

Philemon

Philemon 1:17-25

Faith, Forgiveness, Friendship and Freedom

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Phm 1:17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

Phm 1:18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

Phm 1:19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Phm 1:20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Phm 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Phm 1:22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

Phm 1:23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

Phm 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Phm 1:25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. [Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.](#)

Phm 1:17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

- **Observe here, 1.** drawn from a partnership and communion with him in the faith; if we are partners, and have communion and friendship one with another as Christians, comply with my desires herein. Learn hence, that there is a communion, a fellowship, a partnership. between saints, should make saints respect one another,
- If thou dost consider me as a friend; if I have still the place of a friend in thy affection, receive him as myself;¹
- The word rendered “partner” a partaker, a companion.” The idea in the word is that of having something in common²

Phm 1:18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

- **If he hath wronged thee,....** By squandering away his time, spoiling his work, or corrupting his fellow servants:³
- **or oweth thee ought;** by embezzling his master's goods, robbing him of his money, and running away from his service:³
- **put that on mine account;** Signifying that he would be answerable for all, and make good all debts and damages.³
- Here is a plain confirmation of the doctrine of restitution. Where any person has injured another, he is obliged by the laws of God and conscience to make reparation as far as he is able, even where the law of the land may not compel him to do so; unless the injured party freely forgive him.⁴

¹ Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Philemon 1:17". "The Adam Clarke Commentary". 1832.

² Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Philemon 1:17". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible".1870.

³ Gill, John. "Commentary on Philemon 1:18". "The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible". 1999.

⁴ Coke, Thomas. "Commentary on Philemon 1:18". Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible. 1801-1803.

Phm 1:19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

- Paul may have written the whole of this letter with his own hand, contrary to his usual practice. (Jerome.)⁵
- Thou hast it here under my hand, I take upon me to satisfy thee Onesimus's debt; yet I could tell thee, that thou owest me more than it can be, even thy own self, God having made use of me as an instrument to convert and turn thee unto God. Such persons are great debtors to their spiritual fathers, Romans 15:27.⁶
- There remains one question. How does Paul — who, if he had not been aided by the churches, had not the means of living sparingly and frugally — promise to pay money? Amidst such poverty and want this does certainly appear to be a ridiculous promise; but it is easy to see that, by this form of expression, Paul beseeches Philemon not to ask anything back from his slave. Though he does not speak ironically, yet, by an indirect figure, he requests him to blot out and cancel this account. The meaning, therefore, is — "I wish that thou shouldst not contend with thy slave, unless thou chooseth to have me for thy debtor in his stead." For he immediately adds that Philemon is altogether his own; and he who claims the whole man as his property, need not give himself uneasiness about paying money.⁷

Phm 1:20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

- If Philemon receives his slave for Christ's sake and in the strength of that communion with Christ which fits for all virtue, and so for this good deed a deed which is of too high and rare a strain of goodness for his unaided nature then "in Christ" he will be helpful to the apostle. In that case, the phrase expresses the element or sphere in which the act is done.⁵
- The "bowels," in the Scriptures, are uniformly spoken of as the seat of the affections⁸
- the element or sphere in which this act of Christian love naturally ought to have place.⁹

Phm 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

- In his obedience of faith to Christ, and his Gospel; he having been made willing in the day of his power to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and being constrained by his love, and the Spirit of Christ having wrought in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure:³
- But it means he would even be more thoughtful in good deeds than Paul was requiring.¹⁰
- Such is the service of love, specially of Christian love, which after the example of Christ gives itself freely to serve the beloved.¹¹

Phm 1:22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

- Paul had hopes of being released and permitted to go out among the churches, and the testimony of history indicates that it was accomplished. In view of such an experience, he asked that Philemon make provision for his lodging.¹⁰
- He had no confident hope of his release, further than if it pleased God. Accordingly, he always kept his mind in suspense, till the will of God was made known by the result.⁷

⁵ Exell, Joseph S. "Commentary on "Philemon 1:19". The Biblical Illustrator. 1905-1909. New York.

⁶ Poole, Matthew, "Commentary on Philemon 1:19". Matthew Poole's English Annotations on the Holy Bible. 1685.

⁷ Calvin, John. "Commentary on Philemon 1:19". "Calvin's Commentary on the Bible". 1840-57.

⁸ Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Philemon 1:20". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible".

⁹ Jamieson, Robert, D.D.; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. "Commentary on Philemon 1:20". "Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible". 1871-8.

¹⁰ Zerr, E.M. "Commentary on Philemon 1:21". E.M. Zerr's Commentary on Selected Books of the New Testament. 1952.

¹¹ Schaff, Philip. "Commentary on Philemon 1:21". "Schaff's Popular Commentary on the New Testament". 1879-90.

Phm 1:23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

- *Epaphras was a Colossian, as we learn from Colossians 4:12¹*
- *He is also called one of themselves, and one who had a great zeal for them (Colossians 4:12,13)¹²*
- *I think therefore that he was a converted Gentile, who had assisted the apostle in preaching at Colossae and who was ordained by him to the office of the ministry in that church¹³*
- *He had been sent by the Colossian Church to inquire after, and minister to, Paul, and possibly was cast into prison by the Roman authorities on suspicion.⁹*

Phm 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

- **Marcus** *is most likely John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas who went with Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey, but left halfway (Acts 15:37-39). It was over Mark that Paul and Barnabas split up (Acts 15:39). Later, Mark was viewed as a close associate of Paul who was very valuable to him (2 Timothy 4:11). Mark possibly was converted by Peter (1 Peter 5:13).¹⁴*
- **Aristarchus** *A Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 27:2) who accompanied Paul to Rome, and who appears to have devoted himself to the apostle's service through the whole imprisonment.¹¹*
- **Demas**, *mentioned like the rest in the Colossian Epistle, but at a later time (2 Timothy 4:10) described as deserting St. Paul for the love of the world.¹¹*
- **Luke**, *elsewhere (Colossians 4:14) called 'the beloved physician.'* He travelled much with St. Paul, and may have been necessary to the apostle by reason of his bodily infirmities.¹¹
- **fellowlabourers** *By his own efforts and by those of his companions, St. Paul made it apparent that, even though he were a prisoner, the Word of God was not bound.*

Phm 1:25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.

- Your ... is plural. Therefore, "The plural reference is to the whole group included in the salutation."¹²

How do we apply all this to our lives?

- Recognize the partnerships we have with other believers in the kingdom work. Vs .17
- Acceptance of a person who has come to Christ is expected of us, in light of our redemption Vs. 18
- We need to remember someone saw us the way God sees us, and shared Jesus with us. Vs. 19
- When we live in obedience to the principles of God's Word it is an encouragement to others. Vs. 20-21
- When we love one another it creates a desire to help and be with one another. Vs. 22-24

¹² Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on Philemon 1:23". "Coffman Commentaries on the Bible".. 1983-1999.

¹³ [40] James Macknight, op. cit., p. 412.

¹⁴ Cobb, Bradley. "Commentary on Philemon 1:24". "Bradley Cobb's Commentary on Philemon". 2014