

Philemon

Greetings from Paul

This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker,² and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your^{*} house.

³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer

⁴ I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon,⁵ because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people.⁶ And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ.⁷ Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

Paul's Appeal for Onesimus

⁸ That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do.

⁹ But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus.^{*}

¹⁰ I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.¹¹ Onesimus^{*}

^{*} Throughout this letter, *you* and *your* are singular except in verses 3, 22, and 25.

^{*} Or *a prisoner of Christ Jesus*.

^{*} *Onesimus* means “useful.”

hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. ¹² I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

¹³ I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. ¹⁴ But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced. ¹⁵ It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶ He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT. AND I WON'T MENTION THAT YOU OWE ME YOUR VERY SOUL!

²⁰ Yes, my brother, please do me this favor* for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ.

²¹ I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more! ²² One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon.

Paul's Final Greetings

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. ²⁴ So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers.

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

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* Greek *onaimen*, a play on the name Onesimus.

¹Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible : New Living Translation.*, "Text Edition"--Spine., 2nd ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), Phm 1-25.