



THE GOOD
AND THE BAD
THE UGLY

CHARACTER STUDIES

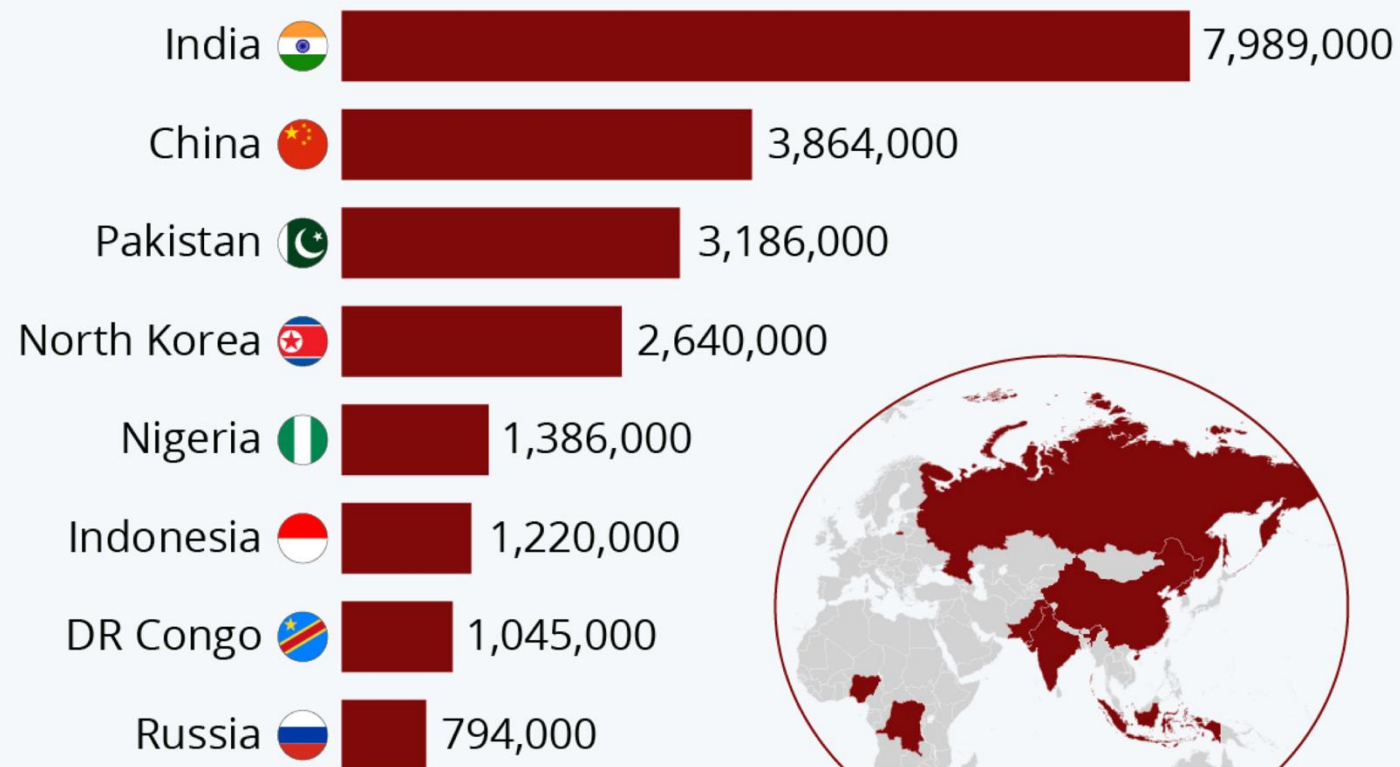
Plot

- A non-Christian slave named Onesimus runs away from his master, Philemon, who is a convert of Paul and a leader/patron in the local church
- Onesimus finds himself in the company of Paul and is eventually converted to Christianity
- Onesimus, now a disciple of Paul, becomes a close friend and valued helper during Paul's imprisonment
- After some time, Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon for reconciliation and restoration

THE GOOD

Modern Slavery Is A Brutal Reality Worldwide

Estimated number of people living in modern slavery in 2018*



* Latest available data.

Source: Walk Free Foundation



Tension through Contrast

- A command vs appeal
- right vs love
- useless vs useful
- send vs keep
- obligation vs free will
- slave vs brother
- me vs you
- flesh vs spirit
- my benefit vs your benefit
- obedience vs extravagant grace

THE GOOD

Heart Language

- Love
- Hearts of the Saints
- My Son
- His Father
- My Very Own Heart
- Dearly Loved Brother
- Welcome Him as You Would Me
- Refresh My Heart



Barriers

- Social - Saving Face
- Financial - Loss
- Tension at Home - Other Slaves?

Philemon 1-25

GREETINGS

¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother:

To Philemon our dear friend and coworker, ²to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your home.

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



Philemon 1-25

PHILEMON'S LOVE AND FAITH

⁴I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love for all the saints and the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ. ⁷For I have great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

Philemon 1-25

AN APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

⁸For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right, ⁹I appeal to you, instead, on the basis of love. I, Paul, as an elderly man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus, ¹⁰appeal to you for my son, Onesimus. I became his father while I was in chains.

THE GOOD

Philemon 1-25

¹¹Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me. ¹²I am sending him back to you—I am sending my very own heart. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me, so that in my imprisonment for the gospel he might serve me in your place.



Philemon 1-25

¹⁴But I didn't want to do anything without your consent, so that your good deed might not be out of obligation, but of your own free will.

¹⁵For perhaps this is why he was separated from you for a brief time, so that you might get him back permanently, ¹⁶no longer as a slave, but more than a slave—as a dearly loved brother. He is especially so to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord



Philemon 1-25

¹⁷So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would me. ¹⁸And if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹**I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—not to mention to you that you owe me even your very self.**



Philemon 1-25

²⁰Yes, brother, may I benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Since I am confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²²Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, since I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.



Philemon 1-25

FINAL GREETINGS

²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do

²⁴Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers.

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



WHAT IS PAUL ASKING FOR?

- v14 this “good deed”
- v15 God’s Providence if not His Express Will - you will have him back for ETERNITY
- v16 “more than a slave ... dearly loved brother”
- v19 “I, Paul, write this with my own hand”
- v20 “refresh my heart”
- v21 “you will do more than I say’



Dynamite

1. Slave to Missionary
2. Private vs Public
3. Theological vs Practice
4. Radical Voluntary Transformation

(Long Fuse)

vs.

Forced Obedience

(Short Fuse)



Gospel on Display

- Son/Love

The Ephesians 2:4–5

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,
⁵made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!



Gospel on Display

- Son/Love
- “Once he was useless”

Romans 3:23

²³For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;



Gospel on Display

- Son/Love
- “Once he was useless”
- **“Charge it to my account” & “I will repay”**

Romans 5:7–8

⁷For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. ⁸But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us



Gospel on Display

- Son/Love
- “Once he was useless”
- “Charge it to my account” & “I will repay”
- **“Welcome him as a brother”**

Romans 8:16–17

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children, ¹⁷and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified



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