

Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: *THE RUNAWAY* - A Story of How the Gospel Changes Lives

Based on the [The Book of Philemon](#)

Message 2: The Runaway Returns: The Story Through Philemon's Eyes

Speaker: Shawn Vandop

Date: September 27, 2026



Connect (30min)

- **Read [Ecclesiastes 3:1](#)** – *For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.*
- **Fall Faves:** What are three of your favorite things about the Fall Season (Autumn)?
- **Seasons of Life:** How would you describe the season that you're in right now? Share a *battle* and a *blessing* that you're experiencing in that season.
- **Give thanks and pray for one another.**

Message Discussion (45min)

- ***THE RUNAWAY*** is a journey through failure, forgiveness, reconciliation, and a fresh start. It reveals a gospel that does more than forgive our sins; it transforms who we are, changes how we see one another, and restores what once seemed beyond repair. You may run from your past or from God, but you can never outrun Grace.
[Option: Watch the [Book of Philemon Summary](#) on the BibleProject YouTube Channel. 6min]
1. **Read** the Book of [Philemon](#). (3min)
How were you encouraged, challenged or changed through Sunday's message? Share your feedback.
 2. **Philemon was known for refreshing and encouraging others**, yet he was being asked to extend grace to someone who had personally hurt him.
 - a. Why is grace easier to talk about than to give?
 - b. **Read [Philemon 15–16](#)**. What changed when **Onesimus** became a Christian?
How was Philemon being asked to see him differently?
 3. The message said, ***“Grace refuses to freeze people in the worst chapter of their story.”***
 - a. Why do we tend to define people by what they have done to us?
 - b. Has anyone ever shown you grace by allowing you to become more than your past?
 - c. What is the difference between *forgiveness, reconciliation, and trust*?
Why is it important not to confuse them?
 4. **[Corrie ten Boom](#) acted in obedience before she felt forgiveness.** [Video Option: [Forgiveness Story](#)]
 - a. Do you believe forgiveness is primarily a *feeling, a decision, or a process*?
 - b. How might all three be involved?
 5. Paul said, ***“If he owes you anything, charge it to me.”*** What does this teach us about the cost of forgiveness, and how does Paul's action point us towards the truth and grace of Jesus?

6. Paul didn't merely ask Philemon to tolerate Onesimus; he asked him to **welcome Onesimus as family**. What is the difference between releasing someone's debt and "***making room at the table***"?
7. **Application Challenge.** Read [Luke 6:27-28](#). Consider the message's three closing questions:
- Who might God be asking you to see differently?
 - What debt are you still trying to collect?
 - What is one wise, grace-filled step you could take this week toward showing grace?

Prayer (15min)

>> Break into groups of 3-4 people to enhance this time

- In response to Sunday's message and scripture, how can we pray for YOU today? Share and pray for one another.
- Who is a *RUNAWAY* or an *ENEMY* in your life that we can pray for together? Share and pray for them.

Resources

- >> Book: [The Hiding Place](#), by Corrie ten Boom.
- >> Participate in our [Set Free Retreat](#) this Fall. November 20-21.

FYI

- Confirm the details for your next Life Group meeting.
- Share key church announcements from the weekly Church Newsletter.
 - [Hearing God Workshop](#). Sundays October 4-November 8. 8:30am-9:40am. Church Office.