Philemon



Receive Him as Myself

"If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself."
Philemon 17

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO

PHILEMON

Philemon was a Christian of Colosse, in whose house the church met (verse 2), and who had been brought to Christ through Paul (verse 19). His slave Onesimus had run away, perhaps having stolen from him, and had found his way to Rome, where he met Paul in prison and was converted. Paul wrote this short personal letter while a prisoner at Rome, about A.D. 64 by the chronology printed in the margins of many King James Bibles, and sent it back with Onesimus together with Tychicus, who carried the letter to the Colossians (Colossians 4:7–9).

With great tact and tenderness Paul asks Philemon to receive Onesimus back, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (verse 16). The name Onesimus means "profitable," and Paul writes that he "in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me" (verse 11). Paul offers to repay whatever Onesimus owed: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account" (verse 18). The letter is a living picture of the gospel itself, for as Paul stood surety for Onesimus, so Christ has taken our debt upon Himself, and in Him master and slave become brethren. Ellen G. White describes this letter in *The Acts of the Apostles*, in the chapter "Written From Rome."

CHAPTER 1

Greeting

PAUL, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay *it:* albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Final Greetings

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with
your spirit. Amen.

Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.