

Runaway Grace – A Series in Philemon

The Relationships of Grace

Philemon 1:1-25

We are in a series from the small book of Philemon that is all about GRACE! Our working definition: **GRACE: God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**

Major Players: 1) Author: Paul, 2) Recipient: Philemon, 3) Subject: Onesimus

*“Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, 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. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. 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. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 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. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.” **Philemon 1:1-25***

Main Idea: Grace Provides a New Perspective on Relationships

I. Grace Calls Me to Christ-Centered Companionship

Exp: Receiving the grace of God results in a new type of companionship.

Paul’s Companions: Aristarchus was a longtime companion of the Apostle Paul, faithful, loyal and the only friend to remain with Paul until his final days.

Philemon’s Companion: Paul mentions Apphia, Philemon’s wife, who was deeply involved in hosting *“the church in your house.”*

Onesimus’s Companion: The journey from Rome to Colossae was a treacherous one, and Tychicus was the answer to Onesimus’s prayers as both a traveling companion and friend.

“Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother & faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, 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.”

Colossians 4:7-9

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

Proverbs 17:17

II. Grace Calls Me to Christ-Centered Influence

*“...Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf.” **Colossians 1:7b***

*“And say to Archippus, ‘See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.’” **Colossians 4:17***

*“To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” **1 Timothy 1:2***

III. Grace Calls Me to Christ-Centered Patience

*“Get Mark & bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.” **2 Timothy 4:11b***

*“For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...” **2 Timothy 4:10a***

Grace calls us to withhold judgment while encouraging everyone, everywhere to receive the grace of God for themselves. Ultimately, God will sort it all out!

Grace Changes Everything: Mindsets, Priorities, Giving & Relationships!

To the Unbeliever: Receive God’s grace made possible because of Christ!

To the Believer: Deploy the grace of God into every area of your life!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* – P.L. Tan (1996)
- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* – Craig Keener (1993)
- *Faithlife Study Bible* – J.D. Barry (2016)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *Saint Crysostom: Homilies* – P. Shaff (1889)
- *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (Vol. 32)* – Richard R. Melick (1991)
- *Philemon* – John MacArthur (1992)
- *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* – P.W. Comfort & B.B Barton (1995)
- *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* – K. Larson (2000)
- *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* – J.B. Lightfoot (1886)
- *Fullness & Freedom* – R.C. Lucas (1980)
- *An Exposition of the New Testament* – J. Gill (1809)
- *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations* – Tony Evans (2009)
- *From Ruthless to Generous and Enslaved to Empowered* – J.D. Greear (2015)
- *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes* – Charles Swindoll (1998)

