



That we would not rely on ourselves, but that we would always be, as it were, in battle, fighting against the sinfulness of who we are and endeavouring to live lives that are pleasing to you and honouring in your sight and refreshing to each other.

Lord, we pray for us as a congregation. We pray that you would build us up and strengthen us together in love for one another, in patience, in kindness, in forgiveness.

That we pray for one another with thankfulness in our hearts. That we pray for others and bearing burdens as required. We pray for those who mourn.

[10:15] We pray for those who are laid aside in sickness. We pray for those who cannot be with us. And we ask that they would know your presence with them. We ask that your Spirit would speak to us and speak likewise to those that are at a distance from us.

Lord, we pray that your Word would go with great effect. That your Spirit would do a work of working faith in people, persuading and enabling them to trust in Jesus Christ, to embrace Him as He has freely offered to them on the pages of Scripture.

Lord, we pray for the other congregations near us, different denominations. We pray that whatever Christ crucified us preached, that your Spirit would be doing a work.

We pray for David and Scalpy. And we ask that you would be with them and bless that congregation there. We pray for the church in a wider sense, across our nation and across our world.

Those that find themselves in vacancy, we pray for them that you would provide for them. A man of your choosing. As your Word tells us, we are to pray for labourers to go out and reap the harvest.

[11:42] We pray that you would be doing our work in men, in your calling, your Word, to persuade them, to commit their lives fully to your cause and for your glory.

We pray that you would help all who endeavour to do such a task. We pray that you would keep them and sustain it, acknowledging that the devil is liable to attack.

Lord, we pray that your name would be upheld in all things. We pray that our nation would return to your name. We pray that you would be doing our work, that you would be drawing men, women, boys and girls who are lost to salvation.

That is the reality of eternity. That is the reality of what Jesus teaches in the Gospels.

That there is an eternity of a joy at your presence, or an eternity cast away from you in pain and anguish and turmoil.

[13:06] Lord, we pray that reality to be forcefully set before those that are lost and bring them to fall at the cross, to bow the knee to Jesus and to have him as their Lord and their Saviour.

We are mindful again of those who mourn and we pray for them, that you would comfort them and bind them up. And we just ask that you would watch over us now as we open up the word together. Help us in these things we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. We continue in our praise by singing in Psalm 31.

Psalm 31, from the beginning of that psalm, down to verse mark 5. A psalm that speaks of trusting in God. A psalm that speaks of a God that saves.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust. Shamed let me never be. According to thy righteousness Do thou deliver me. Bow down, I near to hear me.

[14:17] With speed send me deliverance. To save me, my strong rock be thou and my house of defence. Down to verse 5. Into thine hands I do commit.

My spirit, for thou art he, O thou Jehovah, God of truth, that has redeemed me. So we'll stand to sing these words to God's praise.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust. In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Shame let me never be. According to thy righteousness, Do thou deliver me.

Thou God, I near to me with speed. Send me deliverance.

[15:38] To save me, O Lord, I put my trust. To save me, O Lord, I put my trust. To save me, O Lord, I put my trust. My heart that cannot be. My heart that cannot be My heart that cannot be My God can be High for my fortress cave Therefore do thou Me lead and guide In for thine own name's sake O shines the Lord My strength therefore Through me at all the neck

Which is so Dilt in for me So privily in my set In to thine hands I do commit My strength therefore O Lord Jehovah God of truth The last redeemed me If you have a Bible Please turn with me To the Paul's letter To Philemon Philemon's just before Hebrews

In the New Testament If you're working through this Small letter And this will be the third time We've read it through Third and final time But hopefully a letter That we've become All the more familiar with So Paul's letter To Philemon And we'll read the whole letter again So let us hear God's word Paul a prisoner for Christ Jesus And Timothy our brother To Philemon our beloved fellow worker And Athia our sister And Archippus our fellow soldier And the church in your house Grace to you And peace from God Our Father And the Lord Jesus Christ I thank my God always When I remember you in my prayer Because I hear of your love And of the faith that you have Toward the Lord Jesus And for all the saints

And I pray That the sharing of your faith May become effective For the full knowledge Of every good thing That is in us For the sake of Christ 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 To command you To do what is required Yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you I, Paul, an old man Are now a prisoner also For Christ Jesus I appeal to you For my child Onesimus Whose father I became in my imprisonment 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 bond servant But more than a bond servant 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 I, Paul, write this With my own hand I will repay it To say nothing of your own Even your own self

[ 20 : 51 ] Yes, my brother Yes, brother I want some benefit From you and 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 prayer I will be graciously Given to you Epaphras My fellow prisoner In Christ Jesus Sends greetings to you And so do Mark Aristocris Demas And Luke My fellow worker The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ Be with your spirit Amen In the reading of God's word Be a blessing To those who have heard it Before we come back To that letter We're going to sing once more In Mission Praise 988 How deep the Father's love for us

How vast beyond all measure A hymn that pictures The great love And the great price That was paid To redeem us So we'll stand in a moment To sing these words How deep the Father's love for us How vast beyond all measure That he should give his only Son To make a wretch his treasure How great the pain of searing loss The Father turns his face away

As wounds which are the chosen one Bring many sons to glory Behold the man upon a cross My sin upon his shoulders As shame thy ear by mocking voice Fall out among the scholars It was my sin that held him there Until it was a gunwish

His dying breath has brought me light I know that it is a pain I know that it is a pain I know that it is a pain I will not boast in anything, no gifts, no power, no wisdom.

But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection.

[ 24 : 42 ] Why should I keep from His reward? I cannot give an answer, but this I know with all my heart.

His wounds have faked my ransom. If you have a Bible, turn back with me to that letter once more. Letter to Philemon. I will read again at verse 17. And we will consider verse 17 down to verse 22 this evening.

Verse 17 it says there, 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.

And so on. The last few weeks we've been, as I said, we've been looking at this short and probably overlooked letter of Paul's letter to Philemon.

[ 26 : 05 ] So far we've looked at the people that have been included in this letter. People that Paul wrote to, the names that he mentions at the end there.

And we particularly noticed also the life of Philemon, that Paul gave thanks for Philemon's witness, how he lived amongst those in the church, because we said it was primarily because of his great love and faith towards Christ.

Christ. That left this huge impression on the believers and on Paul. It brought joy to Paul, as it said in verse 7, and a refreshment to the saints.

And last week we kind of came to the main thrust of the letter. We came to the main point of the letter. Why Paul was writing in the first place. To bring about or to appeal for reconciliation between Philemon, the master and this runaway slave Onesimus.

And we thought about the challenge of that reconciliation that Paul was appealing for. A challenge to forgive and a challenge that speaks to every heart here.

[ 27 : 28 ] Would Philemon put aside that power he had to punish the runaway slave? Or would he welcome him now as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Because now being a believer, it changed the situation entirely. And now we come to this section from verse 17 to verse 22.

I think this is probably the richest section of this letter to me as I read it. Up to this point, Paul's almost been sort of gentle with Philemon in his approach.

He's been saying, I'm not going to command you in this matter about this reconciliation, how you're going to address this problem. He's pretty much been saying, I'm going to let you choose to do the right thing, the right action.

But funnily enough, as we come to this little section here, it's actually full of commands. It's full of what you probably call imperatives.

[ 28 : 31 ] It's just a name that we give to something when we say that you want them to do something. So boys and girls, it's just like your parents saying to you, listen, or tidy up your room, maybe.

They're telling you to do something. It's a command. And Paul has four commands in this section. That's funny because he's saying, I'm not going to command you. But then we have these four commands. But in the context of the whole letter, when you think about the ways writing, the ways written, and the love that's almost coming through in this letter, I think we'd probably be better to call them requests.

Four requests, personal requests for reconciliation that Paul makes to Philemon. They're addressed to Philemon.

And so if I just show you these four requests that we have first, and we're going to use them as our points as we walk through this section.

[ 29 : 43 ] So if you have a Bible, you'll see in verse 17, that the first one we have is receive. Receive him.

The second, you'll see in verse 18. That's charge. Charge that to my account. So they're all commands.

They're all requests. You do this. You receive. You charge. The next one's in verse 19. Refresh my heart.

And the last one is in verse 22. Verse 22, it says, prepare, I guess, room for me.

So you have these four requests. Receive. Charge. Refresh. And prepare. And as we walk through them, we're going to see this strong gospel fragrance about each of these words and each of these requests.

[ 30 : 46 ] So the first one is verse 17. Receive. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

Now in such a circumstance that Onesimus has disobeyed his master, run away, rejecting him would have been far easier than receiving him.

Punishing him would have been far easier. To receive Onesimus, this disobedient slave last week, we pondered what Philemon would have felt in his heart, seeing him returning.

Paul almost acknowledges how difficult it is, how hard it will be for Philemon by repeating this appeal again.

Receive him. But not just receive him. It's actually more outrageous in a sense than just receiving him back as a slave.

[ 31 : 58 ] More outrageous than actually receiving him back as a brother. This disobedient slave that's likely he'd stolen or cost him something.

Paul says, receive him as you would receive me. Saying to Philemon, pretend Onesimus, it's just like it's me coming back to you.

How would you welcome me? Is what Paul's saying. Well, treat the slave that's hurt you in the same manner.

He says, why? Because we're partners. He's been saying that Onesimus, as a Christian, as a believer, he's become like a son to Paul.

He was saying that in verse 10. He says that he is my very heart. We've seen that in verse 12 last week as well. It's almost as if he is a part of Paul.

[ 33 : 03 ] It's the best Paul could send. Part of me, part of us, partners in the gospel. He is one with us.

So receive him. As you would receive me. We're now bound together. As believers.

As brothers. And we understood that what commentators think is likely that Onesimus was there with this letter on its delivery.

Tychicus, as mentioned, with Onesimus and Colossians. And I think that they came together with this letter. It's almost as if he's standing there, returning as a prodigal son, expecting harsh treatment.

But rather he experiences gentleness. And I think the best way to make this real to us is if we're to put ourselves in Onesimus' shoes.

[ 34 : 12 ] We are the slave that's dishonoured our master. We're the one that's come back with this letter. We're standing there right in front of him.

Guilty. Worried. Guilty. What's he going to say? How is he going to treat me?

And you're listening to this letter being read in the presence of the church. Presence of Philemon.

Appealing.

For this reconciliation. That Philemon would actually not only receive me as a slave. Not even a brother.

But actually just as if it was Paul standing in front of him. Just as if it was Philemon's most loved companion.

[ 35 : 15 ] The person he would have rejoiced in coming home. It's saying receive him. Receive you as you picture yourself there in front of Philemon.

Just in that way. And you'll be thinking, well I've only been a Christian for five minutes. I don't deserve to be welcomed in such a way.

I'm just here to make amends for what I've done wrong. I know my guilt. I'm here before my master. Acknowledging that.

I'm so far from being anything like Paul. So how can I be received with such love?

As we said, these words are just full of the fragrance of the gospel. Because Christ had received Paul.

[ 36 : 22 ] Christ had received Philemon. In a likewise manner. In their guilt. They stood before their master. They stood before their master.

Confessing their sins. They had already stood like Onesimus. Repentant. But received.

And if we come to our master likewise. We will be received. With warmth.

With love. In the sight of God. As if it were Christ himself. Not a sinner.

But a son of God. That's amazing. But it takes us coming.

[ 37 : 18 ] It takes us coming. First of all. We'll be questioning. How can I.

Be received in such a way. I don't deserve it. I'm so guilty. I feel nothing like Christ.

How is it that I can be received. Before God. At all. How can I come. To my master.

How can I come. Well that takes us. To our second command. In understanding. How. We can. And that's.

Charge. Verse 18 and 19. If he has wronged you at all. Or owes you anything. Charge that. To my account. I Paul write this with my own hand.

[ 38 : 20 ] I will repay it. To say nothing. Of you. Owing me. Even. Your own. Self. Last week.

Well. Didn't even go back to last week. We know fine. We. Remember. Wrongs. Far easier. And we don't forget them.

Than what the good. That people do to us. When people offend us. We remember them. Paul's saying here. Don't let these wrongs.

That he has done. Before you. Whatever wrongs he has. Don't let these be the point of offence.

Don't let these things cause hardness.

In your heart. Or hatred even in your heart. Paul's saying. Look. Whatever cost. Whatever wrong there has been. Paul's saying.

[ 39 : 18 ] I'm going to pay for it. And what will he do. On Paul's behalf. Did he know the full extent.

Of the costs. Of Onesimus' running away. Of his disobedience. Of maybe what he stole. The damages that he caused. We don't know. What he did. But Paul's saying.

I'll pay for it. But Paul the prisoner. Paul. Who in all likelihood. Didn't have. Much.

If anything. To cover any cost. But it's as if it doesn't matter to Paul. The cost doesn't matter.

The resources. The finances. Whatever it is. Doesn't matter. It's a secondary thing. What Paul's primary concern. Is to restore. The relationship.

[ 40 : 14 ] Restore. This damaged. Relationship. In fact. He's going to restore it. In more than it was. As we were saying.

He's not just a slave. But a brother. And a brother. Just like Paul. So the restoration of this relationship.

Is special. Willing. If Paul's willing to do anything. To see it happen. And we know that. Because he puts his name to it.

Doesn't he? Verse 19. It says. I Paul. Write this with my own hand. I. Will. Repay. It. I understand.

That's not a light matter. What he's saying here. By. Putting his own name to it. And signing it. It's.

It's almost making a legal. Document. So the commentators say.

[ 41 : 17 ] Every wrong that. Onesimus has done. I'll pay for it. And I'll put my name to it. So you can stroke off. Onesimus's name.

Against the bow. And you can put. My name. And he's in his place. What I love.

Paul had. For this slave. Who was. Of course. Repentant. Who was. Now a believer. But also.

Paul expresses. His love. For Philemon. Himself. Not forgetting. That. Paul. Made his own sacrifices.

For Philemon. Philemon. Philemon. Philemon. Owed himself. To Paul. As if. Paul is saying. If I wasn't there.

[ 42 : 15 ] Would you have been converted? I gave my time. I gave my money. To teach you. To instruct you. In the ways of God. I gave myself to you.

Maybe you can think of someone. That was like that. In your own life. Maybe you can think of someone.

That. Taught you. All about Jesus. Taught you through the gospels. Helped you understand. Didn't matter. The cost of time.

That was involved in it. They put that. Beyond anything else. Just so that you would know. Jesus Christ. Just so that there would be.

A restored relationship. With God. Through him. It's a Christ like attitude. To be willing to give of ourselves.

[ 43 : 15 ] So that people would know. Jesus. So we put ourselves in Onesimus' shoes earlier. We're going to do it again. You're standing there.

Guilty. In your sin. Before the master. That has power. To exercise. Any form of punishment over you. Maybe you think back.

To. What you did wrong. Maybe it was stealing something. Maybe it was damaging something.

Maybe it was just running away. And causing the insignificance of.

Philemon. Having to get another slave. The cost of buying another slave. To cover the work that you've. Failed to do in your duty. But if we're going to make this real, I'm going to make the death

real for us, if we're going to put ourselves in Onesimus' shoes, and if we're going to stand before God, because of our sins, we cannot pay. There's an unpayable element to it. If you were to

imagine that he was a farmer, it's almost as if he's destroyed his tractor, destroyed the combine harvester, boiled all the grain and harvest, and then burnt everything, the cost is just far too much to

repay. To the fact that you could say, well, we can never repay it. We cannot pay back the offences of our sins before God ourselves. So much guilt, so much sin.

You imagine yourself in Onesimus' shoes. You've done all these wrong things, whatever it is.

You're standing before the master. You're wondering how he's going to punish you. And you hear the words of Paul saying, I will repay it. How would you feel? Stuck for words? You'd be thinking,

that's not right. He can't do that for me. Surely not? I'll pay it. I should pay it.





disciple-making, faithful follower of Christ.

So that when he comes, he will say, well done, good and faithful servant. The question is, are you living, ready for the Lord's coming?

Are you preparing to meet the master? We're received into the family of God through Christ.

[ 60 : 37 ] We are set free from the payment due for sin through Christ. We are refreshed daily by Christ.

And we are to prepare for Christ. Four gospel-filled requests.

In a letter that appeals for reconciliation. And a letter that points to the great reconciliation that is made for us through Christ.

And if we come, we will be called sons of God. What a thought. What a saviour we have.

So I pray these things be blessed to us. We will have one more item of praise and then I'll conclude with prayer. And we'll sing in Mission Praise 624.

[ 61 : 43 ] Mission Praise 624. Take my life and let it be consecrated. Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days.

Let them flow. In ceaseless praise. We'll stand a moment. Sing these words to God's praise. Take my life and let it be consecrated.

Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days. Take my moments and my days. Take my moments and my days. Let them flow.

In ceaseless praise. Take my hands and let them move.

At the end, close all thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for me.

[ 63 : 09 ] Take my voice and let them be swift and beautiful for me.

Take my heart and my heart. Not a might would I withhold. Take my intellect and use.

Every ferrux that have done shall choose. Take my heart and let it be■.

It shall be no longer mine. Take my heart and let it be■.

It shall be thy royal throne. Take my love, my Lord, I've worn.

[ 64 : 36 ] At thy feet its treasure store. Take myself and I will be ever only all for thee.

We ask, Lord, that you would fill us with wonder at the gospel. That we are received with such love. That you have paid such a price.

Lord, refresh our hearts when we think about these things. And as we prepare for you to come.

That your kingdom would come.

And that you would call us to stand before you in repentance of hearts. Trusting you as a saviour.

That will never leave us nor forsake us.

So be with us and watch over us and bless us as we part. In Jesus' name, Amen.