

## Paul's Letter to Philemon

### *Introduction*

<sup>1</sup> From Paul, now a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and from Timothy, a fellow follower of the Lord. <sup>2</sup> To our dear friend and fellow worker Philemon, to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus; and to the church that meets at Philemon's house; <sup>3</sup> may God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you peace.

### *Request regarding runaway slave*

<sup>4</sup> I always mention you in my prayers and thank God for you, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of the love and the faith which you show, not only to the Lord Jesus, but also to all his people; <sup>6</sup> and I pray that your participation in the faith may result in action, as you come to a fuller realisation of everything that is good and Christlike in us. <sup>7</sup> I have indeed found great joy and encouragement in your love, knowing, as I do, how the hearts of Christ's people have been cheered, friend, by you.

<sup>8</sup> And so, though my union with Christ enables me, with all confidence, to dictate the course that you should adopt, <sup>9</sup> yet the claims of love make me prefer to plead with you – yes, even me, Paul, though I am an ambassador for Christ Jesus and, now a prisoner for him as well. <sup>10</sup> I plead with you for this child of mine, Onesimus, to whom, in my prison, I have become a father. <sup>11</sup> Once he was

of little service to you, but now he has become of great service, not only to you, but to me as well; <sup>12</sup> and I am sending him back to you with this letter – though it is like tearing out of my heart. <sup>13</sup> For my own sake I should like to keep him with me, so that, while I am in prison for the good news, he might attend to my wants on your behalf. <sup>14</sup> But I do not wish to do anything without your consent, because I want your generosity to be voluntary and not, as it were, compulsory. <sup>15</sup> It may be that he was separated from you for an hour, for this reason, so that you might have him back for ever, <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave, but as something better – a dearly loved friend and follower of the Lord, especially dear to me, and how much more so to you, not only as a person, but as your fellow Christian! <sup>17</sup> If, then, you count me your friend, receive him as you would me. <sup>18</sup> If he has caused you any loss, or owes you anything, charge it to me. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, put my own hand to it – I will repay you myself. I say nothing about your owing me your self. <sup>20</sup> Yes, friend, let me gain something from you because of your union with the Lord. Cheer my heart by your Christlike spirit.

<sup>21</sup> Even as I write, I have such confidence in your compliance with my wishes, that I am sure that you will do even more than I am asking. <sup>22</sup> Please also get a lodging ready for me, for I hope that I will be given back to you all in answer to your prayers.

*Messages and Blessing*

<sup>23</sup> Epaphras, who is my fellow prisoner for Christ Jesus, sends you his greeting; <sup>24</sup> and Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers, send theirs.

<sup>25</sup> May the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ rest on your souls.

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