

Forgiveness Reconciliation Fellowship

(Part 3)

Philemon 19-25

Luke 15:11-24; 2 Corinthians 5:11-25

Lie #16

Author: Apostle Paul (v. 1)

- “Prisoner of Christ”
- Sovereignty and Providence of God - we experience it every day (moment) of our daily lives.



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Audience: Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the Church in His House (Church of Colosse, Colossians 1:2)

- A lesson for all in the Church - not just Philemon.
- A lesson for HIBC and IBC.
- A lesson for YOU and I since God's Word is eternal.

Major Theme: Forgiveness - the dangers of unforgiveness

- Unforgiveness is a great sin against God. It is a violation of His Law. (Ps 51:4)
- Unforgiveness imprisons one in the past.
- Unforgiveness prevents one from healing from the wounds of being sinned against.
- Unforgiveness produces and grows bitterness.
- Unforgiveness's bitterness is a disease that spreads to others. (Hebrews 12:15)
- Unforgiveness hurts the one sinned against more than the one who sinned!
- Unforgiveness blocks fellowship with God. (Matthew 5:23-24)
- ★ **Forgiveness should be the easiest thing for a born-again Christian to do.**

What About “Forgive and Forget”?

- We cannot, as humans, truly erase events from our minds.
- We are commanded to forgive **as** we have been forgiven. (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32)
- Paul instructs us to “forget those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Philippians 3:13 with 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- We must not allow bitterness to take root in us. (Hebrews 12:15)
- Christians love “thinks no evil”. (1 Corinthians 13:5)

The Man Philemon (vv. 4-7)

- (v. 4) A man on Paul's prayer list.
- (v. 5) Philemon's love and faith for Christ **and** all the saints.
 - Love and faith toward Christ and all the saints always go together.
(Col 1:4; 1 John 5:1-2; 3:10, **14**, 23; John 13:34-35; Heb 6:10-11)
- (v. 6) "that" Paul's prayer's goal.
 - "sharing of your faith" - Greek: *koinonia* - "fellowship"; "having in common"; "participation in"; "communion"; "communication"; "**belonging**".
 - The living out your faith (not just in words but in action) would be an **effective** acknowledgment of "every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." Philemon's forgiveness would be a *powerful* witness to the Church.

Onesimus: A Transformed Slave (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11)

- By the providence of God, Onesimus ended up in Rome.
- By the providence of God, Onesimus was introduced to Paul.
- By the providence of God, Paul led Onesimus to Christ.
- By a supernatural act of His will God gave eternal life to Onesimus and transformed him from a being an unprofitable runaway slave/thief into a child of God profitable to God and others.
- By a supernatural act of God Onesimus became a fellow-laborer with Paul.
(Ephesians 2:10)
- This is the story of every person that God saves.

Paul: Intercessor and Surety

- Paul prayed to God for Philemon.
- Paul's prayer for Philemon and the Church in his house is recorded in Colossians 1:9-11.
- Not only did Paul pray for Philemon but also did Epaphras. His prayer is recorded in Colossians 4:12.
- Paul not only prayed - He acted out his faith. He accepted Onesimus's debt as his own and promised Philemon that he would pay it in full.
 - Paul became Onesimus' surety.

Paul's Closing (vv. 19-25)

- Though Paul's closings **seem** unimportant they are, in fact, the Word of God. And if the Word of God then they must be studied.
 - See Romans 16 - a whole chapter!
- (v. 19) See Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17
 - Paul was signing his name to the promise he made in verse 18.
- (v. 19) "Lest I should mention to you that you **owe** me even your own self as well."
 - Paul is saying that Philemon's debt to Paul is greater than any debt that Onesimus owes to him.

- Onesimus owed Philemon a temporal debt, but Paul was pointing to a different kind of debt - a spiritual/eternal debt.
- Of course, Paul would give all glory to God for our salvation but Paul also knew that God brings people in our lives to bring us to Christ and to help us mature.
- Verse 19 is another way Paul is using to move Philemon to do what was right in God's eyes.
- (v. 20) "You, my brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord . . ." (2 John 3; 3 John 3-4; Philippians 2:2)
 - A pastor's **greatest** joy is seeing his "sheep" obey. (Heb 13:17)
- (v. 20) "refresh **my** heart" - as Philemon had refreshed saints at Colosse (v. 7)
 - Failing to forgive Onesimus would greatly sadden Paul!
- (v. 21) "Having confidence in your obedience" - What Paul heard of Philemon's works and faithfulness gave him confidence that Philemon would do what was right. (See 2 Thessalonians 3:5)
- (v. 21) "I know that you will do even more than what I say" (Ephesians 3:20-21)
 - Consider "abounding" in 1 Cor 15:58; 2 Cor 8:1-6; Philip 1:9; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:1; 2 Thess 1:3; 2 Peter 1:5-8.
 - The prodigal son's father welcoming him. (Luke 15)
- (v. 22) "prepare me a guest room" - Paul had plans to visit Colosse once released. But he understood that not his will but God will be done. (Acts 18:21; Romans 1:10; 15:32; 1 Corinthians 4:19; Hebrews 6:3) Also see Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; 20:24; 21:30; Isaiah 46:10; Jeremiah 10:23.
- (v. 22) "for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you"
 - Paul prayed and had confidence in prayer - his own and the prayers of others. God answers prayers . . .
 - ★ That are prayed according to His will. (1 John 5:14-15)
 - ★ That are prayed by those who keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 John 3:23; Proverbs 28:9)
 - ★ That are prayed by those who are living righteously according to His written Word. (1 John 3:3-10; James 5:16; Prov 15:29)
 - ★ That are prayed by those who are abiding in His Word. (John 15:7)
 - ★ That are prayed by those who seek Him with their whole heart. (Jeremiah 29:12-13)
 - Plans change - Romans 15:23-25
 - Prayer is a part of God's sovereignty and providence.
- (vv. 23-24) Fellow laborers: (See Colossians 4:7-18)
 - Epaphras - "our beloved fellow servant/slave, who a **faithful** servant of Christ" (Colossians 1:7) - **DEVOTED to PRAYER!**
 - Mark - the Gospel writer; defected from Paul on his first missionary journey; matured; reconciled; valuable to Paul near his death (see 2 Timothy 4:11)
 - Aristarchus - Jewish believer, native of Thessalonica (Col 4:11; Acts 20:4; 27:2) A fellow soldier in difficult times (Acts 19:29; 27:4)

- Demas - Demas is an example of one who start out good but fails to persevere. (Matthew 13:20-22; 2 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 2:15)
- Luke - "the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14) - Author of the Gospel and Acts. A faithful friend that stayed with Paul to the end (2 Tim 4:11).

Final Greeting (v. 25)

- Paul ends with a prayer for GRACE - God's undeserved power to do what is right.
- Philemon could not forgive Onesimus in his flesh but with Christ's grace **working** in him he could!! (Philippians 4:13)

We Are All Onesimuses!

- OUR DEBT: We have sinned against our God; We are born enemies of God; we are unprofitable to God and others; we are slaves to Satan, the world, and our own lusts; we are born "children of wrath". We could do nothing but sin. (Psalm 51:4; Romans 5:10; 3:12; Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:36; Rom 6:18-20)
- (v. 15) By God's sovereign will and providence He made His Gospel known to us and He saved us from our sins. (Ephesians 1:3-14; Matthew 1:21)
- (v. 3) Grace and Peace - we are saved by grace and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2)
- (vv. 8-9) Christ: Our Advocate. Christ testifies on our behalf. (1 John 2:1)
- (vv. 4, 25) Christ: Our Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34)
- (v. 18) Christ: Our Surety (2 Cor 5:21; Hebrews 7:22; Psalm 69;; Isaiah 53:4-7;)
- (v. 18) (Ephesians 1:7) Christ paid for our forgiveness with His blood.
- (v. 12) (Romans 5:10-11; Ephesians 1:6) Christ: Our reconciliation/acceptance are accredited to the work of Christ - not ourselves. We are accepted "in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Colossians 1:21)
- (v. 18) Imputation: Sin and Righteousness
 - Our sins were imputed to Christ. (Isaiah 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21)
 - Christ's righteousness was imputed unto us! (2 Cor 5:21; Rom 5:17)
- (v. 17) Christ: Our Fellowship - 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:1-3
- (v. 25) Grace: Spirit of Christ (Philippians 4:13; 2:13; Heb 13:20-21; John 4:13)

Forgiveness LEARNED from Paul's Letter to Philemon

- Having been forgiven of many, many, many sins, receiving God's forgiveness every day for our many, many daily sins, we chose, out of love for Christ and all the saints, against all hurt feelings, against culture, to imitate God and forgive others just as Christ has forgiven us. We are willing to forgive freely those who have sinned against us. We chose to receive others just as Christ received us and brought us to God. We chose to "share our faith" in the presence of others being an effective/powerful demonstration of Christ's work in us! We forgive not in the power of our flesh but by "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ working in us to will and do for His good pleasure".