

Philemon & Forgiveness

Please open your Bible to the book of Philemon, or turn to page ____ in the Bible under the chair in front of you. And that's how you say the name, not Phile-mon or PHIL-ee-mon. We're pretty confident it's Philemon. The little book or letter of Philemon is found after the "T" books in the New Testament, and just before Hebrews. And there's no shame in going to the table of contents in the front to find the exact page number.

Philemon is a small book with a big lesson. In it, we'll see that the gospel transforms our relationships – that the family of God is held together by forgiveness and mutual love as a new family in Christ. Though you can read it in just a few minutes, it has a message that can change your life.

This morning, I want to walk through this brief letter, section by section. But rather than read our whole passage up front, as I often do, we'll work our way through it one piece at a time. And then we'll conclude with the 'so what' question? What does the content of this book have to teach us today? What does God want to show us in this letter about how we are to live?

On one level, this letter is about an appeal to a slave-owner named Philemon to forgive and receive back a runaway slave named Onesimus. But on a deeper level, it's about how the gospel takes broken relationships—fractured by sin, hurt, and betrayal—and makes them whole. It's about how Jesus changes the way we see each other, turning slaves into brothers, enemies into friends, and strangers into family.

As we walk through this letter verse by verse, I want you to ask yourself: *Who do I need to forgive? Where do I need to seek reconciliation? How is the gospel shaping my relationships?* That's because Philemon isn't just a first-century story—it's our story. It's about the power of Christ to heal what's broken in our lives, our families, and our world.

So let's jump with the first section...

Philemon 1:1-3

Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved fellow worker **2** and Apphia our sister and Archippus our

fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul begins with a customary greeting, though there are some details which are important. He says, I'm a prisoner for Christ Jesus. He says that because he's writing this letter from prison, likely from either Rome or Ephesus. And he's in prison because he was preaching the gospel of Christ Jesus.

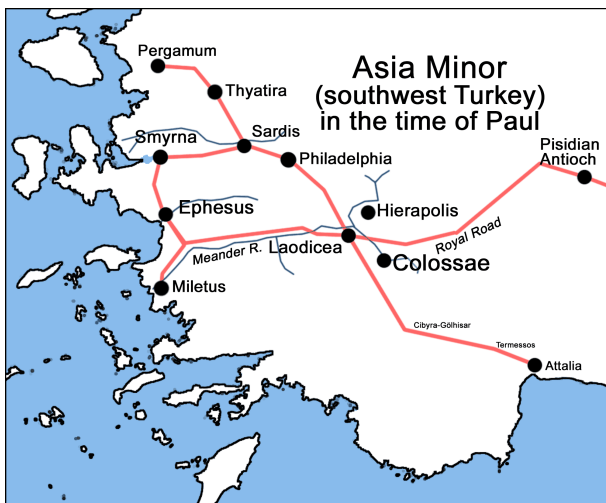
This letter is grouped with several other letters in the New Testament called the 'prison epistles' or the letters written from prison, along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. And Philemon is especially linked with the book of Colossians. It's almost like a post-script to that book. It's like P.S. I also want you to read this letter to Philemon as well.

In fact, near the end of the book of Colossians, we first read about this guy named Onesimus. There, Paul writes...

Colossians 4:7-9

Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8** I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, **9** and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

Paul says, I've sent these two guys to you. Onesimus is one of you – he's from Colossae. And he's going to be a big part of why I wrote this letter to Philemon. And it's likely that



Philemon himself was also from the city of Colossae, which is a city which is in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey. (show picture) It's near Ephesus and some of the other cities mentioned in the book of Acts.

Well, this guy Onesimus was a slave or bond-servant of Philemon. And apparently, he has run away from his master and stolen some things as he went.

Somehow, in God's providence, either intentionally or not, this guy Onesimus has met up with Paul. And Onesimus has come to Christ! He's a believer now. And because he's now a Christian, he needs to be reconciled to Philemon. And that's why Paul is writing this letter – to plead for Onesimus to Philemon.

And who was Philemon? In verse 1, Paul calls him our beloved fellow worker. Philemon was likely a wealthy guy with many servants and slaves. And he had been converted under Paul's ministry, which we'll see later.

Paul has a message for Philemon, particularly in regards to Onesimus, and that's why he's written this letter and sent it along with the book of Colossians. This book is unusual in the New Testament because it is so very personal – a plea from Paul to Philemon.

But notice that Paul does intend for others to read it. He also lists a couple other names: Apphia, whom he calls our sister, and Archippus, our fellow soldier. We don't know much about them – though some suggest that Apphia might have been Philemon's wife and Archippus his son or one of the key leaders in the church.

And then Paul also includes that this letter is also for the church in your house in verse two. All the churches that we know about in the first centuries met in people's homes. If you were to go up to someone and say, "Where do you go to church?" to one of the early believers, they would have been confused by the question. The church isn't a place you go; it's not a building. The church is the people. It's the assembling together, the gathering of the family of God in a local place so that they can worship God and make disciples together.

So Paul writes to Philemon and Apphia and Archippus and also beyond them to the whole church who meets in a house together. This isn't just a private letter; it's public, meant for the whole church to hear.

Why? Because forgiveness and reconciliation aren't just personal—they're communal. The church is a family, and what happens between two brothers affects us all. We are all inter-dependent on one another. Forgiveness is the glue that binds the family of God together. And to do that, what do we need? We need the grace of God.

So Paul's greeting here, "Grace to you and peace," isn't just a polite hello. It's a prayer that God's unmerited favor and the peace that flows from it would fill Philemon's life.

I think that's important because this is where reconciliation begins—with grace. You can't forgive someone who's wronged you without the grace of God working in your heart. And you can't find peace in broken relationships without the peace that comes from Christ.

Think about what's happening here: Paul's writing from a prison cell, yet he's overflowing with grace and peace. One of the striking features that we'll see repeated in this letter is that Paul doesn't view himself as a victim, and he doesn't simply appeal to his authority as an apostle. He's not saying – I'm suffering, so do what I say. Or, you **must** do this because I have the authority to command you. He's saying, I'm a prisoner of Christ, and I am writing so that you would have grace and peace.

If Paul could do that, writing from imprisonment, could we do the same? Maybe you're here today feeling chained—by resentment, by a grudge, by a hurt from years ago. Paul is reminding us, "The gospel sets you free to extend grace, even when it's hard." That's the foundation of this letter, and it's where we start. Look next at verses 4-7...

Philemon 1:4-7

I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, **5** because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, **6** and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. **7** For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

As he often does in his letters, Paul then moves into his gratitude and his prayers. He's not trying to flatter Philemon here. He really means what he's saying. He's heard about Philemon's faith in Jesus and his love for the saints, the other believers in Colossae. Philemon's house is being used for ministry. It's a place where the church gathers, where people are fed, encouraged, and refreshed.

And so Paul says, "Your love brings me joy and comfort, even here in prison." That's high praise! Philemon's not just a wealthy man with a big house; he's a man whose faith is active, whose love is tangible. He is using the blessings of God in his life to bless others. I know many of you like this – you steward God's blessings in your life and the resources He's entrusted to you as an opportunity to bless others. That's what Philemon is doing.

But while Paul's not just buttering him up, he is setting the stage for a tough request. He prays that Philemon's faith would be "effective" in his sharing the gospel, which will lead to a deeper knowledge of God's goodness.

He's not using that phrase "sharing your faith" like we might hear it today – sharing your faith in terms of telling others about Jesus or sharing the gospel. That's a good thing, of course, but that's not exactly what he's saying.

Here, Paul is saying, I'm asking God to bring about the full result of the faith that's in your heart. As you open your life and share in the fellowship of the saints, I'm asking that God would help you know how to walk in full maturity.

You are showing hospitality and love and service of others – that's wonderful. But that's surface level stuff. I want to see the work of Christ which is in you become even more evident in ways that go deeper. In other words, Paul's saying, "Philemon, your faith and love are real—now let's see them in action in a hard situation."

I think this is a good word for us. Your faith isn't just about what you believe in your head; it's about how you live it out in your relationships. Love isn't just a warm feeling; it's a choice to refresh others, to build them up, especially when they've hurt you. That's where your love really shows up.

Think about someone in your life who's hard to love—maybe a coworker who gossips, a family member who betrayed you, or a friend who let you down. Maybe it's your spouse or one of your kids. Does your faith and love for others show up in those kinds of situations? Or is it confined to Sundays or times when it's convenient?

The test of love is whether or not we're willing to forgive and serve when we don't feel like it. Philemon's about to face a test like that, and Paul's reminding him: *Your faith and love are the tools God's given you to pass this test.*

One of the prominent examples of forgiveness in the Bible is in the story of Joseph back in the book of Genesis. His brothers betrayed him and sold him into slavery. But God prospered Joseph, and he rose into a prominent position in Egypt. His brothers come to him and have to plead for his help, and now Joseph has the power to truly get his revenge. So will his love for God show up when he has the chance to take things into his own hands? Will he return evil for evil? No. Joseph forgives them. He has learned to trust in the Lord's good plan. He knows that there is only one God, and it's not him. So Joseph tells his brothers...

Genesis 50:19-20

But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? **20** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good,

This kind of attitude is what Paul is praying will happen in Philemon’s life. He’s commending in Philemon the kind of faith that we should show as well – one that shows up in real actions of love and forgiveness.

Next, we get to the heart of the letter, verses 8-16...

Philemon 8-16

Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, **9** yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— **10** I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. **11** (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) **12** I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. **13** I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, **14** but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. **15** For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, **16** no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Here’s where the story gets real. Now he gets to the reason for this letter. Paul’s writing about Onesimus, a runaway slave who belonged to Philemon. It seems like Onesimus probably stole something from Philemon and fled to Rome or Ephesus, where he met Paul in prison or house arrest. Again, under Paul’s ministry, Onesimus became a Christian—Paul calls him “my child, whose father I became.” There has been spiritual rebirth!

The name ‘Onesimus’ means “useful.” It reminds me of Thomas the Tank engine – you know that show? His big desire is to be a useful train, at least in the old ones? Well now, the once “useless” man is now “useful” to both Paul and Philemon because of the gospel.

Paul's request here is bold: he's sending Onesimus back to Philemon, knowing that under Roman law, it could mean severe punishment, even death, for a runaway slave. But Paul doesn't command Philemon to forgive; he appeals "for love's sake."

Why does he do that? Why doesn't he just command Philemon to obey? Perhaps it's because forgiveness can't be forced—it has to come from the heart. Paul's saying, "Philemon, I know you're a man of faith and love. Now show it by receiving Onesimus not as a slave, but as a beloved brother."

This is radical. In the Roman world, slaves were treated like property, not people. Yet Paul says, "The gospel changes everything. Onesimus isn't just your slave anymore—he's your brother in Christ." This isn't about overthrowing slavery outright; it's about something deeper—transforming relationships from the inside out. The gospel doesn't just change systems; it changes hearts and changed hearts change systems.

Some people have read this letter and how Paul tells Onesimus to return to his former master and seen it as though Paul is upholding the institution of slavery. I don't think that's the case for a couple reasons.

First, we have to recognize that slavery as an institution in that day wasn't exactly like it was in America in our history. It wasn't based on race like it was here. Slavery in that day was more like indentured servitude. The ESV translation has 'bondservant.' That's not to say that slavery was a good thing, especially not for women or for those who had been conquered in war. It could be brutal.

But it wasn't limited to the kind of forced labor that we might imagine. There were slaves at every level of society, from those who worked in the mines to household servants to royal advisors. And it was sometimes possible for a slave to earn his or her freedom. Some scholars estimate that half of all slaves would have been able to become free at some point in their lives (at least if they lived long enough).¹

So it wasn't exactly like American chattel slavery, even if it was a terrible thing. Why then, doesn't Paul just tell Philemon that he should free all of his slaves? Why doesn't he just tell all the believers in that day to rebel against Rome and society and refuse to participate in slavery?

¹ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 632.

Well, it would have been largely ineffective and probably would have just made the early church even more isolated and persecuted than they were already. Rome would have had no patience for people trying to overthrow the social order and cause unrest. To do something like that would have caused offense in the wrong ways.

But that's not to say that the believers just lived like everyone else. If you look at church history, the early church was known for living differently, for valuing life and treating all people with dignity and honor, including women and children and slaves. And they won people to Christ through their love and works of mercy and justice. But they didn't just rail against the culture and make enemies of themselves. That's not his purpose in his ministry.

So Paul has a larger priority – to preach the gospel. And when people come to Christ and their hearts are changed, then they will see how impossible it is to enslave one another. And so in writing this letter, without addressing it directly, Paul cuts the feet out under the institution of slavery. It should be unthinkable for Christians to own another person.

In an article that you can find at Desiring God, John Piper gives eleven ways that the apostle Paul undermines the institution of slavery in this letter to Philemon – things like calling attention to the fact that Onesimus is now his brother forever, that love now controls the dynamic of their relationship, and that in the Lord they are family. He concludes,

“Without explicitly prohibiting slavery, Paul has pointed the church away from slavery because it is an institution which is incompatible with the way the gospel works in people's lives. Whether the slavery is economic, racial, sexual, mild, or brutal, Paul's way of dealing with Philemon works to undermine the institution across its various manifestations. To walk “in step with the truth of the gospel” ([Galatians 2:14](#)) is to walk away from slavery.”²

So Paul gives a radical word here to Philemon – I want you to be reconciled to your brother, one who is now more than a bondservant. He's your brother. So I don't just want you to forgive him, I want you to see him differently. I want you to recognize that you're a part of the same family of God with him.

Then notice Paul's trust in God's providence in verse 15,

Philemon 1:15

Perhaps he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever.

² John Piper, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-paul-worked-to-overcome-slavery>

Paul sees God's hand even in Onesimus's rebellion. Maybe God allowed this mess to bring about something beautiful—a reconciled relationship, a testimony of grace.

I wonder how often do we see our messes as God's opportunities? That broken relationship, that betrayal, that hurt—could God be using it to show His power to redeem?

I know many of you are carrying deep wounds from your childhood or from the way your parents or your siblings treated you. Is it possible that God allowed those things to be a part of your story so that He might show His glory all the more in your redemption? God loves to write long stories. He loves to bring light to our darkness.

You know, the book of Philemon is like a living parable. Paul's plea for Onesimus is a picture of what Jesus does for us. We were runaways, rebels against God, but Jesus didn't condemn us. He paid our debt on the cross and called us brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11). Church, if Jesus can forgive us, we can forgive others.

I think that should make us ask, Who's the Onesimus in your life? Who's God calling you to receive as a brother or sister?

Let's keep going with verses 17-20...

Philemon 1:17-20

So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. **18** If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. **19** I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. **20** Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

Paul gets personal here. He says, "If you consider me your partner, receive Onesimus as you would receive me." That's a big ask! Paul's saying, "Treat this runaway slave like you'd treat me, an apostle." This is the gospel leveling the playing field—slave and apostle, equal in Christ.

Then Paul goes further: "If he owes you anything, charge it to my account." He writes this promise with his own hand, a legally binding pledge to repay any debt Onesimus incurred, whether stolen goods or lost labor.

This is a stunning picture of Jesus. Paul's saying, "Put Onesimus's debt on me," just as Jesus took our sin debt on the cross.

Isaiah 53:5 says,

He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.

Jesus didn't just forgive us; He paid what we owed. Paul's imitating Christ here, standing in the gap for Onesimus, and he's calling Philemon to do the same—forgive, absorb the cost, and restore the relationship.

You need to know that the kind of forgiveness and mercy that we've been talking about this morning is rooted in the work of Christ to save sinners. But maybe you've never asked Jesus to forgive you? If that's you today, I would love to talk with you before you leave about how you can know the forgiveness of Christ for yourself. Jesus is offering to take your debt on Himself, but you have to be willing to surrender to Him and receive the gift of salvation.

This is the same gospel message that Paul had preached, and Philemon had himself received. And so Paul adds a gentle nudge in verse 19...

Philemon 1:19

To say nothing of your owing me even your own self.

Philemon came to faith through Paul's ministry, so Paul's saying, "Hey, you owe me your very salvation—now show that grace to Onesimus." It's not manipulation; it's a reminder of the gospel debt we all owe Christ.

Finally, Paul says in **Philemon 1:20**...

Refresh my heart in Christ.

He's longing to hear that Philemon's faith and love have triumphed, bringing joy to Paul's prison cell.

Cornerstone, this is where the rubber meets the road. Forgiveness isn't cheap—it's expensive. It might cost your pride, your right to be angry, your sense of justice. But Jesus paid the ultimate price for us, and He calls us to forgive as He forgave.

Maybe you can remember a time someone forgave you when you didn't deserve it. How did it feel? Now imagine giving that gift to someone else.

I had my 20 year high school reunion a few weeks ago. I don't know what you were like in school, but I have lots of regrets over how I acted. I remember one instance where I bullied another kid in elementary. I felt fresh shame every time I thought about it. Years later, I asked this guy if he'd forgive me. And he did. There's great relief in reconciliation. I still cringe at it, but I can now recall that I've been forgiven.

It's a gift to forgive someone. That's what Paul's asking Philemon to do, and it's what God's asking us to do. Let's finish with verses 21-25...

Philemon 1:21-25

Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Did you notice how Paul wraps up his letter with confidence? "I know you'll do even more than I say." He trusts Philemon's faith and love will lead him to forgive Onesimus and maybe even free him. I think that's strongly implied.

This isn't blind optimism; it's faith in God's work in Philemon's heart. Paul also asks for a guest room, hoping to visit soon, which adds a layer of accountability—Philemon knows Paul will check in! Finally, he sends greetings from his fellow workers, reminding Philemon he's part of a larger gospel community.

One name is worth highlighting. Paul mentions Mark. This is the man whom Paul had himself strongly disagreed with earlier on one of their missionary journeys. But now, Paul has apparently himself been reconciled to him. And so Paul with this letter is telling Philemon to do something that he has done himself – make peace with a brother.

The closing prayer, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," echoes the opening. Grace is the bookend of this letter because grace is the power that makes reconciliation possible.

Brothers and sisters, Paul's confidence in Philemon is a challenge to us. God's working in your heart, too. He's given you the grace to forgive, to reconcile, to love the unlovable.

Final Applications

So, what do we take away from Philemon? This little letter is a masterclass in the gospel's power to reconcile. It shows us that no relationship is beyond repair when Jesus is at work. Let me give you three practical steps to apply this today:

1. **Identify Your Onesimus:** Who's the person who's wronged you? Maybe it's a spouse, a friend, a coworker, or even someone in this church. Name them in your heart and ask God to give you the grace to forgive them, not because they deserve it, but because Jesus paid your debt.

If you're having trouble thinking of someone whom you may need to forgive, then maybe think about this: is there a person for you, who when their name is brought up in conversation, you just feel this desire to say something bad about that person? That's probably a sign that you have some forgiving to do...

Or is there someone in your life for whom you are just inclined to believe the worst about them? You feel like you can't help but just assume that they have bad motives or that they meant those words in the worst possible way? That may be a sign too.

Or maybe there's a person or a group of people whom you are just thrilled when they fail? Or you just cheer for them to suffer or be embarrassed or humiliated?

Those might be signs that you have an Onesimus in your life whom you need to work on forgiving. But it starts with identifying who that may be for you.

2. **Choose Love Over Law**: We've pointed out that Paul could've commanded Philemon, but he appealed for love's sake. That's an example we should follow.

When you're tempted to hold a grudge or demand justice, choose love instead. You should be the one to take the first step toward reconciliation, even if it's hard. Write that text, make a call, or have a conversation. And yes, even if they started it or they hurt you more than you hurt them.

One of the steps in the process of forgiveness is realizing that we ourselves are no different than the person we're struggling with. They may be waiting for you because they think you started it or you've done the worse thing. When we're mad at a person, it's easy to turn them into a caricature in our minds. They're the worst, they always do this or that, they are incapable of honesty or kindness. So we exaggerate their worst features. And we tend to exaggerate our best features – we only had good intentions, we only meant positive things with our words, we were trying our best. We have this image of ourselves that's totally unreasonable. It's a caricature in the wrong way.

I put a photo of myself into one of those AI-photo generator things to make a caricature of myself, but it just spit this back...

(show picture) That's not what the original was, I promise.

But I think this is often what happens. We feel like we're superman or superwoman, and the other person is the villain. Brothers and sisters, *forgiveness won't happen if you feel superior to the one you're trying to forgive*. Forgiveness won't grow in the soil of condescension or arrogance.



We have to remember that the other person is a human being, made in the image of God, just like us. We have to choose to see them rightly, choose love over law.

If we're going to choose love over law, then that also means that we must offer forgiveness even when we don't feel like it. That happens a lot – forgiveness must be granted before it's felt. Sometimes it takes a while, weeks or months or even years. And even then, you may still have to work at granting forgiveness to that person who wronged you. We must choose to love, even when we want the law for our enemies.

3. **Trust God's Providence**: Like Paul saw God's hand in Onesimus's story, trust that God is working in your messes. That broken relationship, that hurt, God can use it for good, just as He did for Philemon and Onesimus.

Trusting God in the area of forgiveness means giving up control of what may happen. The Bible calls us to make restitution for the wrongs we have committed against one another. That's part of repentance – being willing to pay back what is owed.

But to forgive someone doesn't mean that there are no longer any consequences. It doesn't mean that trust comes back immediately. Sometimes relationships may be forever changed, depending on what happened.

And sometimes, you can do your part, you can repent in humility, you can ask for forgiveness for your actions – and the other person will just dig in their heels. In that case, you have to trust that in God's providence, He can soften their heart in time if He so chooses. Our part is to trust that God is in control, even when we are not.

Romans 12:18 says,

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

If the relationship is broken, then as much as it depends on you, try to make it right. In our relationships, we are to make every effort at peace. Remember, Jesus said, flourishing, blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God. You want to live a flourishing, happy life? Then forgive others as God your Father has forgiven you.

God loves to work in our messes, just like He did with Onesimus and Philemon. And that's what Philemon is about—God taking what's broken and making it beautiful.

Cornerstone, the gospel isn't just about getting you to heaven; it's about transforming your relationships here and now. So, today and this week and in the days ahead, ask God to show you where you need to forgive, where you need to reconcile, and where you need to extend grace. And trust that the same Jesus who paid your debt will give you the grace to do it. Let's pray...

Lord's Supper

(invite band and deacons up)

We come now to the Lord's Supper. Like baptism this is an ordinance of the church commanded by Christ. So like baptism, it's something an individual does and something that the church does. In 1st Corinthians chapter 11, Paul gives instructions for the church for the Lord's Supper, and over and over he calls on them to wait for one another and so walk in unity and love as a church.

So when we examine our hearts today, ask the Lord to call to mind anything that you may have against a brother or sister in the body, that you might be reconciled to them. We are to confess our sins, the Scripture says, as so take in a worthy manner.

When we partake of the bread and the cup, they point us to the body and blood of Jesus given for the full forgiveness of our sins. We are reminded that we participate in the New Covenant Jesus made with His people through His death and resurrection.

And so this table is for believers, for those who have put their trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ as you've heard it sung and proclaimed here this morning. So if you are not trusting in this gospel, we're glad you're here, but I would ask that you heed the warnings of Scripture and refrain from partaking. But if you're a follower of Christ, though perhaps not a member of our church, you are welcome to partake with us as a sign of the unity of Christ's church.

In just a moment, we'll pray, and then the deacons will serve the elements. There is a small piece of gluten-free bread and grape juice. Please hold on to both of those. We'll all partake together in a few moments.

Let's pray...