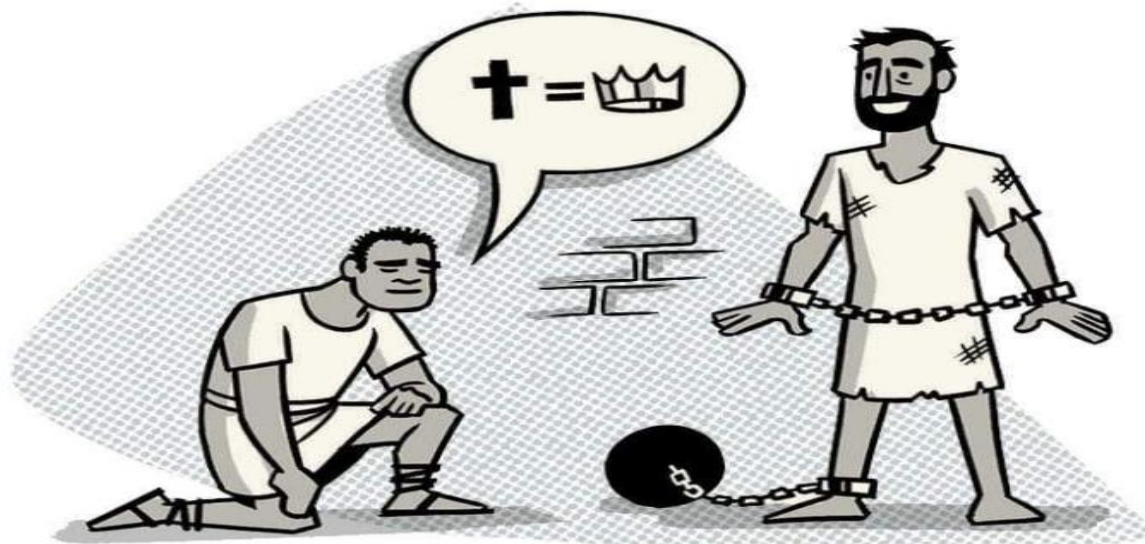


A Study of Philemon



Paul was a prisoner in Rome, his friend Philemon was in Colossae, and the human link between them was a runaway slave named Onesimus. The details are not clear, but it appears that Onesimus robbed his master and then fled to Rome, hoping to be swallowed up in the crowded metropolis. But, in the providence of God, he met Paul and was converted!

Now what? Perhaps Onesimus should remain with Paul, who needed all the assistance he could get. But what about the slave's responsibilities to his master back in Colossae? The law permitted a master to execute a rebellious slave, but Philemon was a Christian. If he forgave Onesimus, what would the other masters (and slaves) think? If he punished him, how would it affect his testimony? What a dilemma!

Along with the Epistle to the Colossians, this letter probably was carried to Colossae by Tychicus and Onesimus (Col. 4:7–9). In it, we see Paul in three important roles as he tried to help Philemon solve his problems. At the same time, we see a beautiful picture of what the Father has done for us in Jesus Christ. Martin Luther said, "All of us are Onesimuses!" and he was right.

I. Paul, the Beloved Friend (1-7)

1. Paul reminds (or informs) Philemon that he is a prisoner. Then he reminds him that he is a _____ and a _____ (1)
2. Two other house member are mentioned, _____ and _____, which may be Philemon's wife and son (2)
3. Paul prays for three things concerning his friend:
 - a) _____ (4-5)
 - b) _____ (6a)
 - c) _____ (6b)

II. Paul, the Beseeching Intercessor (8-16)

1. Paul used five tactful reminders to encourage Philemon's response to Onesimus' return:
 - a) _____ (9a)
 - b) _____ (9b)
 - c) _____ (10)
 - d) _____ (11)
 - e) _____ (12-14)
2. Paul informs Philemon that he is sending Onesimus back to him at a great _____ (12-14)
3. Paul reminds Philemon that perhaps the reason Onesimus left was so that he might receive him back as a _____ (15-16)

III. Paul the Burdened Partner (17-25)

1. Paul makes two suggestions to solve the runaway problem concerning Onesimus:
 - a) _____ (17)
 - b) _____ (18-19)
2. Paul steers Philemon's decision by asking him to remember that he owes his life to him when he said "you owe me your very _____ (19)
3. Paul's confidence in Philemon to do the right thing is shown in two statements:
 - a) _____ (21)
 - b) _____ (22)
4. Paul mentions five men who are with him and sends greetings to Philemon:
 - a) _____ (23)
 - b) _____ (24a)
 - c) _____ (24b)
 - d) _____ (24c)
 - e) _____ (24d)