

## Philemon

<sup>1</sup> Greetings from Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. <sup>2</sup> Also to our sister Apphia, to Archippus, who serves with us in the Lord's army, and to the church that meets in your home.

<sup>3</sup> Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### *Philemon's Love and Faith*

<sup>4</sup> I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you. <sup>5</sup> I thank God because I hear about the love you have for all of God's holy people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> I pray that the faith you share will make you understand every blessing we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup> My brother, you have shown love to God's people, and your help has greatly encouraged them. What a great joy and encouragement that has been to me.

### *Accept Onesimus as a Brother*

<sup>8</sup> There is something that you should do. And because of the authority I have in Christ, I feel free to command you to do it. <sup>9</sup> But I am not commanding you; I am asking you to do it out of love. I, Paul, am an old man now, and I am a prisoner for Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup> I am asking you for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was in prison. <sup>11</sup> In the past he was useless to you. But now he has become useful\* for both you and me.

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\* 1:11 useless ... useful Paul here makes a play on words with the name Onesimus, which means "useful."

<sup>12</sup> I am sending him back to you, but it's as hard as losing part of myself. <sup>13</sup> I would like to keep him here to help me while I am still in prison for telling the Good News. By helping me here, he would be representing you. <sup>14</sup> But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then whatever you do for me will be what you want to do, not what I forced you to do.

<sup>15</sup> Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever, <sup>16</sup> not to be just a slave, but better than a slave, to be a dear brother. That's what he is to me. And I know he will mean even more to you, both as your slave and as one who shares your faith in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> If you accept me as your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him like you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup> If he has done any wrong to you or owes you anything, charge that to me. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this in my own handwriting: I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. <sup>20</sup> So, my brother, as a follower of the Lord please do this favor<sup>†</sup> for me. It would be such a great encouragement to me as your brother in Christ. <sup>21</sup> I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask, and even more than I ask.

<sup>22</sup> Also, please prepare a room for me. I hope that God will answer your prayers and that I will be able to come and see you.

### *Final Greetings*

<sup>23</sup> Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He sends you his greetings. <sup>24</sup> Also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas,

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<sup>†</sup> 1:20 please do this favor Paul here makes another wordplay on the name Onesimus, using a verb related to it.

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and Luke send their greetings. They are workers together with me.

<sup>25</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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Language: English

Dialect: American

Translation by: World Bible Translation Center

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2018-08-30

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PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 28 Jul 2020 from source files dated 30 Aug 2018

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