



Big Photo:

Forgiveness

1



2

Who was Philemon?

- Philemon 1 is the ONLY mention of this fellow
- Apparently a slaveholder who lived in Colosse
- Apparently a Christian

3

Who was Onesimus?

- Colossians 4:9: Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8**I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our¹a circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9**He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

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Who was Onesimus?

- ✦ Christian Slave
- ✦ Household of Philemon
- ✦ Colosse

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Philemon

Epistle of
Forgiveness

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Martin Story:
Attack of the Penny



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8

Author:

- ♦ 1:1,9
- ♦ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus; Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner...

9

Date Written:

- ♦ 60?
- ♦ An Imprisonment Letter
- ♦ Sent w/ Colossians?

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Recipients:

- ♦ Verse 1: "Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved fellow worker...and to the church in your house"ESV

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Purpose:

- ♦ Paul asks Philemon to accept his former slave back without punishing him for running away; to accept him as a brother instead of a slave

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Key Verse:

- ✦ 10&16-17
- ✦ 10 I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus
- ✦ 16...no longer as a slave but more than a slave, 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.ESV

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Key Chapter (Required Reading):

- ✦ There's only one!

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TCF #1

- ✦ Slavery is bad
- ✦ v. 16 Brothers are better than Slaves
- ✦ But doesn't DIRECTLY say slavery is sinful or wrong.

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TCF #2

- ✦ Slavery: BOTH sides cited Philemon as supporting their cause during the Civil War
- ✦ Paul doesn't say, "Stop having slaves, Philemon".
- ✦ Paul doesn't say, "Onesimus, you're a free man." He sends him BACK to Philemon.
- ✦ Exodus 20: Man/Maid servant?

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TCF #3

- Luther sums up the argument by saying that Paul maintains the "Status quo"
- Paul is not a politician--He's not a reformer--his sole mission is to bring people to Christ
- He does not advocate social revolution
- He says, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Ephesians 5:22

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TCF #3

- The Point-- Paul doesn't say that slavery is wrong because that's not his mission

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TCF #4

The climax is seen in his explicit allusion to **the nature of the reception**: to get Philemon to receive Onesimus back "**no longer as a slave**" (vs. 16).
Here is the real message of Philemon—and the Christian stance on slavery: God would have slaves not to be treated as slaves! (Miller)

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TCF #5

- Long, loving opening v. 1-10
- "Holy flattery"--Martin Luther (wikipedia)
- Onesimus isn't even mentioned until halfway through the letter
- Tactful, charming, classic Paul

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TCF #5 continued

- ♦ Organized in a way taught by the ancient Greeks & Romans:
- ♦ Rapport v. 4-10; Persuade the mind v. 11-19, Move emotions v. 20-21

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TCF #6

- ♦ Luther, "Martin Luther saw a parallel between Paul and Christ in their work of reconciliation." (wikipedia)
- ♦ To reconcile--to forgive, to "get past" an issue, to turn to love
- ♦ Forgiveness v. 17-21
- ♦ Galatians 3:26-28, Colossians 3:10-11

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Activity to Remember

Jeopardy!

God is the source of all of our joy;
Philippians 3: 7

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Life Lessons from Philemon

- ♦ "After voicing greetings and a thanksgiving for Philemon's love and faith, the apostle [Paul] asks the addressee [Philemon] to forgive the ex-slave or charge to him (St. Paul) whatever damage Onesimus may have done." (ITBOTB).
- ♦ How does the story of these three men sound like the story of you, your Savior, and your Heavenly Father?

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