



Class 13 - Philemon
Homework for week of 1.22.20 – 1.28.20

Videos we watched in class:

Philemon

<https://youtu.be/aW9Q3Jt6Yvk>

Justice

<https://youtu.be/A14THPoc4-4>

Homework:

Day 1- Read: Intro to Philemon and verses listed below

Where did you find out that Philemon lives? What does Philemon do there? Did you get any clues as to how Paul knew him? How does Paul address him?

As readers of Philemon in the USA in 2020, we naturally question the slavery of Onesimus and wonder why Philemon is not rebuked by Paul for owning a slave. We aren't given an answer to why slavery was permitted, but it does help us understand the

context of Philemon to understand what the Bible says in other places about slaves and masters. Look up the following verses:

- Colossians 3:18--4:1
- Ephesians 6:5-9
- 1 Corinthians 7:21-23
- 1 Timothy 6:1-2
- Titus 2:9-10
- 1 Peter 2:18-21

The passages above emphasize:

- Owners have a “master in heaven”
- Slaves are involved in “serving Christ”
- God deals impartially with master and slave
- Both slaves and masters are bond-servants of Christ
- One may still continue in a functional relationship of master and slave after conversion, but must relate to one another on a higher level of unity

Day 2- Read: Philemon

Look at Philemon 1 – 7. What are some of the characteristics of Philemon?

How would you characterize him from this description?

Day 3: Read Colossians 4

Remember this letter was written by Paul to Philemon, who was a Christian in Colossae. Paul was probably in prison in Rome at the time. It is a personal letter to Philemon and probably came with the letter that would become Colossians.

Look at Colossians 4:9. Who delivered the letter? Why is this important?

Look back at Philemon verses 8 – 22. Paul claims that Onesimus has become “useful” (note the pun). Why is he now useful?

Onesimus was very close to Paul, why did Paul send him back? How did he want Philemon to respond?

Paul asks acceptance of Onesimus as a personal favor and offers to make right whatever Onesimus has done. Do you think Paul expected Philemon to take him up on the offer?

Day 4: Read John 17 and verses listed below

This book is about conflict in the body of Christ. A difficult subject in any time period. Instead of conflict, Christ wants us to have unity. Jesus even prayed this for all of us. Read the beautiful prayer Jesus prays in John 17:20-23 for believers of all time. This verse and these below show how our unity can be a blessing. Read them and see what you learn.

1 Corinthians 1:10

2 Corinthians 13:11

Ephesians 4:1-6

Day 5: Read Philemon again

Philemon provides an excellent model for how to treat others and resolve conflict. Each person involved – Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul – play a particular role that we can learn from. We will probably all find ourselves in each position at one point or another.

Philemon: the victim

What would have been your response if Onesimus had shown up at your door?

What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Read these verses.

Colossians 3:12-14

Colossians 4:1

Matthew 18:21-35

When has it been hard to forgive someone even though you know what the Bible says? Were you able to embrace that person “as a dear brother”?

Is forgiveness an act or an attitude?

Onesimus: the offender

Would you have returned if you were Onesimus? Is it necessary to ask for forgiveness?

What does the Bible say about seeking forgiveness?

Matthew 5:23-24

Romans 12:18

Sometimes it is easy in our minds to shift the burden of reconciliation to the person who has been wronged. Whose responsibility is it to make things right? Is the burden shared?

Can you think of any situation in which you could be proactive and make things right?

Paul: the advocate

How seriously do we take reaching out to someone in need like Onesimus? Do we even consider taking on their cause?

What does the Bible say about this role?

Matthew 5:9
Galatians 6:2

How did Paul approach Philemon? How did he communicate the right thing without offending or causing conflict?