

**Philemon: Grace Heals**  
**2024-03-03**

**Philemon Verse 18**

*If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.*

*Father, make us one, even as you and JC are one.*

*Magnify your majesty by breaking demonic walls that divide your people at LEFC. Heal our wounds. Let forgiveness be given. May hearts be aligned. Let the Holy Spirit bring unity and peace.*

*Let our love for one another be a sign and a wonder to the world around us. I ask that your glory would radiate through the beautiful unity of your body at LEFC as we work together, eat together, pray together, honor, love & serve one another.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*

.... **Last few weeks challenging at LEFC.**

- **Grace answer** to all **struggles**, pain, **sin**, or troubled relationships.
  - By God's **sovereignty in Philemon** about **reconciliation and unity** between **Christians**.
- Grace **smooths friction**, cleanses **bitterness**, heals **pain** of offended.

**Philemon shortest of Paul 13 Letters and 1 of 4 prison epistle** (Colossians, Ephesians, Philipians). Written **61-63 AD**. See *outline at the end*.

- **Ones stole from Philemon, ran to Rome 1200 miles** away, somehow **met Paul, saved, Paul sent back** with Ones **this epistle**...Philemon.
  - **Plea to forgive and embrace Ones as brother** in the Lord.
    - Paul **offers pay** any **restitution** owed Philemon by Ones.

**History not clearly reveal Philemon's response** to Paul's letter.

- Years **later, early church father Ignatius refer** to a **bishop of Ephesus** named **Ones**.... used **same play on words** Paul did in **verse 11**.

**Paul and early church never said converts had to give up their slaves.**

- **Slavery common, maybe 1 in 2 people in voluntary slavery to pay debt.... treated alright.**
  - But in Philemon **seeds sown for ultimate destruction of all slavery.**
    - **Gospel transforms** servant and master **relationship** from **inside out**.

**Slavery can't exist in presence of true Christian love.** *Philemon 10, 15-16, Galatians 3:28*

- **Changed hearts produce changed behavior** and eventually **social change**.
  - **Can't treat as slave during week** and **brother sister in church**.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> century and later:** many masters upon salvation freed slaves.

Philemon **not about abolition** of slavery **but reconciliation and** unity among Christians.

- Paul's request: **forgive** unworthy **offender** Ones, **accept him as brother** in Jesus, and **if** Ones owed **debt Paul** would **pay it**. Philemon 17-20
  - Ones' **sin not minimized**, ignored...**your offense** and hurt **real**.
- **Not cheap grace** either. **Sacrifice required** by someone.
  - **Forgiveness and** reconciliation **usually begin with injured**, not offender.

Forgiveness and reconciliation **based on God's love and forgiveness** to **unworthy Philemon**, he **shows same love and forgiveness** toward **unworthy Ones** and **receives as brother**. Philemon 2:3-4. Luke 6:35-36, 7:47, Colossians 3:12-13, Ephesians 4:31-32

- **Through Holy Spirit's** power can **obey command to forgive anyone of anything**.
  - **Trust** Lord is **sovereign** and **carries out His purposes in ALL things**.
    - **Even in turmoil** of human events. Genesis 50:20.
  - **Ask Lord** help **see size your debt Jesus paid and His love** Luther Quote at end.
    - **Maybe** unforgiveness **reason for physical or emotional issues**.

**Must forgive** but **genuine reconciliation only happens** when **offender truly repents**. Galatians 6:7

- **If repent** still may reap: **loss of money or fellowship....** takes **time to rebuild trust**.
  - **Warning: Not delight** when **offender reaps or is disciplined**.

**Grace** of Jesus **restores** and transforms **relationships** and **creates love**, brotherhood, and **unity** that **brings** our heavenly **Father** magnificent **praise and glory**.

- **Be agent of reconciliation** to those who have **wronged you**.
  - **Not every** relationship **works out**. Romans 12:18-21

**Key to Philemon** and **heart of Gospel:** **grace of vertical reconciliation** (peace with God) is **foundation and hope** for **horizontal reconciliation**, peace, **unity w/others**. See paragraph at end.

### Outline of Philemon

- 1-3 SALUTATION
- 4-7 THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER
- 8-21 THE PLEA FOR ONESIMUS
  - 8-9 An Appeal, Not A Command
  - 10-20 Paul's Request

21 Paul's Confidence in Philemon  
22-25 CONCLUDING REMARKS

*All of us were God's Onesimus. We were slaves. We were debtors. We were sinners. We merited nothing. On our own, we stand naked and wretched before a God who is righteous and holy, yet the Lord Jesus says to the Father, "If this one has done anything wrong, or owes You anything, charge it to My account. I will pay it."*

**Martin Luther**

Based on Your love and forgiveness to unworthy me,

I ask You Father to help me show that same love and forgiveness toward \_\_\_\_\_ and receive them as my brother/sister in Christ.