

House Arrest: Making the Best of a Bad Situation
An Opportunity for Freedom

Philemon 1:8-20

“Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. 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, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 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. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.” **Philemon 1:8-20**

Main Idea: House Arrest Provides an Opportunity for Freedom

I. True Freedom is experienced in Forgiveness

“For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 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.”

Philemon 1:15-16

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:32

What are the results of un-forgiveness?

- **Un-forgiveness imprisons believers in their past**
- **Un-forgiveness produces bitterness**

“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;” **Hebrews 12:15**

- **Un-forgiveness gives Satan an open door**

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” **Ephesians 4:26-27**

- **Un-forgiveness hinders fellowship with God**

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 6:14-15

II. True Freedom is Found in the Gospel

“So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.” Philemon 1:17-19

“Never are we more like God than when we forgive. Never are we more like Christ than when we pay someone else’s debt so that reconciliation can take place. Paul’s willingness to suffer the temporal consequences of Onesimus’s sin mirrors Christ’s willingness to suffer the eternal consequences of our sin.” J.F. MacArthur

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” Colossians 2:13-16

True freedom is found in the Gospel and experienced when we forgive others!

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The Acts of the Apostles* – William Barclay (1975)
- *Philemon*– J.F. MacArthur, Jr. (1992)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – W.A. Elwell & P.W. Comfort (2001)