
 - God was “*in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself*” according to 2 Corinthians 5:19.
 - God has given us the “*word of reconciliation*” according to 2 Corinthians 5:19.
 - God has made us to be “*ambassadors for Christ*” according to 2 Corinthians 5:20.
 - Our message is simple, “*Be ye reconciled to God.*” 2 Cor 5:20.
 - We are to reconcile the **lost** to Christ... Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20
 - We are also to reconcile the **saved** to Christ... Galatians 6:1
 - Our daily prayer and mindset ought to be, “*Lord use me to reconcile people to you today.*”
2. What should you do when you are the “Onesimus” in your scenario?
 - If you have never repented of your sinful way and trusted Christ by faith alone, you are like Onesimus WAS before Paul led him to faith in Christ.
 - Your first step is to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ as your only Hope of salvation.
 - The next step is to obey the Bible and be faithful in all areas of your life (find a Paul☺).
 - The next step is to “*make right*” areas in life where you have violated God’s Law and people.
 - In Luke 19:8, Zacchaeus said, “*Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*”
 - That is what Biblical REPENTANCE looks like. You have a desire to obey God and do right.
3. What should you do when you are the “Philemon” in your scenario?
 - Well, the first thing to consider is that you probably are NOT thinking that you are!
 - The first step is to make a list of people in your life (as big as you can) that you cannot forgive.
 - Even when you say, “*I forgive them,*” the question is whether you can receive them in Christ.
 - If someone is in the same room as you who “*wronged you*” what do you do?
 - If someone is in the same room as you who “*owes you*” what do you do?
 - To learn from Philemon is to trust God that this happened for a reason – a bigger purpose.
 - To learn from Philemon is to trust God and take the first step towards reconciliation.
 - To learn from Philemon is to trust God no matter what the personal consequences are to you.
 - This might help...
 - ✓ Before you re-read Philemon, ask God to teach you through His Holy Spirit what He would like you to do about a situation in your life and a person in your life.
 - ✓ Re-read Philemon again only this time read it as though JESUS (instead of Paul) is speaking directly to YOU (instead of Philemon) related to the PERSON IN YOUR LIFE (instead of Onesimus).
 - ✓ After you read it, pray again and ask God to help you to obey Him and what He has revealed to you and taught you from the Bible about your situation.
 - ✓ Obey what God is leading you to do. It may be that God wants you to go to someone in love and tell them that you truly forgive them even if they have not asked. The key is that you do not want any relationships in life where a roadblock may prevent someone from trusting Christ for salvation or growing in Christ if someone is already saved.