

I. Sent - Philemon 8-12

1. I could be bold, but I appeal (**verse 8**)
 - “you ought to do”
 - Paul has a right to simply instruct Philemon
- Rea -because of age? Because of apostolic authority? Because he is Philemon’s mentor?
2. But I appeal (**verse 9**)
 - on the basis of love
 - probably the love between Paul and Philemon
- Rea -when you love someone you do things for them that you would not otherwise
3. Identifies himself
 - an old man
 - a prisoner of Christ
- Rea -a personal letter, not just fellow-workers in the faith
4. The appeal is for his “son” - Onesimus (**verse 10**)
 - not a slave but a son
5. Formerly he was “useless” not has become “useful” (**verse 11**)
 - “Onesimus” means profitable
6. I’m sending him back to you (**verse 12**)
 - he is “my very heart”
- Rea -there is unfinished business that Onesimus needs to attend to
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. Salvation has changed him from “useless” to “useful”
 2. Love run deep in the letters of Paul
 - it is the heart of everything he does - it ought be so for us
 3. Churches have become buildings to house our worship concerts instead of homes to house the people - the people are the most important part of churches
 - nowadays it’s all about the “show”

II. As a Brother - Philemon 13-16

1. He would like to keep Onesimus (**verse 13**)
 - to take the place of Philemon in helping Paul
- Rea -how big is this “help?” - it is everything
2. Paul wanted Philemon to make a “voluntary” decision (**verse 14**)
 - the converted slave could have just stayed with Paul - but that would be to make Philemon’s decision for him (without your consent)
 - we ought to do good of our own free will, not out of compulsion
- Rea -Jesus went to the cross of His own free will
3. Having Onesimus for a while meant that he was now saved
 - now, he could be with them all “forever” (**verse 15**)
- Rea 4. Paul does the “right” thing in sending Onesimus back
 - he wants Philemon to do the “right” thing in setting Onesimus free
5. Receive him back - no longer as a “slave” but as a brother (**verse 16**)
 - his status has changed, even though technically Onesimus is still a slave

- a “brother” in the Lord
- a “fellow man”
- Rea -the issue of status and personhood are raised by this occurrence
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. No brother in the Lord is ever a slave - even though he might have that status in life
 - I might be a ditch digger, but also a brother in Jesus
 - class distinctions melt away in the hot love of Jesus
 - socio-economic differences very often divide us in the local church
 2. Was it necessary for Onesimus to do this - to go back?
 - yes, there is some unfinished business

III. So Welcome Him - Philemon 17-21

- Rea 1. An “if/ then” statement
 - if I am a partner welcome him back (**verse 17**)
 - welcome him just as you would welcome me
- Rea -in other words don’t punish him for having fun away
- 2. Paul offers to make good any loss that Philemon has incurred because of Onesimus
 - like running the household (**verse 18**)
- Rea 3. When the Good Samaritan took the wounded Jew to the end - he offered to pay his on-going expenses
 - when Zacchaeus was converted he offered to pay back money that he had taken from others by theft
 - we might call this restitution??
- 4. At verse 19 Paul makes it clear what he is offering - “I will pay it back” (**verse 19**)
 - but you owe me your very self - Philemon’s spiritual debt to Paul
- 5. I wish that I might have some spiritual benefit from you (**verse 20**)
 - refresh his heart
 - Paul refers to Philemon as brother
- Rea -so Paul is *brother* to both Philemon and Onesimus
- 6. He is confident that Philemon will do the right thing (**verse 21**)
 - even more than Paul asks
 - the “even more” is a delicate request that Philemon free this runaway slave
- 7. Paul did not condemn slavery, but he did not condone it either
 - the truths of this letter help to abolish slavery later
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. Discuss slavery and it’s problems - for us today... but also in Paul’s day
 2. Obviously Paul witnessed to slaves and saw them as persons - who could and should trust Christ as savior
 3. There is no reference to skin color in this letter - to be a slave was not a matter of skin color
 4. Discuss the fact that Paul sent him back - why?