

The Gospel in Philemon

Background:

- Paul wrote this letter between A.D. 54 and 62, depending on the referenced imprisonment.
- 1 of the 4 "prison epistles" written in Rome.
- Read Colossians 4:7-17.
- Onesimus delivered this letter, along with Colossians, with Tychicus (Colossians 4:7-9).
- Onesimus was "one of you," as stated in Colossians 4:9. He was from Colossae.
- Paul mentions Archippus in Colossians and in Philemon 2, where the church also meets in Philemon's house, and Archippus is believed to be Philemon's son.
- Onesimus is delivering this letter to Philemon in Colossae, together with the letter to the saints meeting in Philemon's house.

Read Paul's letter to Philemon.

1. Paul does not specifically mention the death, burial, or resurrection of Jesus here. What is their significance? Let's look at this principally.
 - Reconciliation through forgiveness.
 - Mercy and Grace.
 - Oneness among all believers.
 - This applies here: Onesimus, freed from Satan and now a slave to Christ, had his debt forgiven and was treated as family. As family, they needed to see each other this way, without worldly divisions, even though existing roles remained (see Col. 3:22-4:1). They were truly one in God's kingdom (Col. 3:11).
2. Consider Paul's approach and language because of his mindset.
 - "Prisoner for Christ" vs. 1
 - "I thank my God always when I remember you" vs. 4
 - "For love's sake I prefer to appeal" vs 9
 - "My child, Onesimus" vs. 10
 - "Sending my very heart" vs. 12
 - "Perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while" vs 15
 - "That you may have him back forever . . . as a beloved brother" vs. 16
 - "So if you consider me your partner" vs. 17
 - "Charge that to my account" vs. 18
 - "To say nothing of you owing me even your own self" vs. 19
 - "Refresh my heart in the Lord" vs. 20
3. How do we live each day?
 - What do we see?
 - What are we *looking* for?
 - What do we *say*?
 - Do we *compartmentalize* our faith?
 - Can you *find the gospel* in your daily choices?