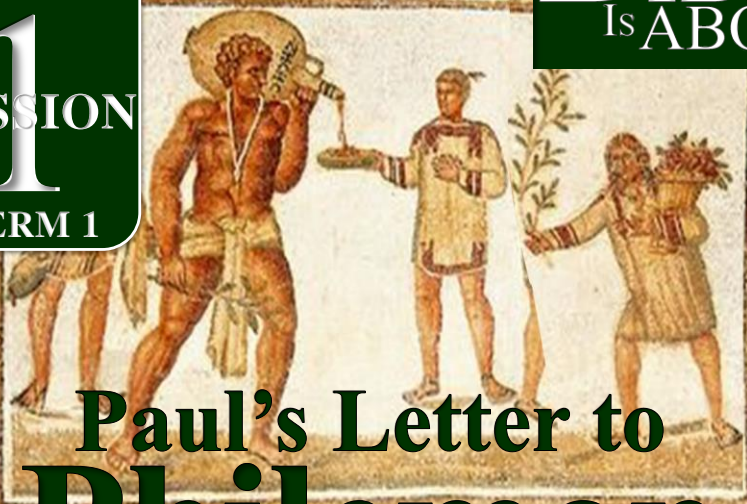




2022
1
SESSION
TERM 1

WHAT THE
BIBLE
IS ABOUT



Paul's Letter to
Philemon

Outline of Philemon

APPRECIATION (“I thank my God”) (Philemon 1:1-7)

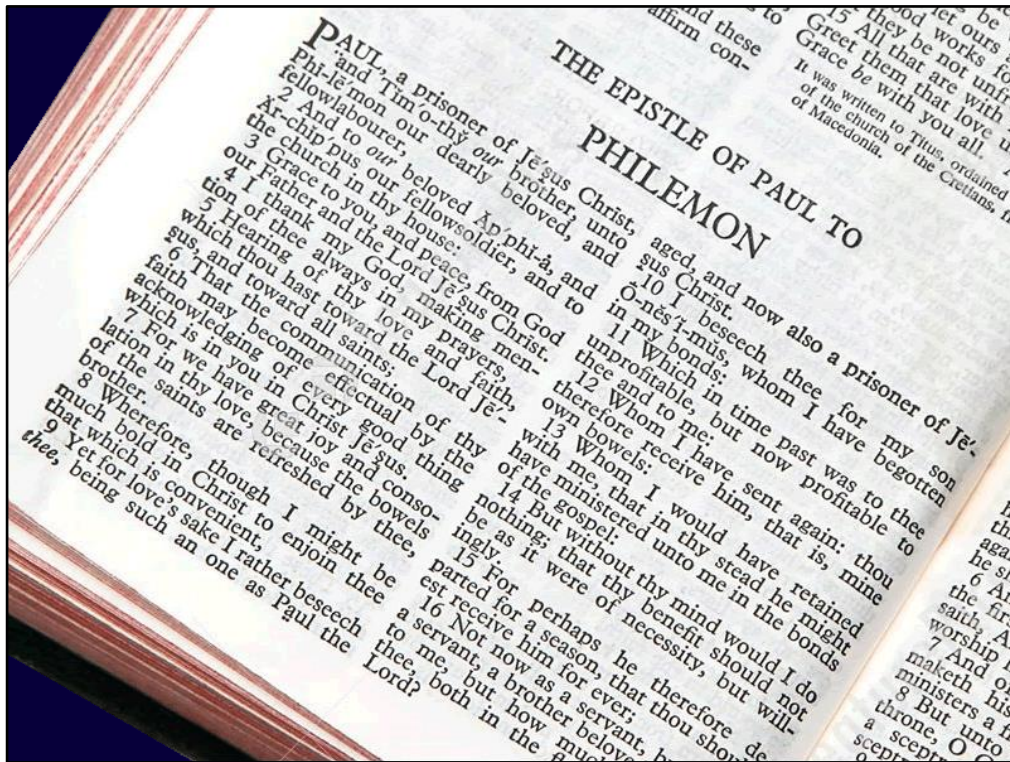
- A. Paul’s love—1–3
- B. Paul’s thanksgiving—4–5, 7
- C. Paul’s prayer—6

APPEAL (“I beseech thee”) (Philemon 1:8-16)

- A. Philemon’s character—8–9
- B. Onesimus’s conversion—10–14
- C. God’s providence—15–16

ASSURANCE (“I will repay”) (Philemon 1:17-25)

- A. Paul’s partnership—17–19
- B. Paul’s confidence—20–22
- C. Paul’s greetings—23–25



¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, ² to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

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

⁴ I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, ⁵ hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, ⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. ⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

⁸ Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, ⁹ *yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—

¹⁰ I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains, ¹¹ who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

¹² I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, ¹³ whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. ¹⁴ But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary. ¹⁵ For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose*, that you might receive him forever, ¹⁶ no 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.

¹⁷ If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me. ¹⁸ But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. ²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

²¹ Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²² But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, ²⁴ *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers. ²⁵ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Paul's letter to Philemon is one of the shortest books in the New Testament, only John's second and third letters are shorter, so it fits on this one slide. But within these words, Paul sums up Jesus' entire message of forgiveness. I'll read it through and then we'll take our time dissecting it.

The Sin of Israel (Amos 3:1-15)

A	Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1:1-3)
B	For I have experienced much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the holy ones have been refreshed by you, brother. (1:4-7)
C	Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner for Christ Jesus. (1:8-9)
D	I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. (1:10-14)
E	no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a brother, beloved (1:15-16)
D'	So if you regard me as a partner, welcome him as you would me. (1:17-18)
C'	I, Paul, write this in my own hand: (1:19)
B'	Yes, brother, may I profit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. (1:20-22)
A'	The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (1:23-25)

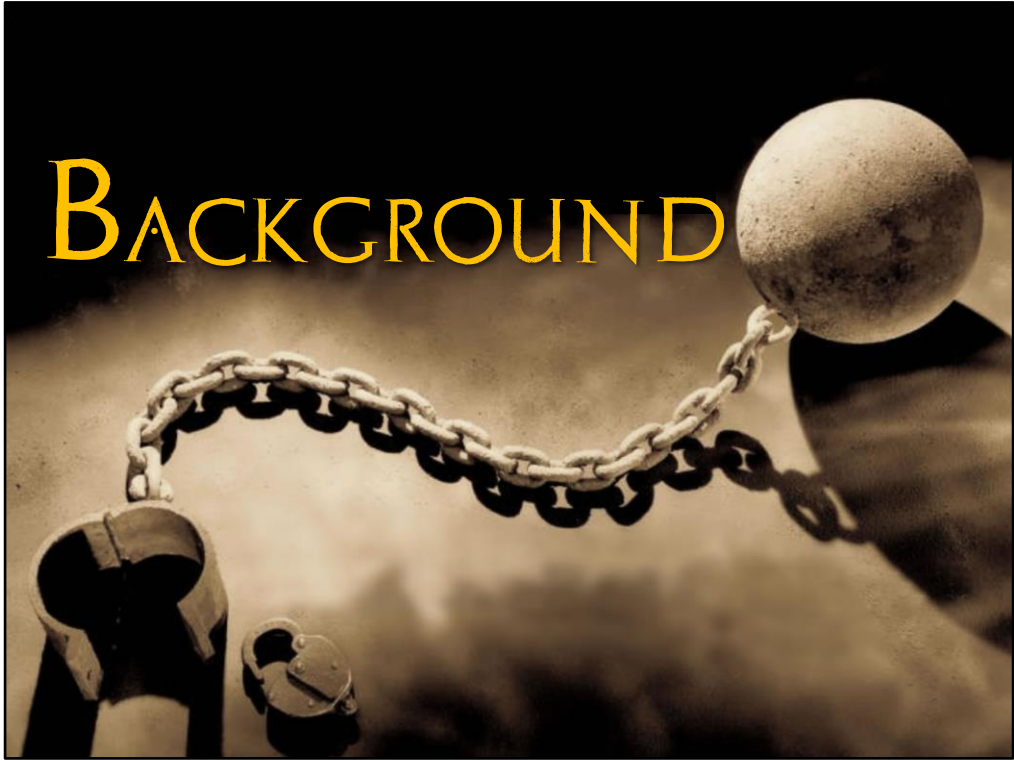
A: Salutation. B: Joy caused by Philemon. C: Paul by himself. D: Sending / welcoming Onesimus. E: More than a slave.

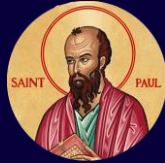
- A(1:1-3) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B(1:4-7) For I have experienced much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the holy ones have been refreshed by you, brother.
- C(1:8-9) Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner for Christ Jesus.
- D(1:10-14) I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you.
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- B'(1:20-22) Yes, brother, may I profit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.
- A'(1:23-25) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Contrasts and comparisons

Paul's approach	"I might be much bold in Christ" (v.8)	"for love's sake I rather beseech you " (v.9)
Paul and Onesimus	"Paul the aged " (v.9)	"my son Onesimus" (v.10)
Onesimus' value	" unprofitable "	" profitable " (v.11)
Philemon's service	"the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee " (v.7)	" in thy stead he (Onesimus) might have ministered unto me" (v.13)
Paul's choice	"I would have retained " (v.13)	"I have sent again" (v.12)
Onesimus' position	"departed for a season " (v.15)	"receive him forever " (v.15)
Onesimus' status	"a servant " (v.16) "in the flesh " (V.16)	"a brother beloved" (v.16) "in the Lord " (v.16)

Paul also uses the literary device that Paul of contrasts and comparisons to make his arguments stronger and more memorable.





Paul

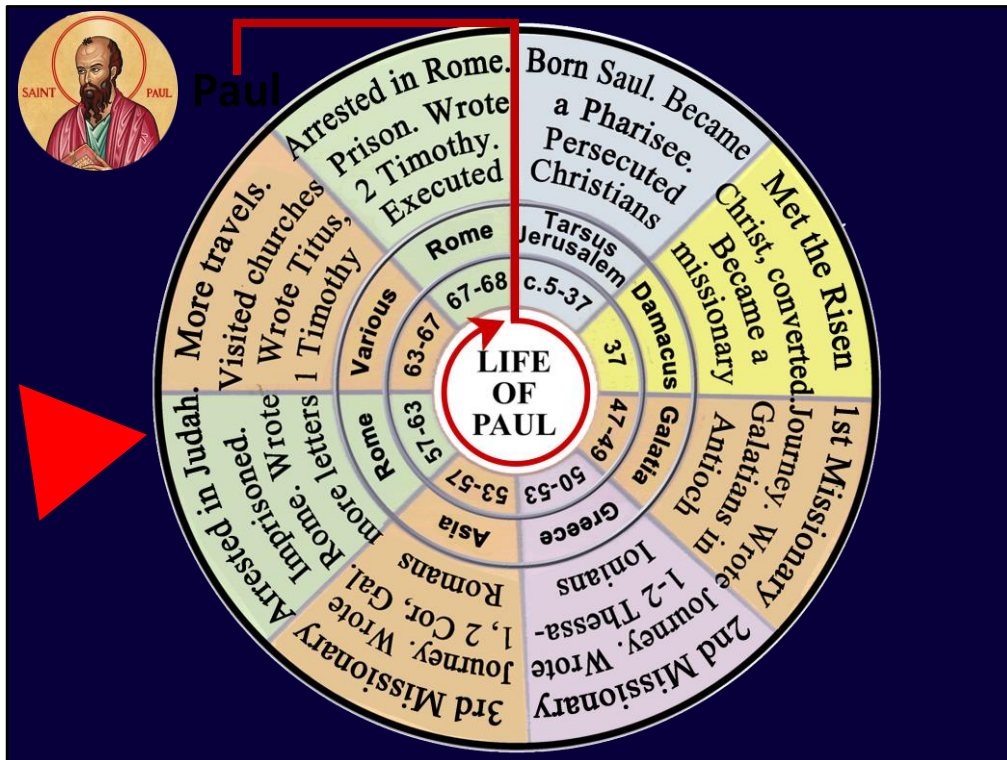
- Born Saul of Tarsus.
- Tribe of Benjamin.
- Born a Roman citizen.
- Highest Greek and Jewish education (Gamaliel).
- A Pharisee.
- Violent persecutor of Christians.
- Damascus Road conversion.
- Primary apostle to Gentiles and New testament author.
- Martyred in Rome.

Main Characters

Philemon



- A wealthy and noble Roman citizen.
- Like most of the wealthy class, an owner of slaves.
- Lived in Colossae in the Lycus River Valley.
- Converted to Christianity by Paul.
- A local ekklesia (home church) met in his house.
- Husband of Apphia and father of Archippus.
- Master of Onesimus, a runaway slave.



The book of Acts covers Paul's life, with a focus on his ministry. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon while under house arrest in Rome while awaiting an audience with the Roman Emperor Nero, where the Book of Acts ends. He was declared innocent at that hearing and set free. After more travels, possibly to Spain or back to Ephesus and Colossae, he was arrested again and finally executed.

Historical background

- Philemon appears to have been a comparatively wealthy Colossian who owned slaves, as did most of the rich in his day.
- Slaves in the Roman Empire were similar to household servants in Victorian Britain; as many as a third of the inhabitants of most large urban centers would have been slaves.
- Onesimus evidently came to faith in Christ as a result of Paul's influence (v. 19), possibly when Paul was in Ephesus or Colossae and Onesimus was one of Philemon's household slaves. He likely ran away not because of mistreatment but because of some domestic trouble.
- He eventually made his way to Rome where instead of hiding in the crowds, he came into contact with Paul and became a devout Christian (v. 10) and a valuable helper to Paul (v. 11).

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- Paul desired to keep Onesimus with him but felt a greater responsibility to return the slave to his Christian master (vv. 13-14). Onesimus had to make things right with Philemon whom he had wronged. Paul and Onesimus both knew the danger the slave faced in returning since slave owners had absolute authority over their slaves and often treated them as property rather than as people.
- Paul wrote this brief appeal to pacify Philemon and to affect reconciliation between the slave and his master. His other purposes were to commend Philemon for showing compassion to other believers (vv. 17), to announce his plans to visit Philemon following his anticipated release (vv. 8-22), and to send greetings from his associates (vv. 23-25).
- “Philemon provides insight both into the social realities of ancient society, in this case the relations between master and slave, which is surpassed only by 1 Corinthians, and into the way in which influence was brought to bear within the earliest churches between parties of differing social status.” (James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*)

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Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus

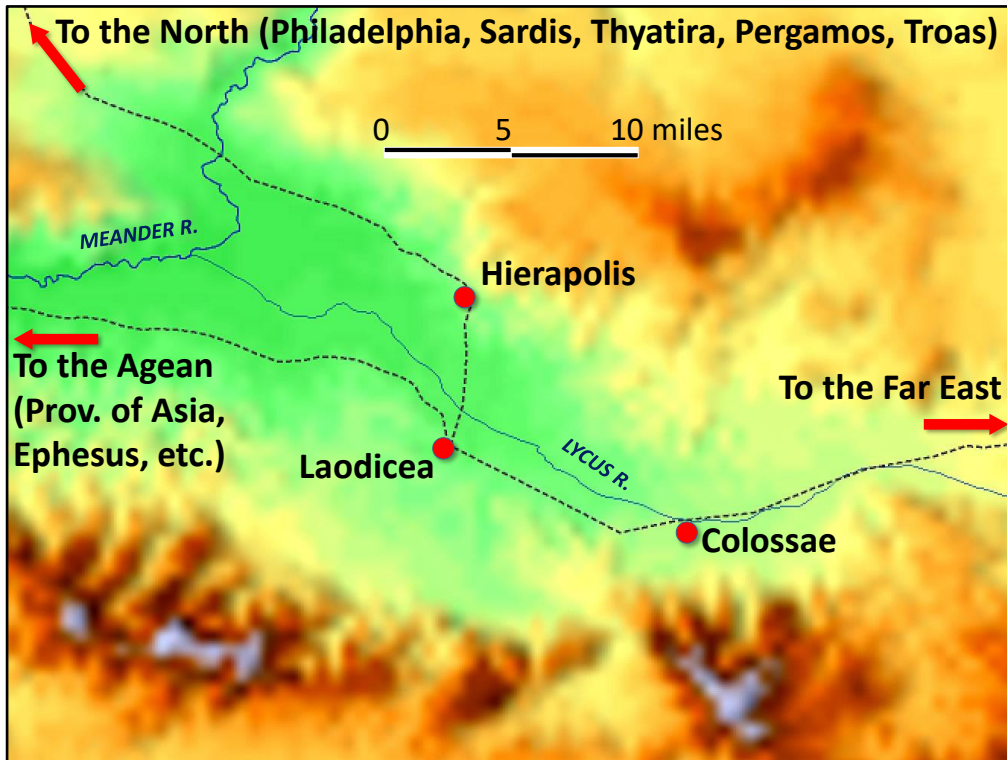
- **Philemon** (affectionate, one of a kind) from Colossae, a city of Phrygia, was a man both wealthy and noble; the assembly met in his home. He was one of Paul's converts (v. 19)
- **Apphia** was Philemon's wife.
- **Archippus**, their son, was a minister of the Gospel (Col. 4:17).
- **Onesimus** (profitable), formerly an unbeliever and slave of Philemon (v. 16), stole certain things and fled to Rome (v. 15). While there, Paul guided him to faith (v. 10) and he became very useful to Paul (vv. 11-13, Col. 4:10). Paul encouraged him to voluntarily return to his master Philemon, and provided a letter of commendation to take.
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They lived in Colossae, a small town in Phrygia, Asia Minor, about 100 miles inland from Ephesus along the Meander River.



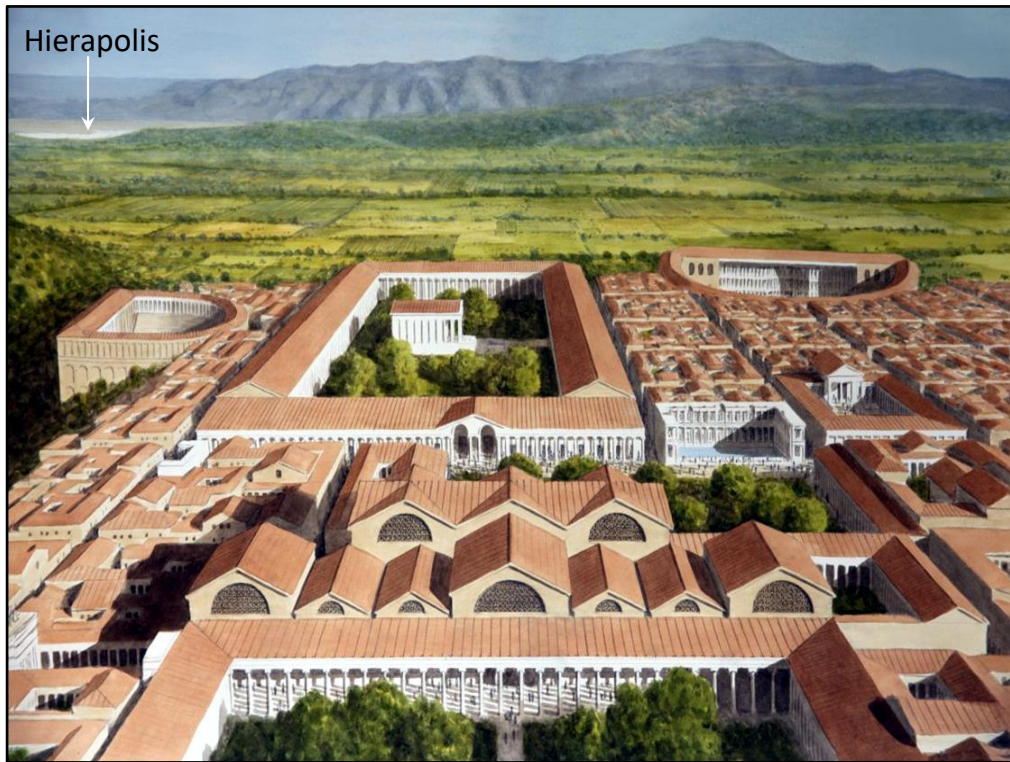
Colossae, once a powerful city, was fading under the Roman rule. Today it is the only one of the New Testament cities not to have been even partially excavated. By the 7th century AD it was abandoned as its remaining population shifted a few kilometers to the present city of Honaz at the foot of the snow-capped Honaz Mountains. This photo was taken from the top of the unexcavated acropolis mound of Colossae.



Three large cities flourished in the Lycus River Valley: Laodicea at the intersection and on the main road to the Aegean, Colossae along the main road to the Far East, and Hierapolis along the road to the north. Originally Phrygian cities, in the New Testament age they were part of the Roman Province of Asia.

Hierapolis and Laodicea stood six miles apart on opposite sides of a valley with the Lycus River flowing between them. Colossae was located ten miles upriver and on the same side as Laodicea.

The strategic position of these cities also drew Christianity to Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis in the middle of the first century.

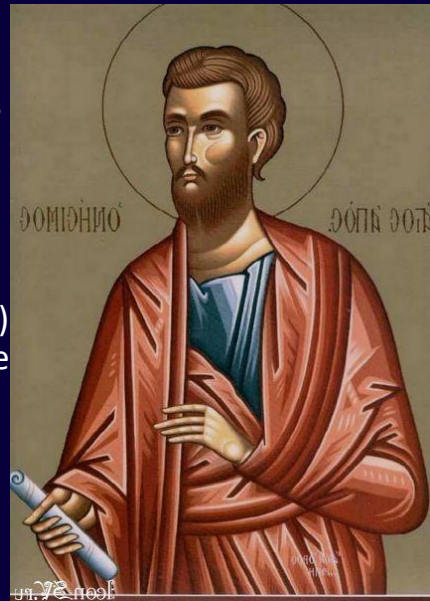


Laodicea was the political center for the district of Southern Phrygia, and a major international financial center for all major East-West trade.

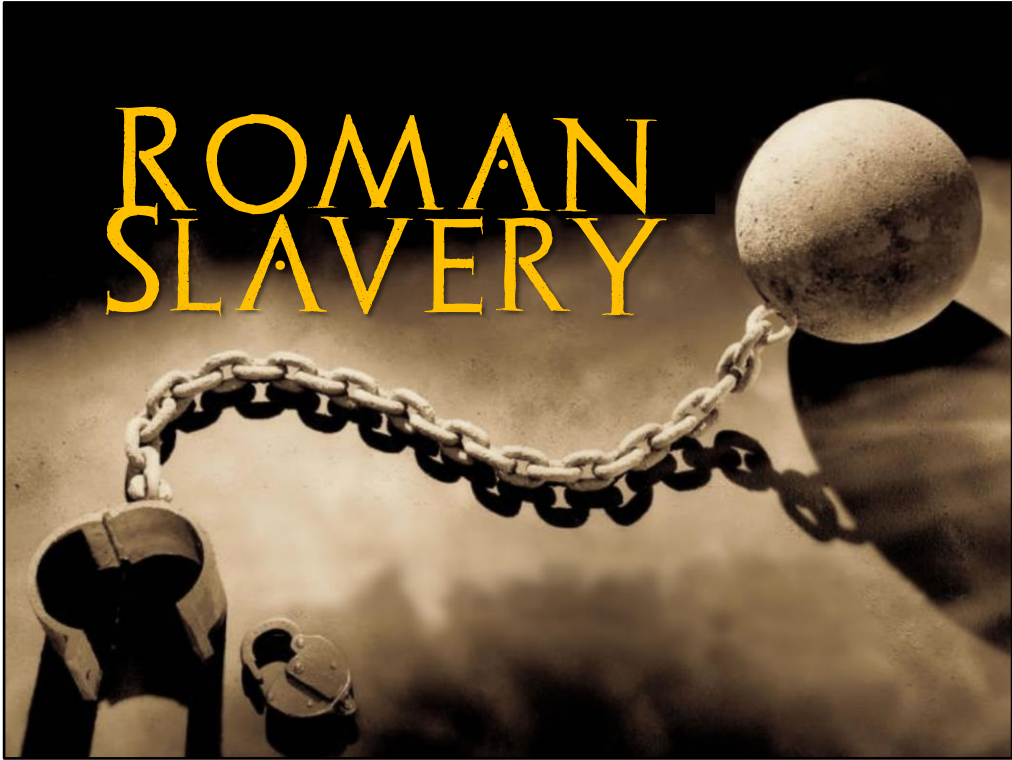


Six miles across the Lycus Valley from Laodicea was the wealthy resort city of Hierapolis.

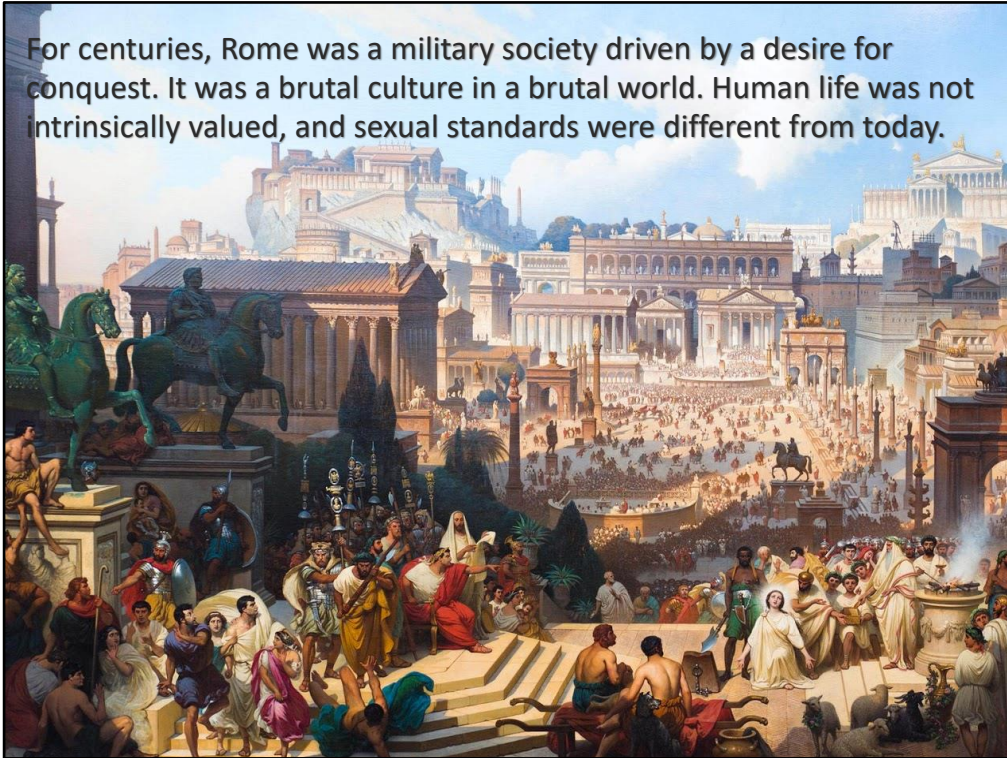
- Paul may have included Apphia, Archippus, and the church meeting as addresses to encourage Philemon to consent to the manumission, or at least forgiveness, of Onesimus.
- Onesimus probably accompanied Tychicus with the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. Tychicus was likely briefed by Paul on how best to approach Philemon.
- Paul probably wrote these letters during his first imprisonment in Rome under house arrest (60-62 AD) awaiting a hearing before Nero, one of his rights as a Roman citizen.
- Some suggest that Philemon is the lost letter to the Laodiceans mentioned in Col. 4:16.



ROMAN SLAVERY



For centuries, Rome was a military society driven by a desire for conquest. It was a brutal culture in a brutal world. Human life was not intrinsically valued, and sexual standards were different from today.



For centuries, Rome was a military society driven by a desire for conquest. It was a brutal culture in a brutal world. Human life was not intrinsically valued, and sexual standards were different from today. It is impossible to accurately describe many topics, such as slavery, crime and punishment, popular entertainment, and military affairs, without acknowledging that fact.



Rome itself was a powerful and wealthy city, the envy of the world. Massive buildings and monuments projected power, and the ruling elites maintained their power through raw strength and bribery, keeping the masses in their place with both a rigid class system and a series of perks, including “bread and the circus”. There were four classes of people in the Roman Empire: citizens of Rome (*cives*), Latins, noncitizens or peregrines (*peregrini*), and slaves. Latins enjoyed some but not all of the privileges of a *civis*. The privileges were many and ranged from the opportunity to participate in Roman politics to being exiled instead of fed to the beasts in an arena for the same crime. After AD 4, a policy of birth registration was established. A copy could be obtained for proving one’s age, very much like the birth certificates of today. Merely a Roman citizen (*civis*) by birth depended upon the status of your parents. If they were citizens, so were you, even if they decided to abandon you at birth (a common practice with unwanted children, especially girls).



In the 1st century BC, the free inhabitants of Rome and Italy were Roman citizens. Retired legionnaires were citizens and were given land and settled in *colonia* around the Empire. Most of the citizens of *colonia* like Philippi were retired legionnaires, auxiliaries, and seamen.

Residents of some other cities (*municipia*) were given citizenship by special grant of the emperor. Paul's Roman citizenship came from being the child of Roman Citizens in the *municipia* of Tarsus in Cilicia. As we saw last week, Laodicea was also such a city.



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'Cicero indicts Catiline before the Senate' by H. Schmidt, 1920.

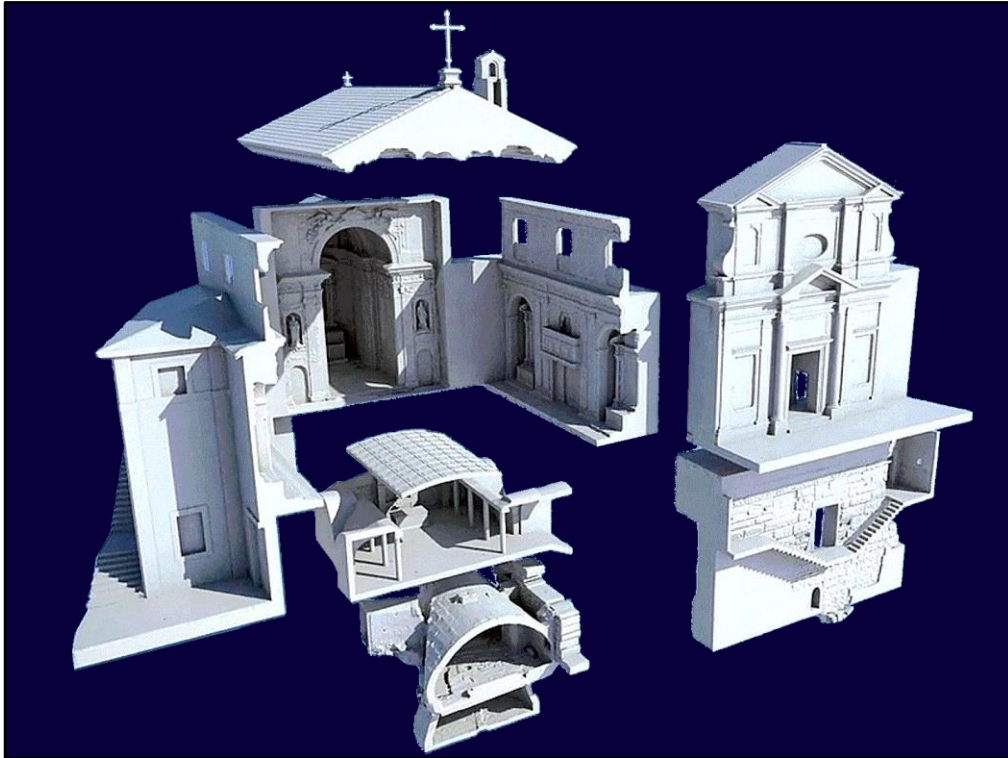
Rome was heavily over-governed. The empire in the 1st century was truly a one-world government, and had the economic and military power to enforce their rule.

Paul affirmed the value of human government which, he noted, God has placed over the believers. He told them to respect the political leaders and pay their taxes, stating that the leader wields the *jus gladii*, the law of the sword, as the servant of God. But if believers are to be persecuted by leaders who are tyrants, it mustn't be because they deserve it.

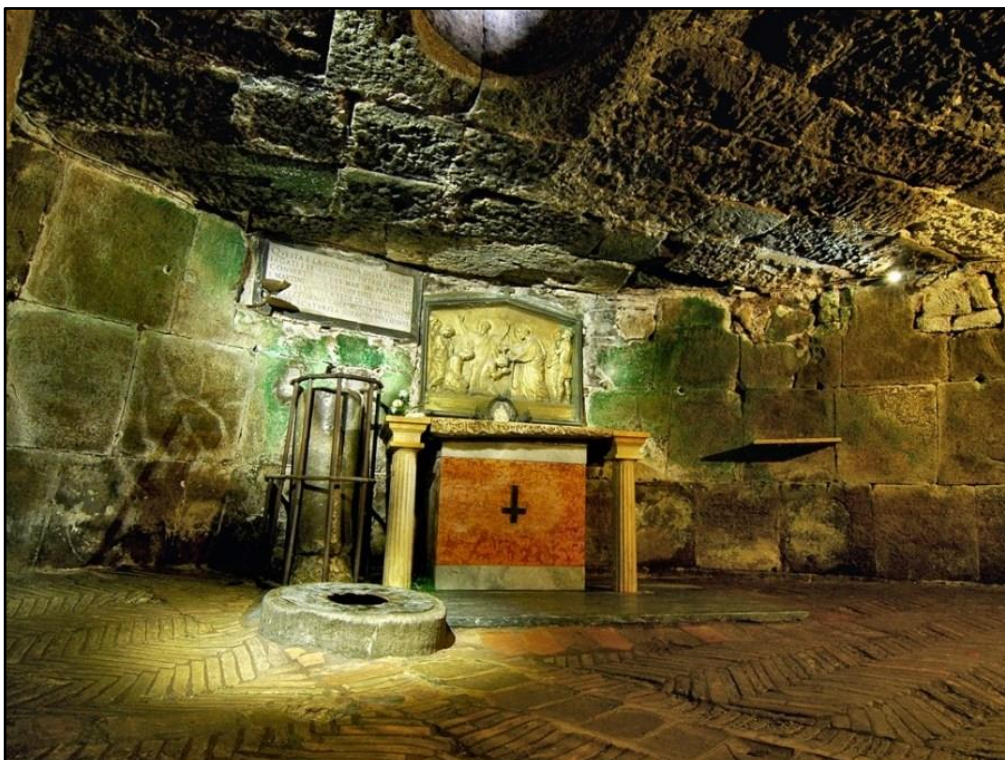
And in practice, the penalty for a given crime depended on your citizenship status and your social class. In general, punishments for the senatorial and equestrian orders were milder than that for the ordinary citizen. In the Republic and early Empire, punishment for a citizen (*civis*) was less severe than for a noncitizen peregrine (*peregrinus* = stranger, alien, foreigner), and citizens had a right of appeal not open to the peregrines.



Capital punishment was standard. Prisons were mainly built to hold the accused awaiting trial or execution. Paul was under house arrest when he wrote the prison epistles, but after conviction at his second trial he was incarcerated in the carcer (sewer) of the Mamertine Prison to await execution. Public executions were deliberately agonizing for the condemned, often to entertain the bystanders, but as a Roman citizen, Paul had certain protections in the law; the only method of execution considered appropriate for a citizen was decapitation.



This shows an exploded view of the Mamertinum, now one of Rome's cathedrals. There are two levels of sewer. The upper level is called a carcer, and is where prisoners are lowered in through a hole in the ceiling. It was the only prison in ancient Rome. The lower chamber, the Tullianum, was also used to hold prisoners.



Condemned prisoners were lowered into the tullianum through a hole in the ceiling. This is the cell where Paul (and possibly Peter) may have been incarcerated. The manhole had originally led to a spring, but in the 1st century AD was connected to the Roman sewers. History records that some executions were carried out here. In 63 AD, a few years before Rome executed Paul, our friend Cicero whom we met last week in Laodicea, executed Lentulus, Cathegus, Statilius, Gabinius, and Caeparius by strangulation and dispatched their bodies to the sewers.

The Roman approach to criminal justice is summed up in two words: punishment and deterrence. For most, trial came swiftly, and punishment was even swifter. It was also public and frequently so horrible that an accused person who expected conviction might commit suicide instead.

- Judges oversaw courts where charges were brought and argued by prosecutors and lawyers rose to argue in defense of the accused.
- Records were kept of the court cases, and the results modified how the laws would be applied in future similar cases.
- In some cases, the convicted even had the right to appeal.



Yet one of the greatest legacies of Rome was the establishment of a legal system based on a written code of law. While early Romans dealt mostly with the rights of Roman citizens, the society came to believe and generally practice that laws should be equal, whether rich or poor. All persons had the right to equal treatment and a person was considered innocent until proven guilty. The burden of proof rested with the accuser rather than the accused. A person should be punished only for actions, not thoughts, and any law that seemed unreasonable or unfair could be set aside.

Judges oversaw courts where charges were brought and argued by prosecutors and lawyers rose to argue in defense of the accused. Records were kept of the court cases, and the results modified how the laws would be applied in future similar cases. In some cases, the convicted even had the right to appeal to a higher authority.



Rome was also a hotbed of sin and decadence. It was a huge metropolis, and Paul mentions various sinful Roman practices to avoid. A big one was homosexuality. 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were practicing homosexuals, so you can imagine the behaviour of the court. Paul will also mention things like antisocial behaviour; children's disobedience to parents; uncontrollable crime and violence; and lack of law and order. The empire had big problems collecting taxes, as people worked off the books and blackmarket activity was rife. Paul was concerned that believers could become corrupted by their society which was riddled with vice, crime, and violence.



Jews from throughout the Roman Empire had been in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and been converted there. The first believers were Jewish and ekklesia grew, often meeting in secret, throughout the empire as they were evangelized by Jewish merchants and traders passing through. Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome in AD 49, but about 40,000 had returned after his death in 54 AD when Emperor Nero, keen for their business, invited them back. When they were expelled, Jewish believers had been running the ekklesia, but when they returned five years later Gentiles had taken over leadership, so there was tension between Jewish and Gentile believers.



So that's a quick look at Rome, the Eternal City and the Capital of the Roman Empire. Many of the 1st century believers were actually slaves, called *servis*, *mancipium* or *res mortalis* (mortal thing). Slavery was considered normal in virtually all ancient cultures, and the Romans were no exception. About 15% of the population was enslaved throughout the empire, with perhaps 30% in Italy and Sicily, and some estimates are that about a third of the population of Rome were slaves. Slavery was the engine that powered parts of the Roman economy and supported the elite Roman lifestyle. It was fueled by massive influxes of men, women, and children captured during Rome's military campaigns and piracy. Each conquest pumped a fresh supply of cheap labor toward the estates, businesses, and homes of rich and average citizens alike. There was also an international slave trade. Finally, some people sold themselves into slavery for various reasons.

Roman Institution of Slavery

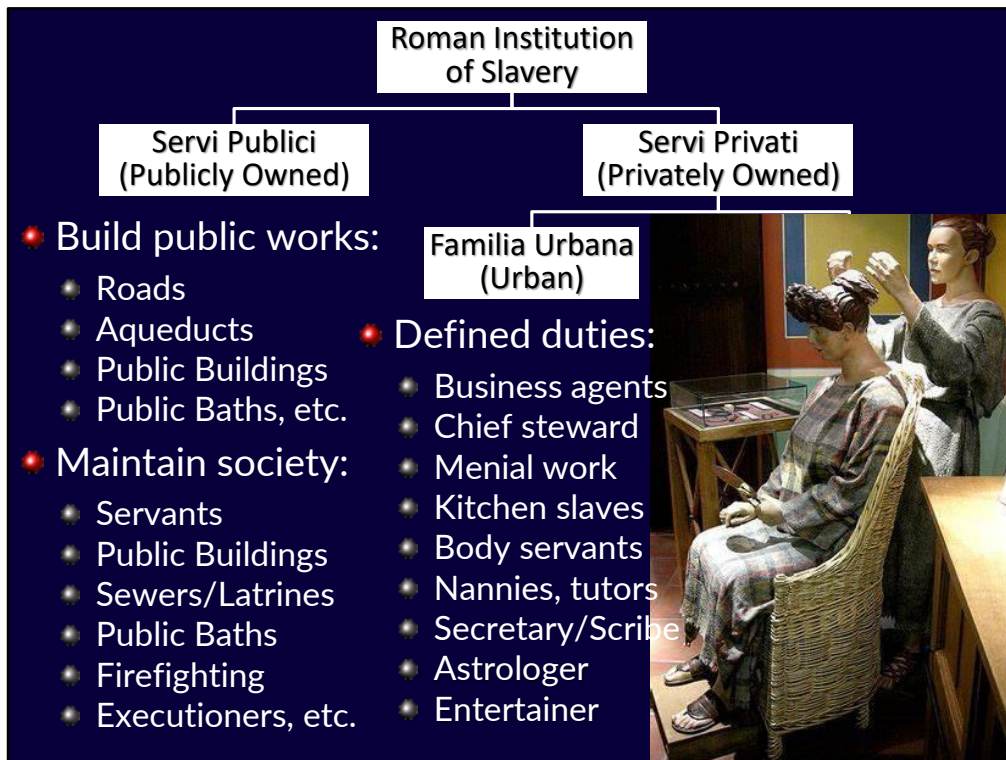
Servi Publici (Publicly Owned)

- Build public works:
 - Roads
 - Aqueducts
 - Public Buildings
 - Public Baths, etc.
- Maintain society:
 - Servants
 - Public Buildings
 - Sewers/Latrines
 - Public Baths
 - Firefighting
 - Executioners, etc.



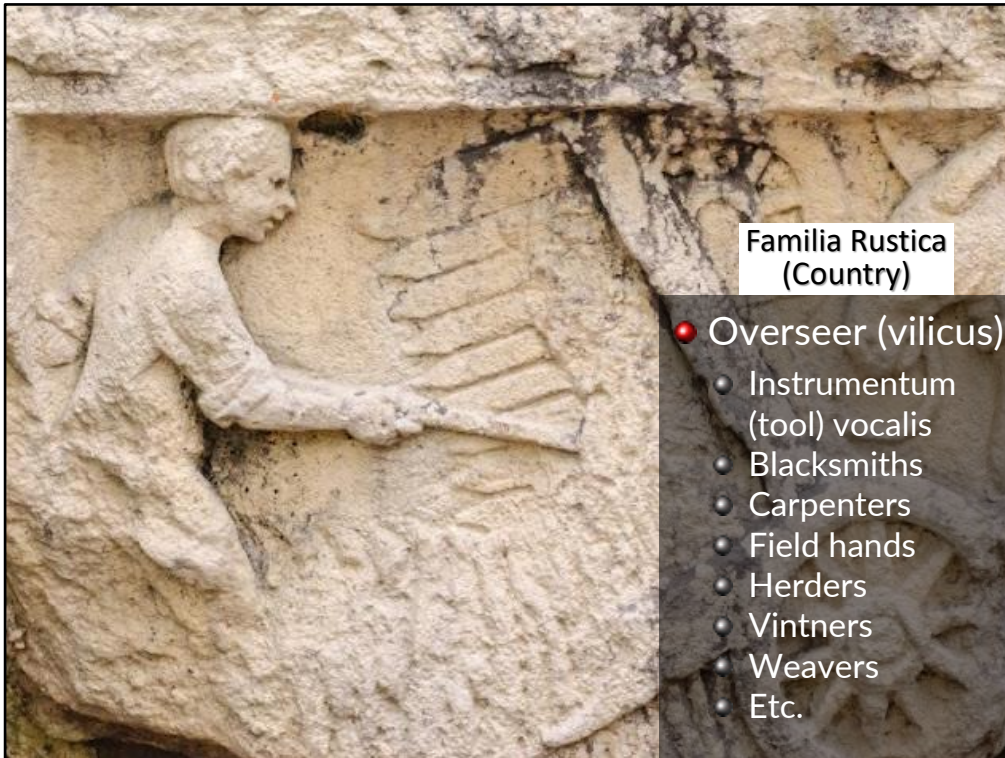
The people in the Empire fell into three main categories: Roman citizen (*civis*), free noncitizen (*peregrinus*), or slave (*res mortals*, mortal things). Slaves could be either publicly or privately owned. Public slaves were owned by the State. That role was generally considered the more desirable because like public servants today, they were not worked so hard and were not exposed to the whims of a capricious master. They were also less likely to be sold.

[CLICK] Public slaves were employed as servants of public officials like the magistrates and priests or as the builders and caretakers of public buildings. The quaestors and aediles had great numbers of them in their service. Some servi publici were drilled as a corps of firemen to serve at night under the triumviri nocturni. Others were employed as lictors (officials of the court), jailers, executioners, and a host of other duties.

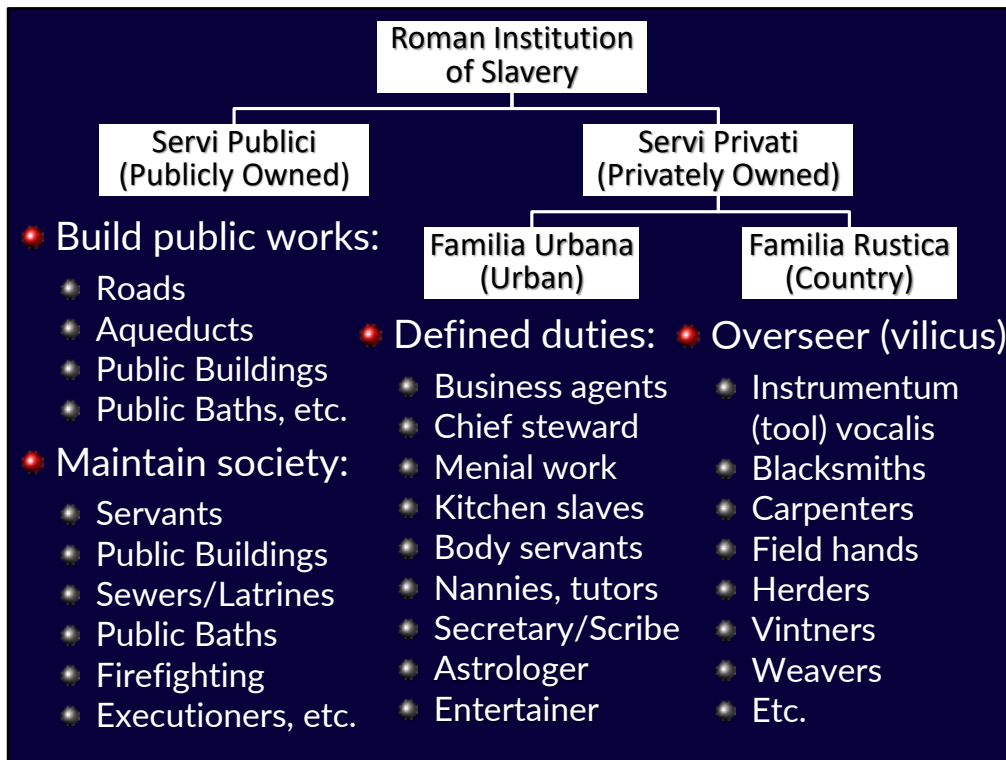


Private slaves were either employed in the personal service of their master and his family or were kept for gain, for example, for hire or employed in the business enterprises of their master. Urban slaves were a conspicuous measure of wealth, and while the average private home in Rome might have five to twelve slaves, the elites might have up to five hundred slaves. Slaves purchased supplies, kept the books, and supervised the house and its furnishings.

[CLICK] Every part of the house had its special staff of slaves, often divided into shifts with a separate superintendent for each shift: one for the kitchen, another for the dining-rooms, another for the bedrooms, etc. The entrance door had its special slave, who was sometimes chained to it like a watchdog. Each slave typically had one duty, and one duty only. When the master or mistress left the house, a numerous retinue was deemed necessary, some to clear the way, strong men to bear a chair, others to fan or shade the occupant or carry torches. A journey out of the city was a more serious matter and called for more pomp, possibly even a band of gladiators to act as escorts.



The master was typically a landlord, living in a city the capital and visiting his lands only occasionally for pleasure or for business. The estates could be divided into two classes: country seats for pleasure and farms or ranches for profit. Both required large numbers of slaves, and a large agricultural estate might employ two or three thousand slaves. A farm implement, like a plow, was an *instrumentum*. The ox pulling the plow was an *instrumentum semivocalis*. The slave driving the ox was an *instrumentum vocalis*, a talking tool. But these human tools were often highly skilled as farmers, landscape gardeners, vinedressers, foresters, miners, and even experts in the breeding and keeping of birds, game, and fish. They were supported by assistants and labourers of all sorts. All the slaves were subject to the authority of a superintendent or steward (vilicus), put in charge of the estate by the master.



Day-to-day management of slaves was intrusted to the vilicus, who was proverbially a hard taskmaster, simply because his hopes of freedom depended upon the amount of profits he produced. On large estates everything necessary for the farm was produced or manufactured on the place. It was the touchstone of a good vilicus to keep his slaves busy. On many properties, slaves were alternately plowmen and reapers, vinedressers and treaders of the grapes, perhaps even quarrymen and lumbermen, according to the season.

I should mention that there was another class in the Roman Empire as well. They were free retainers who were attached to various wealthy patrician patrons as clients, much as serfs or other slave-like dependents in other cultures. These clientela were the original plebs, considered a lower class in their own right. They later included conquered peoples brought to Rome. Some were citizens and others were peregrini (free aliens). As with lower classes everywhere, they made a living as best they could.



Estimates suggest that there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Slaves were considered property, and men, women and children were traded like pieces of chattel or merchandise.

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The average slave sold for 500 denarii. (One denarii was a day's wage for a common labourer.) Educated and skilled slaves were sold for as much as 50,000 denarii. A master could free a slave, or a slave could buy his freedom if he could raise the money (Acts 22:28).

So slaves were valuable property. Just as we today might consider our wealth to be held in our houses, vehicles, and investments, The average Roman citizen might consider their wealth in terms of their homes and slaves.



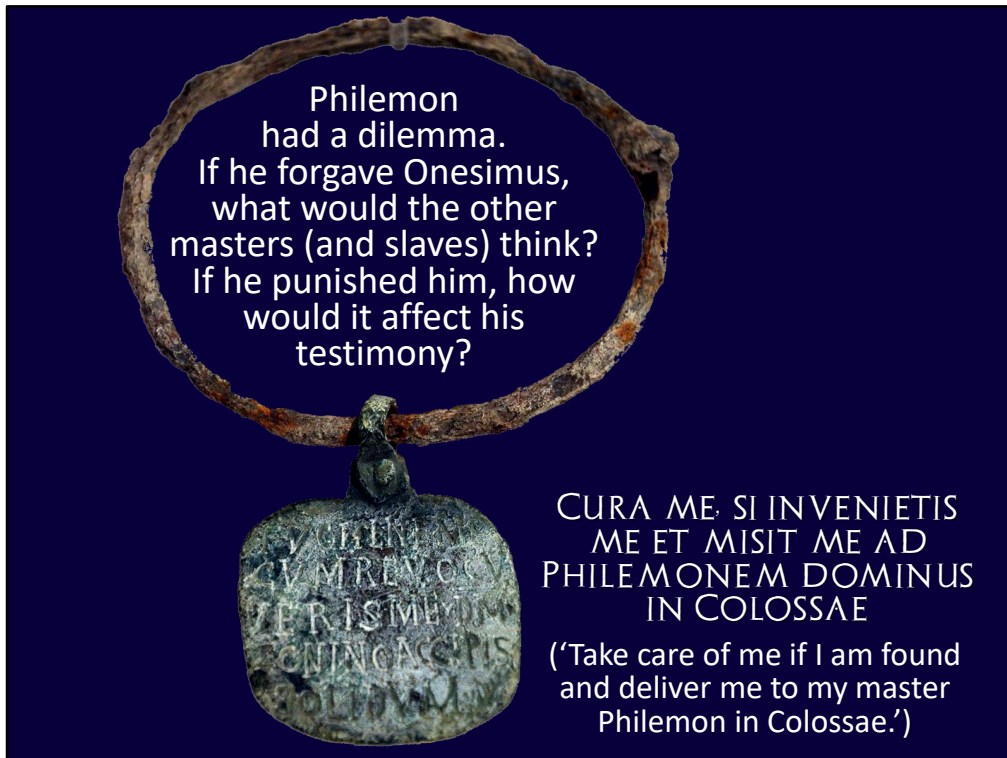
CURA ME SI INVENIETIS
ME ET MISIT ME AD
PHILEMONEM
DOMINUS IN COLOSSAE

(‘Take care of me if I am found
and deliver me to my master
Philemon in Colossae.’)

TENE ME NE
FU GIA M ET REVO
CA ME AD DOMINUM
EVVIVENTIUM IN
AREA CALLISTI

(“Stop me so as not to flee,
and return me to my lord Eiventium
in the temple of Callixtus.”)

Necklaces or bracelets like these denoted the status of slaves.



The master would register the name and description of a runaway slave with the officials, who would place him on the “wanted” list. Masters could execute rebellious slaves. While some masters were cruel, others were humane.

Philemon had a dilemma. If he forgave Onesimus, what would the other masters (and slaves) think? If he punished him, how would it affect his Christian testimony?

Manumission

- Slaves could be freed by their owners and the practice was widespread and generally viewed positively.
 - 1st generation = Freedmen; looked down on by Citizens
 - 2nd generation = Free; eligible for public office
- The prospect made many ambitious and industrious.
- It increased the number of the free laboring class.
- It gradually made the population more cosmopolitan.
- Freedmen filled the ranks of many of the trades and professions, particularly those despised by the freeborn.
- Many became wealthy.



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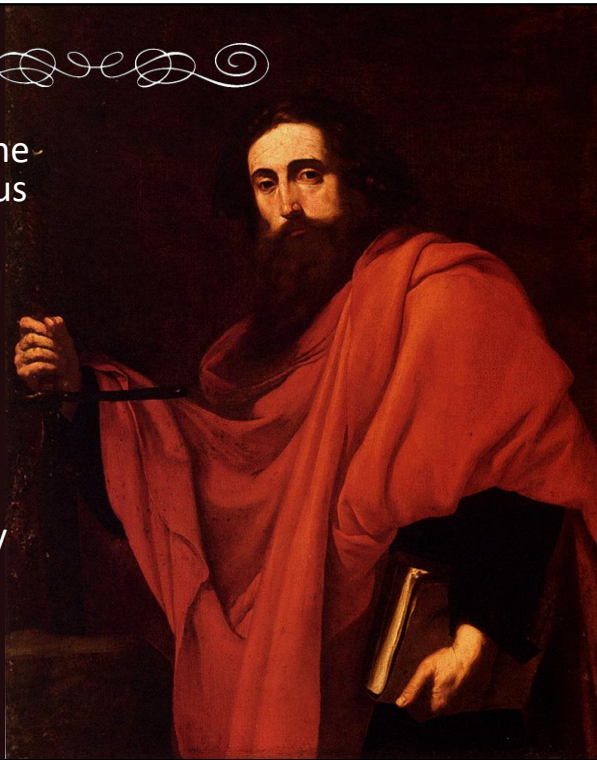
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- Paul was sensitive to the needs of both Onesimus and Philemon.
- He carefully structured this letter to respect the sensitivities of both parties.
- Onesimus may have been a particularly talented slave, possibly serving as a trusted business agent or steward for Philemon.

'Saint Paul' by Jusepe de Ribera, 1637.



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- He carefully structured this letter to respect the sensitivities of both parties.
- From the nature of the letter, Onesimus may have been a particularly talented slave, possibly serving as a business agent or steward for Philemon. Per Christian tradition, after he was freed by Philemon, Onesimus became a



Why didn't Jesus and Paul condemn slavery?

- First, the message of Christianity is primarily to individuals, and only secondarily to society. It leaves those influenced to influence the mass.
- Second, it acts on spiritual and moral sentiment, and only afterwards and consequently on deeds or institutions.
- Third, it hates violence, and trusts wholly to enlightened conscience. So it meddles directly with no political or social arrangements, but lays down principles which will profoundly affect these, and leaves them to soak into the general mind.

Alexander Maclaren, "Commentary on Colossians",
The Expositor's Bible (Eerdmans, 1940; vol. VI, 301).

Slavery has been an economic institution in most of the world since the beginning of time. Every known society up to and in the 1st century practiced slavery. Throughout the New Testament the institution is not attacked directly, as that would invite retaliation, but instead the effects of slavery on all parties are consistently and continually condemned.

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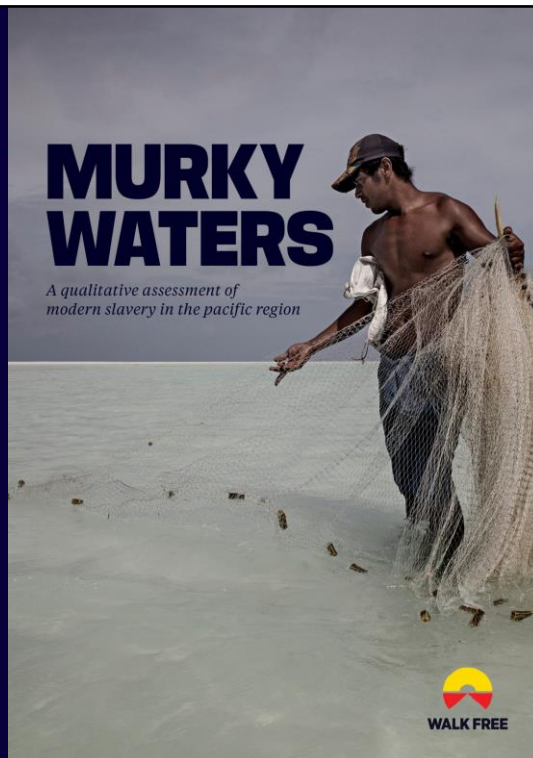


Keep in mind that it was through the efforts of Christians like William Wilberforce that the slave trade was outlawed in Britain and the USA in 1807. Slavery itself was outlawed in Britain in 1833, in France in 1848, and in the United States in 1865. Even so, the Atlantic slave trade continued until Brazil outlawed slavery in 1888.



Between 1861 and 1865, 10,000 battles and engagements were fought across the United States. On 1 January 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which proclaimed "that all persons held as slaves are, and henceforward shall be free." The four-year struggle between north and south forever changed the role of women in society, and freed more than 3 million slaves. In the end, 620,000 or more Americans were left dead in its wake. And in its immediate aftermath, the United States formally abolished slavery by the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution that was ratified on December 6, 1865.

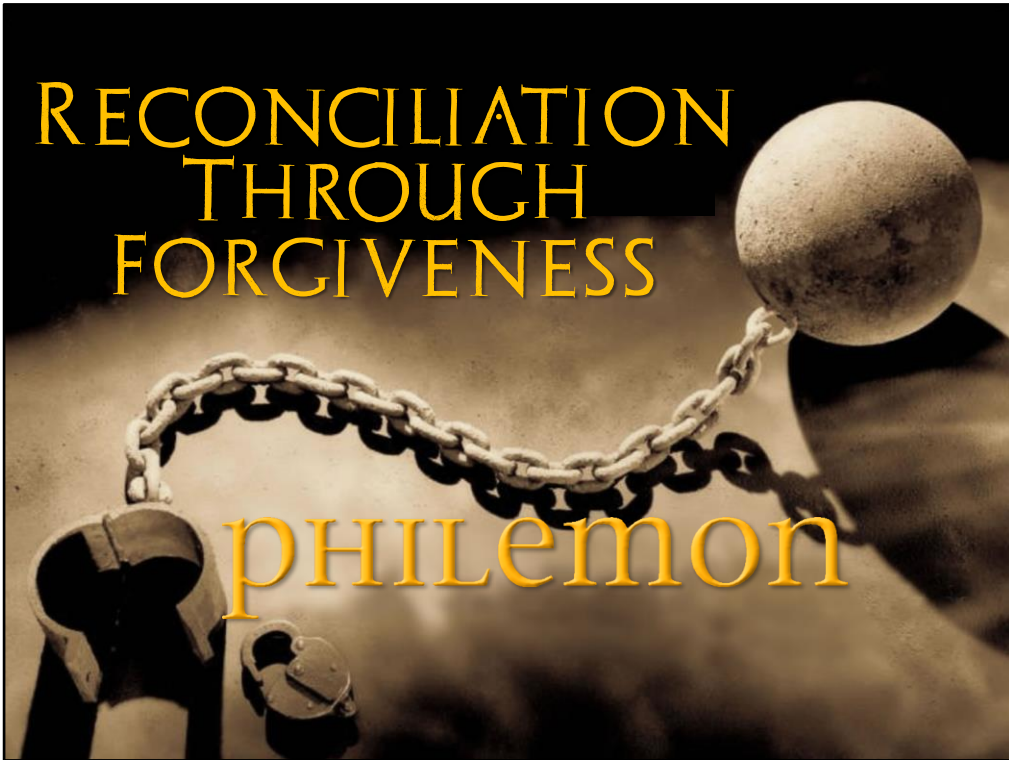
- Lest we get on our high horses, it's conservatively estimated that in 2016 an estimated 40.3 million people around the globe were living in modern slavery on any given day.
- This includes an estimate of 15,000 people in Australia and 3,000 people in New Zealand.
- Economic insecurity from the CCP virus has exacerbated the problem.



Lest we get on our high horses, it's conservatively estimated that in 2016 an estimated 40.3 million people around the globe were living in modern slavery on any given day. This includes an estimate of 15,000 people in Australia and 3,000 people in New Zealand. Economic insecurity from the CCP virus has exacerbated the problem. Let's not forget the USA, where the number of humans illegally trafficked has increased 500% in the last year alone from 403,000 in 2020 to several million today, as ruthless Mexican cartels traffic some 200,000 illegal migrants into the US each month, charging \$3-8,000 from each trafficked migrant. This human trafficking trade has been so profitable that it has replaced their traditional drug trade, and they have set up "offices" in cities throughout the USA to control and enslave trafficked persons in cartel prostitution and other criminal enterprises. Under the corrupt Biden Regime, the Mexican cartels completely control the US southern border and few women or young boys cross the border without having been sexually molested.

RECONCILIATION
THROUGH
FORGIVENESS

PHILEMON

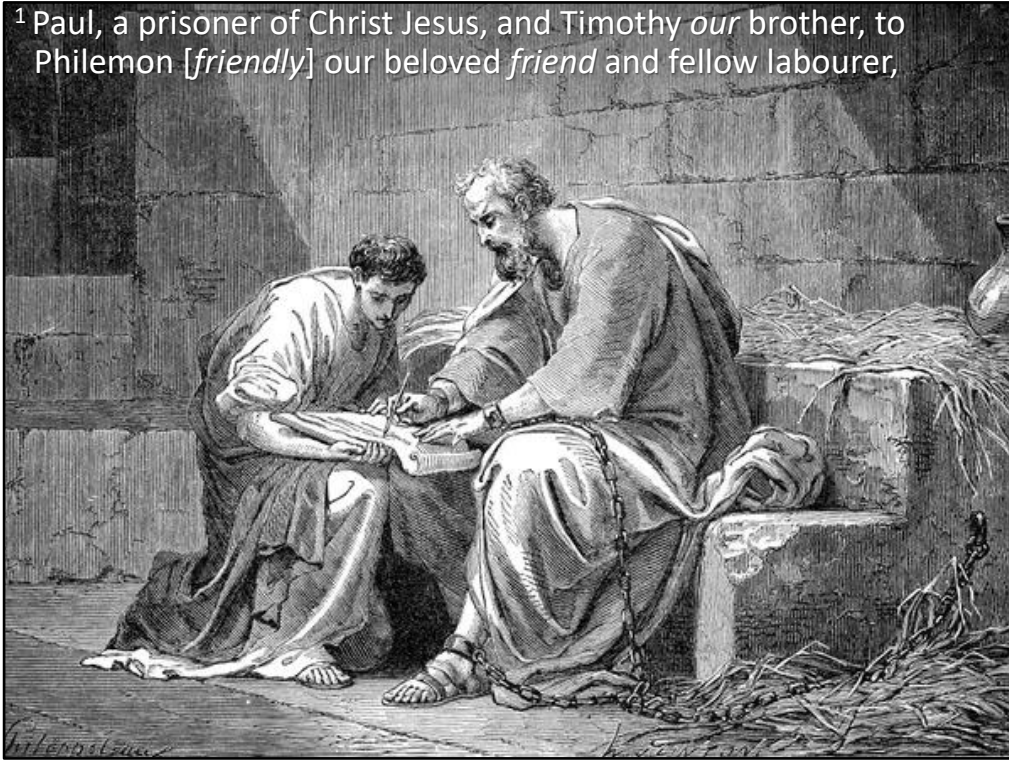


A private letter

- Paul received news from Epaphras of a threat to the faith in Colossae (epistle to the Colossians).
- Paul intercedes for Philemon's runaway slave Onesimus, who apparently robbed his master in Colossae and fled to Rome.
- Onesimus came in contact with Paul and was converted. He began to live up to his name, "Profitable" (v.11).
- Although Paul would have liked to have kept him in Rome as friend and helper, he insists Onesimus return to Colossae to resolve his issues with Philemon.
- Since he was returning as a Christian, Paul asks Philemon to receive him as a "brother beloved" (v.16).
- Paul expects Philemon to do even more than he asks (v.21).

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¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon [*friendly*] our beloved *friend* and fellow labourer,



Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon [*friendly*] our beloved *friend* and fellow labourer,

Paul describes himself simply as a prisoner of Jesus Christ's. He was in prison because he served Christ, and it was God's will for him to be there. As the Lord's bondsman he pleads for another bondsman.

In begging mercy for Onesimus he points to his own bonds six times in this brief letter. Paul is not asking for a sacrifice from Philemon that Paul knows nothing about; he has voluntarily forfeited his own freedom for Christ! A pastoral principle is involved; a leader can only appeal to people for self-sacrifice and discipline if he or she practices self-sacrifice and discipline; otherwise it's just empty words.

We find in verse 19 that Philemon had been converted to Christianity by Paul. We don't know when this occurred, but it could have been during Paul's second or third journeys when he passed through the Lycus Valley, or upon a visit by Philemon to Paul in Ephesus.

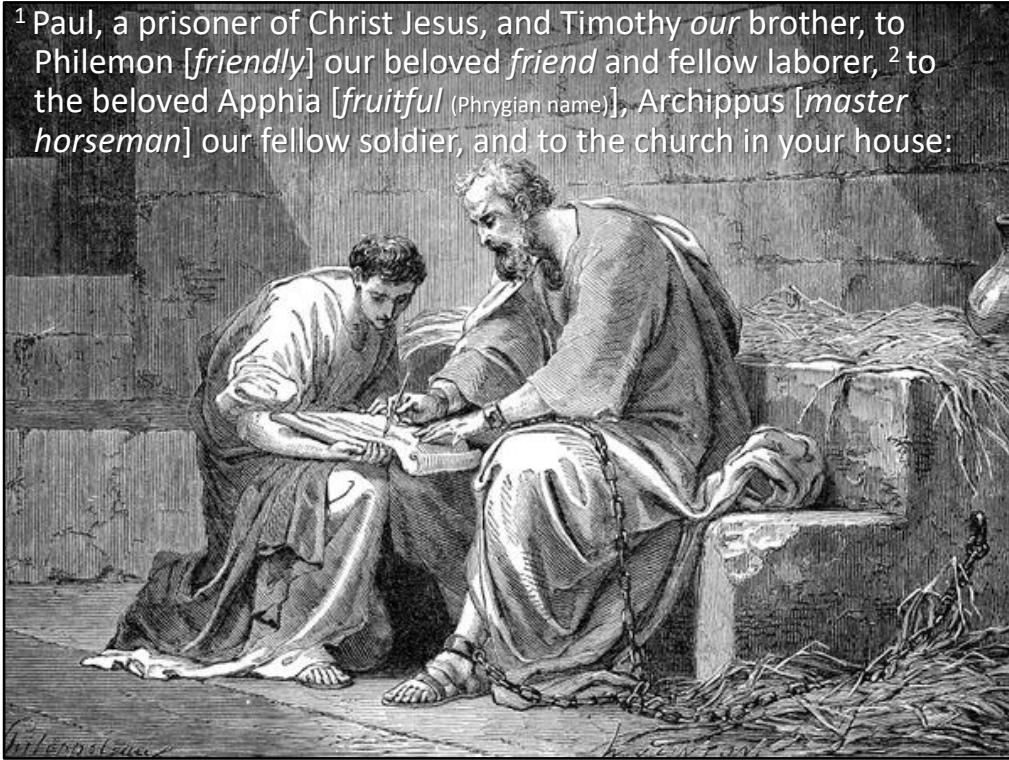
¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon [*friendly*] our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, ² to the beloved Apphia [*fruitful* (Phrygian name)], Archippus [*master horseman*] our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:



² to the beloved Apphia [*fruitful* (Phrygian name)], Archippus [*master horseman*] our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

- Apphia was probably the wife of Philemon. Apphia is not a Roman name; it is likely a Phrygian name. The wealthy usually took on Roman names for prestige and status, so this may speak to Apphia's humility. Apphia may have been included as simple loving courtesy by Paul, but may be mentioned because the wives usually managed the household slaves and Onesimus may have therefore been her responsibility.
- Most commentaries consider Archippus to be the son of Philemon. "Fellowsoldier" indicates that Archippus was an associate in Christian toil; Paul also calls Epaphroditus a fellowsoldier in Philippians 2:25.

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon [*friendly*] our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, ² to the beloved Apphia [*fruitful* (Phrygian name)], Archippus [*master horseman*] our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

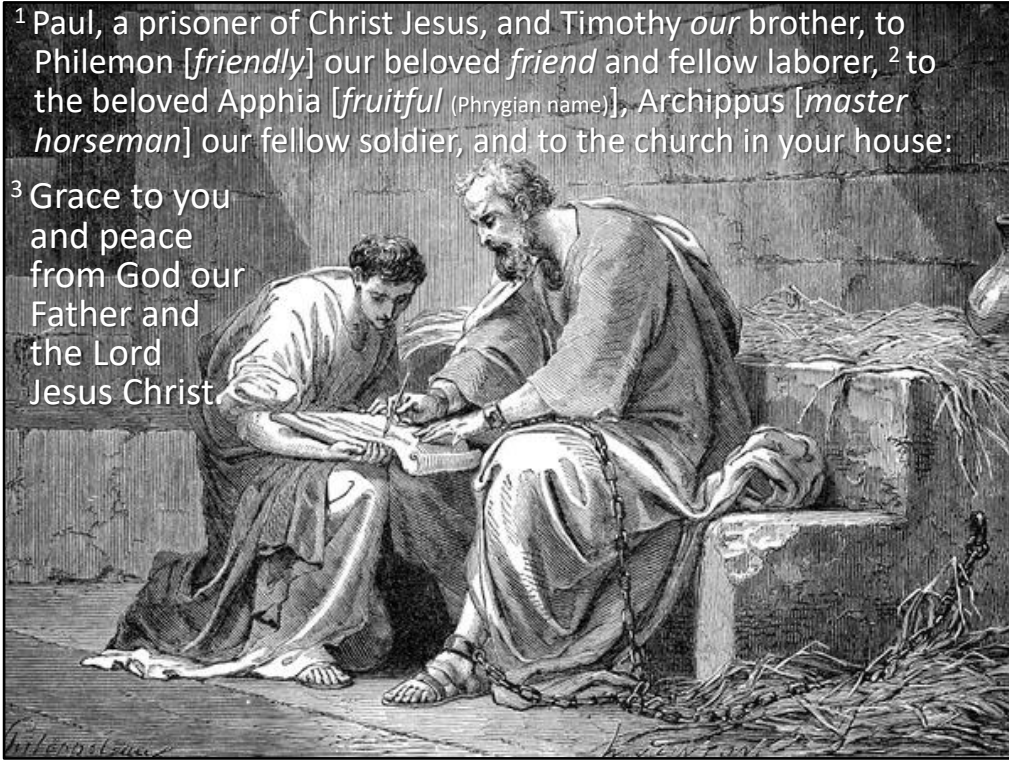


This is reinforced in Colossians 4:17 where Paul instructs Archippus to “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord...” From this, many see Archippus as holding pastoral duties in Philemon’s home church.

- Christian congregations depended upon the hospitality of wealthy members who opened their own houses. So Philemon would have likely been wealthy.
- Large cities usually has several assemblies. Whether Colossae had more than one home church isn’t known.
- Keep in mind that Colossae was in decline and losing people to Laodicea, where at least five 1st century home churches have been found to date.

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother, to Philemon [*friendly*] our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, ² to the beloved Apphia [*fruitful* (Phrygian name)], Archippus [*master horseman*] our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

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



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



Commending Philemon's Love and Faith

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

(**How** Paul prays)

'Saint Paul the Apostle' Marco Pino, c. 1520-79.

I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers,

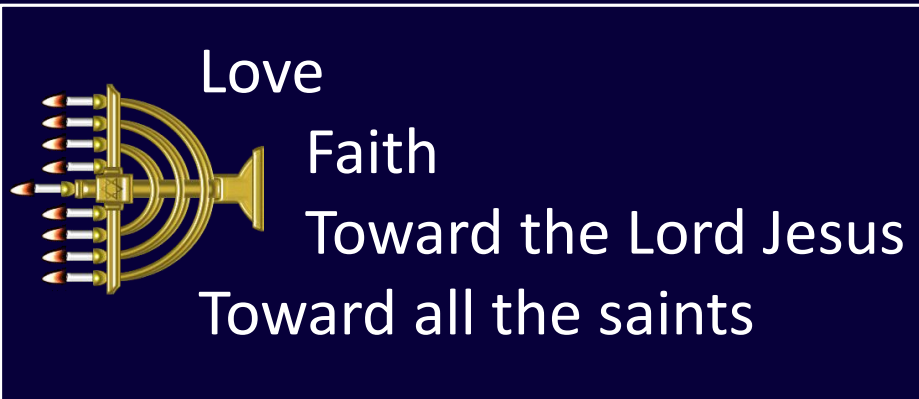
When Paul states he gave thanks 'continually' he means that he did not forget Philemon in his regular prayers. We should not regard this as a simple literary flourish. . . . Paul would have had an extensive prayer list and presumably spent some time each day naming all his churches, colleagues, and supporters before God.

Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8) and probably others as well had reported Philemon's love and faith to Paul.

In this verse and the next one, Paul will describe HOW he prays...

Commending Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, ⁵ hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,



- hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints,

The objects of Philemon's love and faith were "all the saints" and "the Lord Jesus" (v. 5) respectively. This forms a clever Chiastic structure where the first and fourth elements in verse 5 go together, as do the second and third. Paul uses this to emphasize the unity of the entire thought: love for the saints grows out of faith in Christ.

Commending Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God, ... ⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

**I thank my God...
that the active sharing of your faith (koinonos)
may be made powerful
by the full understanding and knowledge
of every benefit which we have in Christ Jesus**

(What Paul prays)

⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Once again our English translation falls short of conveying the power of Paul's words in Greek.

- I thank my God...
- that the active sharing of your faith
- may be made powerful
- by the full understanding and knowledge
- of every benefit which we have in Christ Jesus

Paul will now describe **WHAT** he prays...

Commending Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴ I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, ⁵ hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, ⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

(Why Paul prays)

⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

- Paul is encouraged by his love
- Paul got great joy from his love
- Because his love refreshed the hearts of the saints.

This is a concise description of WHY Paul prays. But does Paul have a message to share with Philemon before he brings up his plea for Onesimus? Paul acknowledges that Philemon is great at faith in the Lord Jesus and love for the saints, but he also prays that his sharing of the faith (koinonos) may become effective. Koinonos is a Greek word that is also translated “fellowship” and “intimacy”. The root of Koinonia means “partnership” or “social participation”. So Paul prays that Philemon’s fellowship may become effective, in other words, spring into action. Christian love is active, not passive. Paul acknowledges the authenticity of Philemon’s faith and love and service within the fellowship, but prays that Philemon’s love, which may be a little theoretical or pietistic, will catch fire and bring him into a practical, working, and functional understanding of Christ’s love.

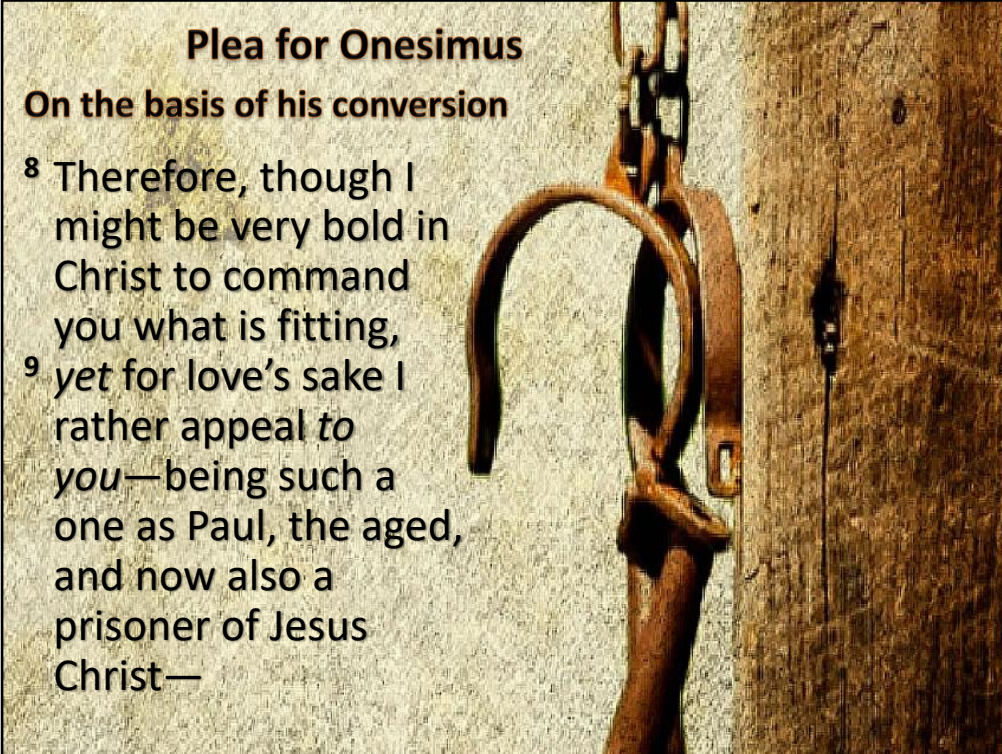
Religion or Relationship?



Paul is reminding Philemon that true Christianity is not a religion where one follows rules to come closer to God, but a personal relationship with the Living God where the individual allows God to come closer to him or her, inviting God inside one's heart of hearts. And that relationship encourages the believer to share his or her faith with people outside their home group, their clique, or their comfort zone. We naturally want to share the good things we received from Christ with others who can also benefit.

Plea for Onesimus
On the basis of his conversion

⁸ Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting,
⁹ yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—



Paul now begins his plea for Onesimus. **Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, ⁹ yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—**

In verses 8 and 9, Paul practically applies the message that he just gave Philemon about Christian relationships. Although as an Apostle he could command Philemon regarding “doing the right, Christian thing with Onesimus”, instead Paul appeals to Philemon as one believer to another, in love and fellowship.

“I appeal
to you for
my son
Onesimus,
whom I have
begotten
while in my
chains, who
once was
unprofitable
to you, but
now is
profitable
to you and
to me.”

(Philemon 10-11)

Modified from 1886
wood engraving.



“I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.”

“My son” is an affectionate form of address. In the NT, pupils or disciples are called children of their teachers, because the latter by their instruction nourish the minds of their pupils and mould their characters. The Greek word **ghen-nah'-o** translated a begotten does indeed mean that, but it also is used metaphorically to denote converting someone to a new way of life, for example to Judaism or Christianity.

Plea for Onesimus

On the basis of Onesimus' conversion

⁸ Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, ⁹ yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, ¹¹ who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.



The passage ends with an affectional double wordplay using the meaning of Onesimus' name, which means useful or profitable.

I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, ... who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

[CLICK] The unprofitable slave ran away and ultimately reached Rome. At this point he was a liability of Philemon's balance sheet. However, in Rome he met Paul who was imprisoned and **[CLICK]** became a Christian, helping and supporting Paul as a son would.

[CLICK] Now Onesimus is returning to Colossae with Paul's letter as a fellow Christian, hoping to put right the wrongs he had done prior to and by fleeing. But what will happen, Paul's letter makes very clear, is up to Philemon, the legal owner of the slave Onesimus.

The Traditional View of Onesimus and Paul

- The traditional view is that Onesimus was a runaway slave who encountered Paul in Rome. But it has also been suggested that Onesimus knew Paul and sought him out for help after having gotten into trouble with his master.
- Alternatively, Onesimus may have been the messenger of Philemon's house church who delivered financial aid to the imprisoned apostle and overstayed his visit.
- Per recent studies of Roman slavery law, it "was a legally recognized practice for a slave who had incurred his or her master's wrath to flee to one of the master's trusted associates to plea for his intervention and protection. The associate then served as a kind of official mediator, who would try to smooth out differences that had arisen through misunderstanding or even malfeasance".

Plea for Onesimus

Per Philemon's and Paul's friendship

¹² I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, ¹³ whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.

¹⁴ But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

(Look **within**)



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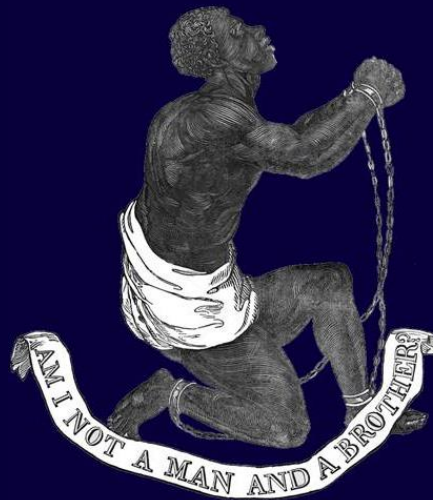
¹⁴ But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

The apostle urges a new relationship between Philemon and Onesimus, but he stops short of demanding emancipation. Elsewhere Paul encourages Christian slaves who could legally obtain freedom to take advantage of this opportunity, but otherwise their situation in life was to be accepted and used to the glory of God (1 Cor. 7:17-24). A Christian slave was still free in Christ (cf. Gal. 5:1), just as a free Christian was Christ's slave (1 Cor. 7:22). Paul taught obedience for slaves and fairness for masters (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1). Nevertheless, the principles of Christianity (cf. Gal. 3:28) were to mitigate the harshness of slavery and would eventually lead to its demise.

Verse 14 covers the key issue, graciousness is born out of grace, it cannot be forced.

¹⁵ For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose*, that you might receive him forever, ¹⁶ no 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.

¹⁷ If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me.



Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, London, 1787.

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Paul's promise

18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.

Philemon,
Charge it to my account.

18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.

Paul didn't suggest that Philemon ignore Onesimus's crimes and forget about the debt he owed. He simply offered to pay the debt himself. "Put it on my account!" All problems can't be solved by love; sometimes there's a price to be paid. God's love doesn't save sinners; He loves the whole world but not everyone is saved. God saves sinners by His grace, and grace is love that pays a price. God in His holiness could not ignore the debt that we owe, for God must be faithful to His own law. So He paid the debt for us!

Theologians call this "the doctrine of imputation." (To impute means "to put on account.") Old Testament sacrifices and Catholic teaching imputes Adam's sin is imputed to us, but God imputes the righteousness and suffering of Jesus to those who are in him and, conversely, imputes the sins of the redeemed to Christ. (To impute means "to put it on account.") When Jesus Christ died on the cross, my sins were put on His account, and He was treated the way I should have been. When I trusted Him as my Savior, His righteousness was put on my account, and now God accepts me in Jesus Christ.

Paul's promise

¹⁸ But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.

Philemon,
Charge it to my account.

¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing with my own hand.

I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.

(LOOK **beyond**)

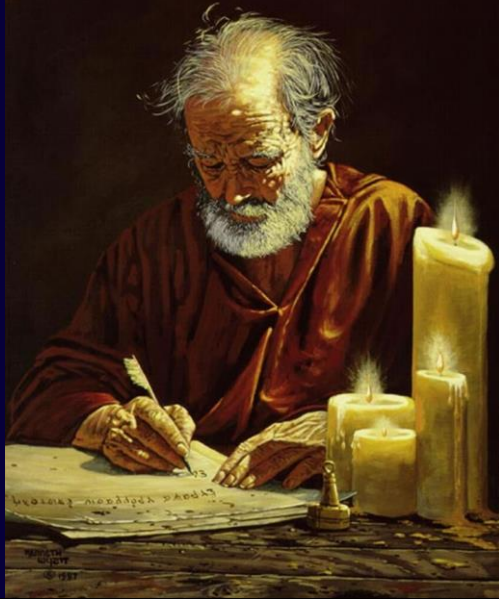
¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.

Philemon 19 suggests that it was Paul who led Philemon to faith in Christ. Paul used this special relationship to encourage his friend to receive Onesimus. Philemon and Onesimus were not only spiritual brothers in the Lord, but they had the same “spiritual father”—Paul!

²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

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

Paul's promise



"Paul" by Kenneth Wyatt, 1987.

²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

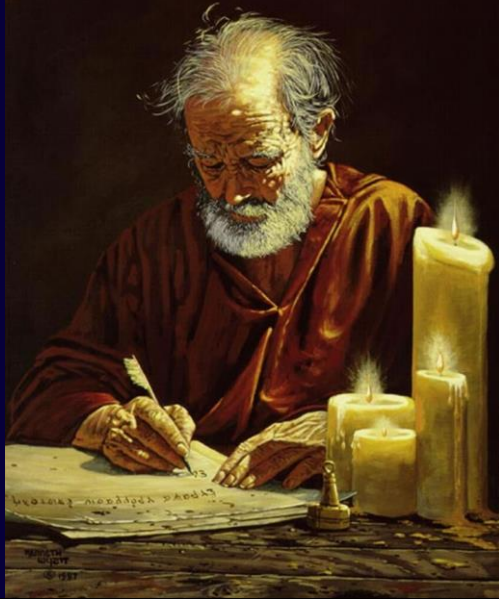
²¹ Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Was Paul hinting in Philemon 21 that Philemon should do even more and free Onesimus? Why didn't he just come right out and condemn slavery? This would have been the ideal place to do so. Paul did not "condemn" slavery in this letter or in any of his letters, though he often had a word of admonition for slaves and their masters. He even encouraged Christian slaves to obtain their freedom if they could, but slavery was a ubiquitous institution throughout the world until just 200 years ago. It was simply part of the way the world worked, and there was no local democratic political structures, so individuals had no political power to bring about change. Had early Christians openly crusaded against slavery, they would have been crushed by the powers that be, and the message of the gospel would have become confused with a social and political program. Think how difficult it was for people to overcome slavery in England and America, despite those two being Christian nations with a generally educated population.

- 20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.
- 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.
- 22 But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you [plural].

"Paul" by Kenneth Wyatt, 1987.

Paul's promise



So it does appear that Paul was hinting that Philemon might “do even more than I say” and not only forgive but free Onesimus. But the decision had to come from within Philemon. It was Philemon’s decision! What did Philemon decide?

I’ll discuss that in a moment.

The letter continues, **[CLICK] “But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.”**

Paul closed the letter with his usual personal requests and greetings. He fully expected to be released and to visit Philemon and Apphia in Colossae (the “you” in Philem. 22 is plural).

Farewell

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



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Five Fellow Workers

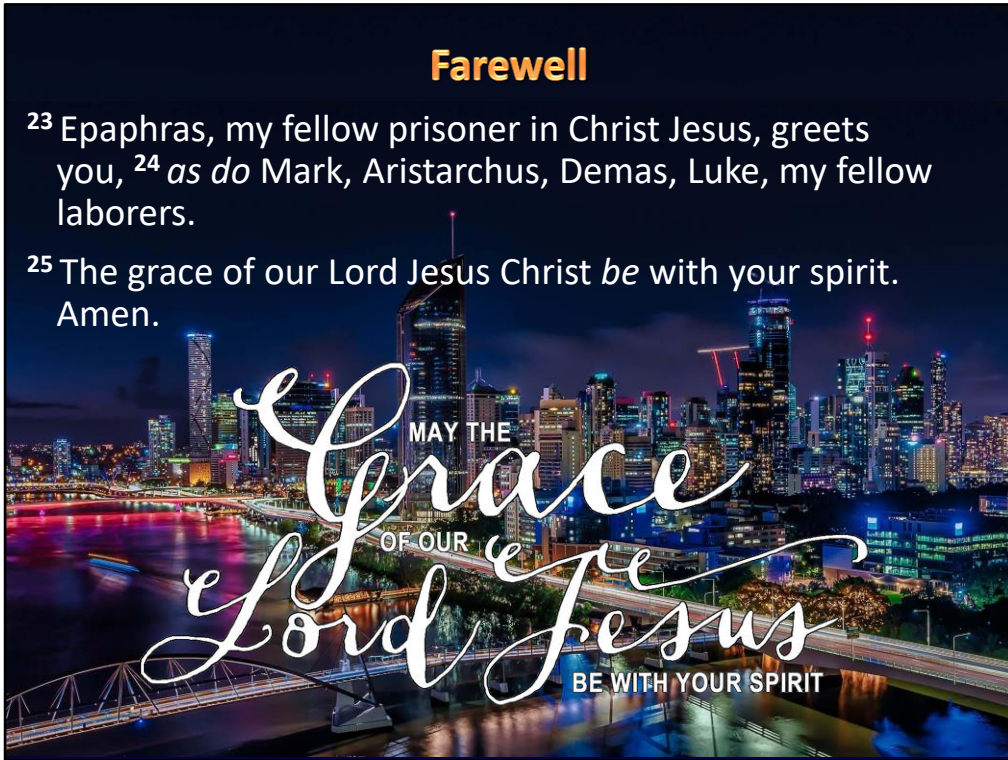
- **Epaphras:** evangelist who started churches in Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis (Col 1:7; 4:12).
- **Mark:** it is now 11 years after Mark's breach with Paul (Acts 15:39); two years later he told Timothy to bring Mark with him and reconciled (2 Tim 4:11). Mark again became profitable.
- **Aristarchus,** of Thessalonica: Paul's companion on his third missionary tour (Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2). Fellow prisoner (Col 4:10).
- **Luke:** remained with Paul until the end (2 Tim 4:11). He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.
- **Demas:** companion (Col 4:14) who later deserts Paul (2 Tim 4:10). Calvin suggests: "And if one of Paul's assistants became weary and discouraged and was afterwards drawn away by the vanity of the world, let none of us rely too much on our own zeal lasting even one year, but remembering how much of the journey still lies ahead, let us ask God for steadfastness."

- **Epaphras:** was the evangelist who started churches in Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis (Col 1:7; 4:12). He went to Rome to assist Paul. Whether he was a "voluntary prisoner" for Paul's sake, or whether he had been arrested by the Romans, we do not know.
- **Mark:** it is now 11 years after John Mark's breach with Paul when he failed Paul on his first missionary journey ; two years later he told Timothy to bring Mark with him and reconciled. Paul forgave Mark and was grateful for his faithful ministry. Mark was again profitable.
- **Aristarchus** of Thessalonica, Paul's companion on his third missionary tour, had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and then to Rome, where he was a fellow prisoner.
- **Luke:** was the beloved physician who remained with Paul until the end. He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.
- **Demas:** companion who later deserts Paul. Calvin suggests: "And if one of Paul's assistants became weary and discouraged and was afterwards drawn away by the vanity of the world, let none of us rely too much on our own zeal lasting even one year, but remembering how much of the journey still lies ahead, let us ask God for steadfastness."

Farewell

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

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



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

Paul's benediction was his "official signature" for his letters, and it magnified the grace of God. After all, it was the grace of Jesus Christ that made our salvation possible. It was He who said, "Charge that to My account! Receive them as You would receive Me!"

The importance of mercy

For judgment is without
mercy to the one who
has shown no mercy.
**Mercy triumphs over
judgment.**

(James 2:13)

The book of James has a verse that resonates with Paul's letter to Philemon.

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

The correct way to appeal

**And a servant of the Lord
must not quarrel **but be
gentle to all, able to teach,
patient, in humility correcting**
those who are in opposition,
if God perhaps will grant
them repentance, so that
they may know the truth.**

(2 Tim 2:24-25)

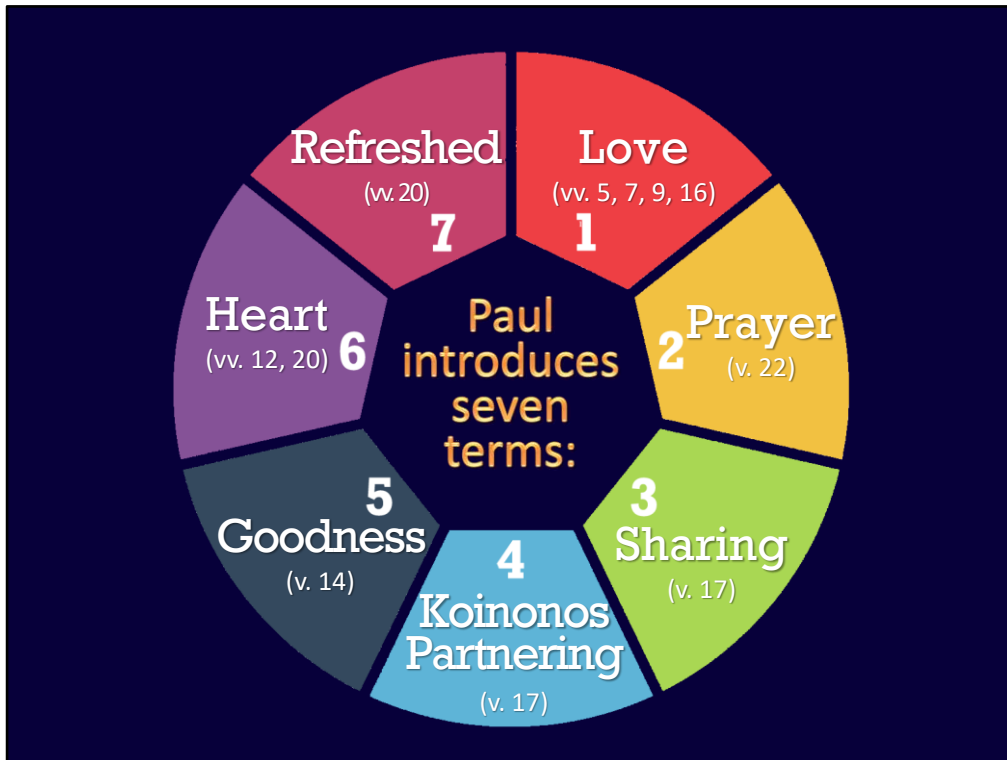
And Second Timothy 2, verses 24-25 adds another perspective to Paul's instructions to Philemon.

**And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel **but be gentle to all,
able to teach, patient, in humility correcting** those who are in
opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that
they may know the truth.**

Some additional lessons

- The **work of our mediator**, interceding for 'criminals'
- The **importance of our prayer**, working out God's purpose
- **Obedience through choice** always to be preferred to obedience through compulsion
- In whatever situation we find ourselves there is **opportunity to give God glory**
- We must **continue to hold fast** until the end

This tiny letter sheds light on five aspects of the Christian life:



Paul introduces seven key terms in his letter to Philemon, which influence the life of a believer.

1. Love
2. Prayer
3. Sharing
4. Partnering
5. Goodness
6. Heart
7. Refreshed

Values expressed in Paul's letter to Philemon

- **Personal value:** light on the character of Paul's character;
- **Ethical value:** focus on what is right;
- **Providential value:** God is behind and above all events;
- **Practical value:** application of highest principles to the commonest affairs;
- **Evangelical value:** encouragement to seek and to save the lowest;
- **Social value:** presentation of the relation of Christianity to slavery and all unchristian institutions;
- **Spiritual value:** the analogy between it and the Gospel

Paul's little letter also expresses a full set of Christian values:

Personal value: light on the character of Paul's character;

Ethical value: focus on what is right;

Providential value: God is behind and above all events;

Practical value: application of highest principles to the commonest affairs;

Evangelical value: encouragement to seek and to save the lowest;

Social value: presentation of the relation of Christianity to slavery and all unchristian institutions;

Spiritual value: the analogy between it and the Gospel

Food for thought

- "An inscription erected by a freed slave from Laodicea was dedicated to Marcus Sestius Philemon, thanking him for his manumission."

(John McRay, *Archaeology And The New Testament*, p. 247).

- We don't know if this Philemon was the church leader in Colossae, but the reference to manumission is intriguing.



Among the ruins of Laodicea, an inscription erected by a freed slave from Laodicea was found that was dedicated to Marcus Sestius Philemon, thanking him for his manumission: "Gratefully presented for the manumission of the slave Onesimus from his master Marcus Sestius Philemon of Laodicea."

We don't know if this Philemon was the church leader in Colossae, but the reference to manumission is intriguing.

- Philemon pardoned Onesimus and set him at liberty, and Onesimus returned to his spiritual father, as Saint Paul had requested; thereafter he faithfully served the Apostle.
- Later, Jerome (342-420 AD) and other Fathers testify, he became an ardent preacher of the Gospel and bishop of Ephesus.
- Per Ignatius of Antioch, Onesimus succeeded Timothy as bishop of Ephesus. When Ignatius was taken to Rome for execution in 107 AD, Bishop Onesimus met with him with other Christians, as Saint Ignatius records in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

“I hope, indeed, by your prayers to have the good fortune to fight with wild beasts in Rome, so that by doing this I can be a real disciple. In God’s name, therefore, I received your large congregation in the person of Onesimus, your bishop in this world, a man whose love is beyond words. My prayer is that you should love him in the spirit of Jesus Christ and all be like him. Blessed is He who let you have such a bishop. You deserved it.”

So what became of Onesimus? A mixture of history and tradition fills out his story:

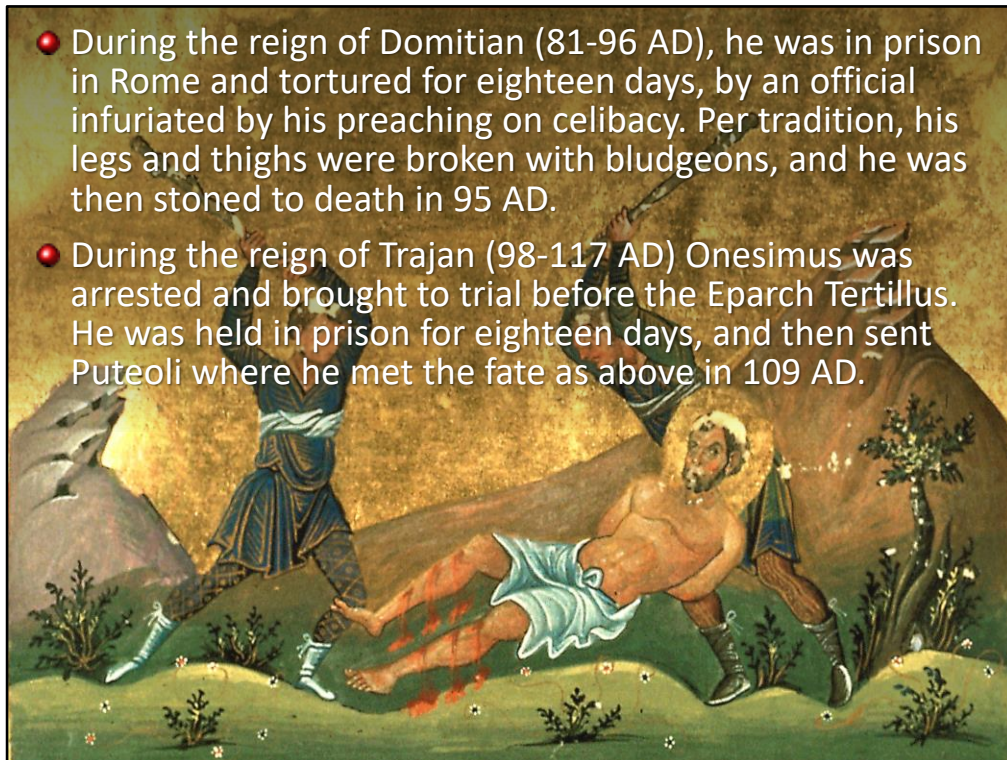
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- During the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD), he was in prison in Rome and tortured for eighteen days, by an official infuriated by his preaching on celibacy. Per tradition, his legs and thighs were broken with bludgeons, and he was then stoned to death in 95 AD.
- During the reign of Trajan (98-117 AD) Onesimus was arrested and brought to trial before the Eparch Tertillus. He was held in prison for eighteen days, and then sent Puteoli where he met the fate as above in 109 AD.

The Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have similar but different traditions for his death.

- **[CLICK] Catholic:** During the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD), he was in prison in Rome and tortured for eighteen days, by an official infuriated by his preaching on celibacy. Per tradition, his legs and thighs were broken with bludgeons, and he was then stoned to death in 95 AD.
- **[CLICK] Orthodox:** During the reign of Trajan (98-117 AD) Onesimus was arrested and brought to trial in Rome before the Eparch Tertillus in 109 AD. He was held in prison for eighteen days, and then sent Puteoli where he met the fate as above. A certain illustrious woman took the body of the martyr and placed it in a silver coffin.

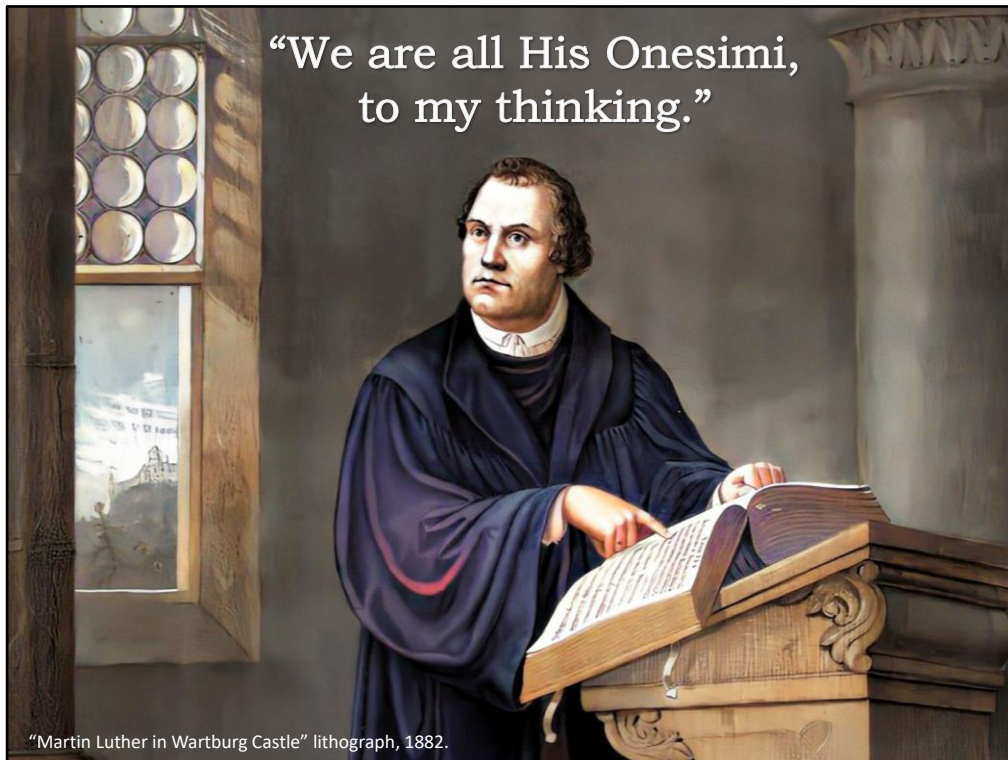
Conclusions

- What Paul did for Onesimus with Philemon, Jesus Christ has done for everyone with God.
- Jesus Christ said on our behalf, “Charge that to My account! Receive them as you would receive Me!”

Philemon,
Charge it to my account.

He paid a debt he did not owe,
I owed a debt I could not pay,
I needed someone to wash my sins away;
and now I sing a brand new song,
Amazing Grace all day long,
Christ Jesus paid a debt
that I could never pay.

He Paid A Debt He Did Not Owe,
I Owed A Debt I Could Not Pay,
I Needed Someone To Wash My Sins Away;
And Now I Sing A Brand New Song,
Amazing Grace All Day Long,
Christ Jesus Paid A Debt
That I Could Never Pay.



"We are all His Onesimi, to my thinking." Martin Luther

Martin Luther explained: this brief letter shows us how we are like Onesimusin at least 3 ways:

1. Jesus provided Himself as an Un-deserved Substitute for us in our sins (Philemon 1:17)
2. He paid with An Un-believable Payment (Philemon 1:19)
3. We therefore owe Him An Un-payable Debt (Philemon 1:18)

Jesus not only nullified that Debt but he imparted His righteousness to us.