

An Intercessory Epistle

Lesson 15: Philemon

April 12, 2020

History

- Written from prison, probably along with Colossians
- Paul writing as a mediator similar to Christ
- Paul appeals for Onesimus, but for what?
- Commands in the letter
 - 17 accept him as you would me
 - 18 charge that to my account
 - 20 refresh my heart in Christ
 - 22 prepare me a lodging

Outline

- 1-3 Introduction
- 4-7 Prayer
- 8-20 Appeal
- 21-25 Closing

Letter greeting similarities

- Romans 1:7 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- 1 Corinthians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- 2 Corinthians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- Galatians 1:3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- Ephesians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- Philippians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- Colossians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1 Grace to you and peace
- 2 Thessalonians 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God **the** Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- 1 Timothy 1:2 Grace, **mercy** and peace from God **the** Father and **Christ Jesus our Lord**
- 2 Timothy 1:2 Grace, **mercy** and peace from God **the** Father and **Christ Jesus our Lord**
- Titus 1:4 Grace and peace from God **the** Father and **Christ Jesus our Savior**

Introduction

Philemon 1-6

¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker, ²and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love and of the **faith** which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; ⁶*and I pray* that the fellowship of your **faith** may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

- While others are mentioned, the letter is written to Philemon
- Characteristics of Philemon
 - Beloved brother
 - Fellow worker
 - Love
 - Faith
- Prayer for increased fellowship

Appeal

Philemon 7-11

⁷For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

⁸Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you *to do* what is proper, ⁹yet for love's sake I rather **appeal** *to you*—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—

¹⁰I **appeal** to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, ¹¹who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

- Not a command, but an appeal
- Paul describes himself as
 - Old
 - Prisoner of Christ Jesus
- Onesimus
 - Paul's "child"
 - Paul's very heart (v. 12)
 - Paul wanted to keep Onesimus (v.13)

Appeal

Philemon 12-16

¹²I have sent him back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart, ¹³whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; ¹⁴but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. ¹⁵For perhaps he was for this reason separated *from you* for a while, that you would have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a **slave**, but more than a **slave**, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

- Goodness needs to be done freely
- Relationships through Christ are the most important
- Slavery wasn't the issue, but that Onesimus was now a brother

Appeal

Philemon 17-22

¹⁷**If** then you regard me a partner, accept him as *you would* me. ¹⁸But **if** he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account; ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). ²⁰Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

²¹Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

²²At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

- Financial terms
 - Owe
 - Charge
 - Repay
 - Benefit
- Paul was confident in Philemon
- As in Philippians, Paul expected to be released

Closing

Philemon 23-25

²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴*as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

- All these are also in Colossians
- Mark was now serving with Paul again

Summary

- We should obey, and help others to obey, not from compulsion, but willingly
- The highest relationship is to be connected to others in Christ
- We should be willing to cover any wrong done by a fellow Christian
- We are to accept others as Christ has accepted us
- As ambassadors of Christ we may be called on to be a mediator