









For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you.

[ 21 : 42 ] I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.

And formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel. But I prefer to do nothing without your consent, in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own accord.

For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever. No longer as a bondservant, but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

[ 23 : 06 ] I, Paul, write this with my own hand. I will repay it, to say nothing of you, owing even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord.

Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

At the same time, prepare a guest room for me. For I am hoping that through your prayers, I will be graciously given to you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ, Jesus, sends greetings to you.

And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Amen. May the reading of God's word be a blessing to us as we hear it together. Before we come back to that passage, we'll sing once more, and we'll sing in Psalm 103.

[ 24 : 14 ] Psalm 103 from the beginning to verse 5. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. All thine iniquities, who doth most graciously forgive, who thy diseases, all and pains, doth heal and thee relieve, who doth redeem thy life, that thou to death mayest not go down, who thee with loving kindness doth intend on mercy's crown, who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy mouth, so that, even as the eagle's age, renewed is thy youth.

So we'll sing these verses to God's praise. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. We'll stand to sing. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stirred up his holy name, to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious, The benefits he has bestowed on thee.

All thy name, greatest good art, most precious forget.

[ 26 : 37 ] For my diseases, all I care, thou fear and me reveal.

Who doth redeem thy life, thy God, to death mayest not go down.

Who deal with loving kindness, thou and tender mercy's cry.

Who with abundance of good things, thou satisfy thy mind.

So that he has me, because it reneweth his fire.

[ 28 : 01 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll turn back to the passage we read in Paul's letter to Philemon.

We're going to read, we're going to look at the passage from verse 8 down to verse 16.

And we'll read again at verse 9. Yet for love's sake, I prefer to appeal to you.

I, Paul, an old man, and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.

So last week we began looking at this small letter, the smallest of Paul's letter, letter to Philemon.

And we look at, sort of gave it a general introduction last week.

[ 29 : 08 ] We looked at the beginning, the greeting there, and we looked down to verse Mark 7. We thought about the people that were mentioned there, the church, the house of Philemon.

As a wealthy man, he had this house big enough for them. He obviously had a slave, turned out to be a bad slave.



An appeal for a brother. There's appeal that's made in love. There's an appeal that's made for Onesimus, a slave. And there's an appeal for a brother.

[ 35 : 07 ] And the last two points will likely overlap, as we'll see. So, there's an appeal here that's made in love in verses 8 and 9.

This is Paul's approach. You see, he begins there, accordingly. So, it's as if what's been said before about you, Philemon, you and your character, what's true of you, so continue to be.

Accordingly, be that same person. And then he comes, almost softening the blow of the bomb he's going to drop.

Paul's an apostle. Paul's an apostle.

With some authority in the church. A voice to be listened to. And he's here appealing as an old man.

[ 36 : 12 ] A prisoner for Christ Jesus. He's restricted. He's limited. Paul says, I could command you to do the right thing here.

But rather, I'm not going to be so forceful. As long as if Paul's laying that power aside. To let Philemon make the right decision himself.

But Philemon will act according to his will. Other than being under compulsion to do it. And this letter's been read in front of the church.

There's always going to be an additional accountability there between everyone. Because you know that makes a bit of difference. If you know that everyone's listening, everyone's watching, you might think twice about the way you act.

You might think twice about what you're going to say. Paul can command him to do what is right.

And for easy, the command is an easy command for Paul to make.

[ 37 : 30 ] But he's going to leave it up to Philemon. He's going to incline what his preference is. And what the right thing to do is.

He's going to tell him what the right thing is to do. But he's going to leave it up to Philemon. And he's going to leave it up to the church. To see how he's going to respond.

You know, sometimes it's better to let people make their own decisions. As hard as it can be.

Probably as a parent, I mean, a teenager. Sometimes you just have to let them learn. Let them go their own way.

Being told to do the right thing is one thing. But actually, when you're free to make up your own mind and to decide yourself, makes all the difference.

[ 38 : 29 ] You've got to think of the outcomes of your actions. But, you know, allowing people to make their own decisions.

Allowing people even to make mistakes. It might not always be a bad thing. It shapes it. And it's shaped here.

It's referred to here. That the mistake that the slave Onesimus has made in God's providence might actually be the thing that brought him back.

Changed. But as we present the gospel. It should be preached with love.

It should be preached with a loving appeal. As Paul says in another, I do not have love. I'm just a noisy bell. A gang, a cymbal. The word of God itself speaks with love.

[ 39 : 43 ] It appeals to us in love. What Christ has done for us. Having a heavy hand. Having a command.

In such things. We know it doesn't have much of a positive outcome. But when we persuasively make a loving appeal.

To make up our own decisions. To make us think. To reason what has been said. And to act rightly. It places a responsibility on our lap.

When Jesus says that. If you believe in me. If you trust in me. If you have faith in me.

You will have eternal life. He will save us. But if you follow your own heart. It's going to lead to disaster. And we make a loving appeal.

[ 40 : 47 ] That you be persuaded. To follow Jesus Christ. And not to follow your heart. I remember.

I mean. I've had a few cars. But it was. I think it was when I was 17 or 18. I'm just thinking. It's just a game. That's this life. I'm wanting.

I'm wanting. I'm wanting. I'm following my heart. And the Bible verse was. I'm chasing the wind. It's empty. I knew that it was just going to leave me empty.

I knew there was going to be nothing in the end. There for me. And so we make a loving appeal. To those.

Who do not yet. Believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because what the Bible tells us.  
 [ 41 : 46 ] Is that if we do not. We'll be lost forever. In an eternity in hell. That's a scary prospect.  
 That's a scary reality. And so we appeal. To you to come. To do what is right.  
 To hear the gospel. And to put your faith in Christ. But as we go on in this letter.  
 There's an appeal made in love. For restoration. Between. Philemon and Onesimus. But there's an appeal made.  
 To restore the slave. An appeal for Onesimus directly. In verse 10. And I appeal to you for my child. Onesimus. Be reconciled with him.  
 [ 42 : 46 ] It's almost as if you can hear him. I know he's hurt you. We don't know what he did. We don't know if he stole anything.

But there's certainly a cost. Involved in it. And it's understood that this letter was brought by a man named Tychicus. And Onesimus himself.  
 They're referenced in Colossians 4. As delivering that letter. And they think that Philemon was delivered at the same time. The two of them together. So you can picture it almost.  
 Tychicus. And Onesimus. Coming to Philemon's house. What was Onesimus expecting? Philemon would have probably punished Onesimus.  
 And actually that's what the world would have expected. That was the right thing for them to do. In their day. And the level of punishment probably was dependent upon the master's cruelty of their heart.  
 [ 43 : 50 ] Maybe even just telling Philemon to go away. I can't help but wonder what Philemon's heart felt like.

Seeing them coming back. That one who had run away. He fled with whatever value it was. Betrayed his trust.  
 Offended him. How much anger was he feeling? Knowing he had the power there and then. To do what the world expected.  
 Maybe he's thinking I'll punish you. But we will be adding to the story. In that way. And we will be adding to the story if we.  
 Maybe imagine that. Tychicus here. Saying. Hold fire. Read the letter. Leave Onesimus.  
 [ 44 : 53 ] Just now. Paul. Will make an appeal to you. To live. Just as you have been living. To be faithful.

To love the saints. To be someone that brings refreshment. To others. It's almost as if. As David always says.  
 Keep on keeping on. Keep on being faithful. Keep on loving Jesus. Keep on being an encouragement. And a refreshment to each other.  
 Do the right thing. Not what the world expects of you. Do the thing that will glorify Jesus. Jesus. As we represent Jesus in this world. As we are Jesus' ambassadors.  
 [ 45 : 54 ] We seek to love lives that will glorify his name. And so we live. We aim to live.

In that way. Philemon has a choice to make. Philemon has a challenge that will face his heart. Because reconciliation. When someone's offended us. Can be the hardest thing to do. When they've offended us. And we've done nothing wrong.  
 And the blame lies with them. How is our heart. In such a matter. But as we listen to this letter. Or as Philemon would have listened to this letter. He says. And he says that Paul. Describes. Onesimus.  
 [ 47 : 02 ] As a child. In verse 10. I have become. His father. In my imprisonment. It's almost as if he's been teaching him.

And instructing him. To do the right thing. And then in verse 12. It says. I am sending him back. You're sending my very heart. He would have gladly kept him there with us.  
 He's saying. But as if it's sending his heart. It's as if he's sending his own child. It's almost as if it's a painful thing to let him go.  
 It's hard for Paul to send him. Why? The slave. The thief.  
 The liar. What's happened? What's happened? Well he's been. He's been converted. And that changes everything.  
 [ 48 : 01 ] In the matter. Paul alludes to this change in verse 11. He calls him not only a child. But he calls him something else.

Paul's making a play on words here.

Onesimus is a name that was commonly given to slaves. Which means profitable or useful. Paul is saying. I know he was useless.

He was useless. He was useless. To you. It's almost as if. Onesimus. He was a bit of a chancer. He was a bit of a. A chocolate teapot.

You couldn't. Rely on him for anything. You couldn't trust him with anything. But he's now.

[ 48 : 58 ] Useful. Totally opposite. Totally different. Conversion. Changes. Everything. Even changes our worth.

Our work ethics. Changes our attitudes. To our employer. Changes our attitudes.

To our relationships. Onesimus. He's now valuable. He's useful.

Paul proves it. He wanted to keep him there. And the fact that he's a changed man. Is evident. Why is it evident?

Because he comes back. He comes back to Philemon. His presence says. I'm sorry. His presence says everything. Doesn't it? I'm sorry.

[ 50 : 01 ] I deserve punishment. I'm guilty. It's the same as a prodigal son. Returning home to his father. Expecting nothing.

Expecting punishment. Expecting the laws. To the job that he could get. But Onesimus. He's been reconciled in his own heart. To go back.

To do the right thing. And sure as anything. It wouldn't have been easy for Onesimus. He knew his guilt. He knew the right thing was to go back to his master.

But again the question lies. How would Philemon respond? What's he going to do? Maybe he's thinking up for what he was going to get him to do.

How many drains he was going to get him to clear. How many toilets he was going to get him to clean. The lowest of the low. The worst jobs. And he could make him work all day for it. What was his heart saying?

[ 51 : 05 ] In this matter. Could he put these feelings aside? Could he lay aside the power that was in his hand? Even it was.

Just to send him away. And to ignore. This man that had hurt him. And offended him. Because we're probably guilty of doing that ourselves.

We have the power to ignore people. When they offend us. To treat them how we want. If we don't really have any power to do anything else.

We can just ignore them. Can't we? We try and almost control the matter. With our own warrants. I'm not going to speak to you anymore. I'm going to pretend you're not there.

We remember so well. When people offend us. Don't we? Reconciliation takes conquest.

[ 52 : 08 ] Conquering our own heart. It takes conquering our own heart. Conquering even the expectations of the world. What does everyone else think the right thing is to do?

How does everyone else expect you to treat that person for what they have done to you? Your friends might be saying you're mad.

To be friends again. With that person. You're silly to have him back. I'm pretty sure there would have been plenty saying that about Philemon.

That guy stole off you. That guy's betrayed your trust. The world would have sent him away. The world would have sent him away. But Paul pleads.

Paul appeals. To be reconciled. With Onesimus. He's robbed you blind. And you're going to have him back. Do we make room to restore relationships?

[ 53 : 19 ] To be reconciled. To be reconciled. To be reconciled. To be reconciled. It's a parable of the unforgiving sin. It's a parable of the unforgiving sin. Do we make room to restore relationships? If someone's especially repentant towards us, we should be so willing to. It's a parable of the unforgiving servant.

The man that had been forgiven thousands by his master then went out and hounded the man that owed him a couple of hundred dinara.

He knew what forgiveness was, but he wouldn't forgive the one that had hurt him or had cost him. And as Christians, we know the greatest of forgiveness.

And yet it is our heart hard to forgive others who have offended us in probably small matters. That same passage teaches us how many times we should forgive one another.

70 times 70. Keep forgiving them. Especially when they're repentant and they're sorry, truly sorry for what they've done.

[ 54 : 53 ] The gospel changes us. As Christians, it should change our attitude with one another.

Change our relationships. Change our approach. Jesus has forgiven us. Do we find our hearts forgiving to our brothers and sisters?

Which takes us to the last point. We have an appeal in love. We have an appeal for Onesimus, the slave that has offended Philemon. And then we have an appeal here for a brother.

And this will be a significantly shorter point. You'll see there in verse 15, it says, For this perhaps was why he was parted for you for a while, that you might have him back forever.

Philemon made a mistake, didn't he? Onesimus made a mistake. Did his own thing. Made the mistake.

[ 56 : 02 ] But actually, the outcome of it was that he realized what he had done. When the responsibility had been placed on his lap, what he had been done, he realized what he had done.

He had thought it over. Paul had probably spoken to him about what he had done. He realized his mistake. He came back.

It's verse 16. No longer as a bondservant, but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother. This mistake changed his life.

And so often it's like that, isn't it? It's like that. We have to make a mistake before we do the right thing. Maybe it's like that.

Before you came to faith, you made so many mistakes. Before you would actually come to the master.

[ 57 : 08 ] to Jesus. The church should be a place of reconciliation.

The church should be a place of restoration. The church should be a place where we forgive one another. The church should be a place contrary to what the world expects.

The church should be a place. We welcome back the runaway. We welcome back those who have offended us, those that have made mistakes, that they would be with us forever as brothers.

As we're often the runaway ourselves. And it's often that we need to come back. Knowing our mistake, knowing our sin, knowing our guilt, we come back to our master and we stand there.

And we say, I'm sorry. We come back with our tails between our legs. With a repentant heart.

[ 58 : 25 ] And when we do that, the Bible tells us that he is faithful and just to forgive us. He's faithful and just to forgive us.

And that's a lesson for us all in our daily lives. And how we respond to those that offend us ourselves.

Jesus is waiting for the runaways to come back.

that you would be reconciled with him. Jesus doesn't have the hostility in his heart. As we question, what would Philemon do?

Jesus will welcome you back. For sure. There's no hostility in his heart. If you come, sorry for your sins, repentant for all that you have done.

[ 59 : 31 ] He will welcome you as a brother. To be with him forever. What's holding us back is our own heart.

What's holding us back is the hardness of our own heart to come to our master. to come to the one that will forgive us. He's waiting for you tonight.

If only you'd come and be reconciled in your own heart. That you're guilty.

That you need forgiveness. That you need Jesus. That if you do, you'll be with him forever.

It's appeal that we make in love. it's an appeal to the runaway slave.

[ 60 : 43 ] And it's an appeal to the brothers and sisters. If we have offended anyone, to be reconciled with them.

And those that repent to forgive. To forgive. And to welcome them with joy. As we have experienced that forgiveness.

As we have experienced that reconciliation. And as we know of that of that sure eternal welcome that we'll have.

As Jesus welcomes us and forgives us. So I pray there'll be a blessing to us all. we'll conclude our time together by singing in Mission Praise 31.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found. Was blind but now I see.

[ 61 : 56 ] So we'll sing these words in a moment. We'll stand to sing Amazing Grace how sweet the sound. Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch my ear.

I once was lost but now I'm found. Was blind but now I see.

T'was grace that taught my heart to fear. And grace my fears to be.

I see. I see. I see. How precious in the grace appear the earth I first believe.

through many through many dangers and sins I have already I know.

[ 63 : 31 ] Tis this that brought me safe and grace and grace and grace will lead me home.

When we've been left and burst the tears and shining at the sun when we've been left and burst the tears and shining at the sun and shining at the sun at the sun and shining at the sun we've all and dare to sing your praise first we've been and when we first we've left.

Amen. Concluding prayer Our Father in Heaven we thank you that through Jesus Christ you are a forgiving Father.

And Lord we give thanks when we see forgiveness and reconciliation between one another in our own lives. That it is a work of your reconciliation showing itself in us.

may it be a refreshing thing for us to witness and see and we see it all the more. So Lord we ask that you'd bless us part us with that blessing in Jesus name Amen.