

(Through the Bible) Philemon

by Chuck Smith

Paul writes to Philemon, asking him to receive Onesimus, a former slave who has become a Christian, as a brother in Christ.

Duration: 57:34

Scripture: Matthew 5:11-12, Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 4:5, Colossians 3:17, Colossians 3:23, Philemon 1:7

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's plan, even when we only see a part of the picture and cry out in dismay. He uses the example of Joseph and his father in Egypt to illustrate how God's plan is far wiser than anything we could devise. The speaker also highlights the story of Philemon and Onesimus to show that sometimes what may seem like a loss or a setback can actually be a part of God's plan to bring someone to faith. The sermon concludes with the reminder that Jesus paid it all for our sins and that we should live our lives for the glory of God.

Transcript

Tonight, let's turn to Philemon. Philemon was written by Paul the Apostle unto the man, whose name is Philemon, who lived in Colossae. This letter was written at the same time that Paul wrote the Colossian Epistle.

When Paul wrote the Colossian Epistle, he made mention that he was sending the letter with Tychicus and that also Onesimus, who was one of their own, would be coming with Tychicus with the Epistle. The letter of Philemon involves this man Onesimus. For Onesimus was at one time a slave of Philemon, who had evidently stolen some money and had run away.

Now Paul is returning him with this Epistle in which Paul is interceding for Onesimus that Philemon might receive him no longer as a slave, but as a brother in Christ. This is one of Paul's prison epistles and in it Paul not only asks Philemon to be merciful and gracious unto Onesimus, but also be preparing a place for Paul to stay for Paul is expecting to be released soon from prison, which he was released from that first imprisonment, later rearrested, and then executed. So, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us whatsoever we do in word or deed, we should do all to the glory of God. Paul, in his service, was a servant of Jesus Christ. As a servant of Jesus Christ, his life was totally committed to the

cause of Jesus Christ.

So whatever happened to him, he did not look upon it personally, but as unto the Lord and for the Lord's sake. I think a lot of times we Christians get out of sorts because we are prone to personalize the reproach that comes on us for the cause of Jesus Christ. If while I am sharing my faith in Jesus Christ, or my love for the Lord with someone, and they get upset with me and tell me that I'm a nut and things of this nature, I am prone to personalize their remarks.

Rather than realize that the animosity that they feel is not really directed towards me, it's directed towards the Lord that I represent. And I think that it's important that we make that distinction in our minds that so often times the reproach we bear is the reproach of Christ. So that when in the early church they were beaten and told not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus Christ.

And Paul talks about the many sufferings that he endured as filling up the afflictions of Christ. So here he sees himself, interestingly enough, not as a prisoner of Rome. Rome can't hold Paul.

Nor can it hold back the work of the Spirit of God in Paul's life. I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And when you see things that way, it puts a whole different light on our experiences.

I can endure. I can accept it when I realize that it is for the Lord and in His name and for His cause that I am experiencing these things. Paul, when he talked to the Ephesian elders there at Miletus, there on the beach, he spoke to them how that he was with them serving the Lord.

And we need to realize that the Lord is our Master. We are serving Him. Whatever befalls us, befalls us for His sake and for His glory.

And that really, we are His servants and thus, the results of our service are also because of that service, so I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And Timothy, our brother, now when Paul wrote the Colossian Epistle, he also joined Timothy's name with his, for Timothy was well known to the church in Colossae. He had been there with Paul ministering.

It is also interesting as we complete the letter, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, Paul said, my fellow labors, these are the same men that Paul joins in his salutation in the Colossian Epistle. So we know that they were both written at the same time. For by the time Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy in his second imprisonment, he said, all of those from Asia have forsaken me.

Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present world, and so forth. So here, with the Epistle to Colossae, the same names that Paul joins with his in the closing salutation are joined in this Epistle to Philemon. So, he joins Timothy in the beginning as a greeting from Paul, and then also in the final salutation joins the same ones that he joins in the Colossian Epistle.

To Timothy, our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow laborer. And to our beloved Athea. Now, Athea was probably Philemon's wife.

It is a feminine name. And so, it is probably the wife of Philemon that Paul is also greeting here at the beginning of the Epistle and Archippus. Now, there are some commentaries that suggest that Archippus was the son of Philemon, and that he was in the ministry.

Paul speaks of Archippus as being a fellow soldier, and that was a phrase that was used of those who were also ministering together in the Gospel. And so, the greeting probably to the household of Philemon, his wife Athea, and his son Archippus. And to the church that is in your house.

So, at least Philemon had a home Bible study going in Colossae. And there was a letter sent to the entire church of Colossae, but Paul here greets the church that is in his house. Or the word here is ecclesia, the assembly, or those that are assembling in your house.

In the early church, they did not have church buildings. Quite often, they met in homes. And it was not at all uncommon to have a church within your house.

And the church in its simplest form was constituted by two or three people gathering together in the name of Jesus. And Jesus said He would honor such a gathering. Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.

And so, Philemon had a church or a fellowship, a home Bible study going in his own house. And the grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So, it's the typical Pauline greeting.

The grace and the peace coupled together from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of Thee always in my prayers. The men that God uses are men of prayer, among other things.

And it is interesting how often Paul makes reference to his own personal prayer life. For in each of the epistles, he makes mention how that he is praying for them continually. And in some of them, how he is interceding for them night and day.

Paul's life was a life of prayer. Constantly in prayer. For Paul realized the power of prayer.

You see, here was Paul imprisoned in Rome. Sitting there as they believe in the Mamertine prison, chained to a Roman guard. Rome could not stop the witness of Jesus Christ.

For Paul, through prayer, was continuing his work in all of the churches that he had established as he prayed for them. You see, the interesting thing about prayer is that it is not bound to locality as is service. We think that serving the Lord is probably one of the most important things that we can do.

More important than service is prayer because there are times when through uncontrolled circumstances, our service must be limited. I mean, if you're sitting there in a jail cell and you're chained to a Roman guard, your service is going to be quite restricted. But, they could not restrict the power of Paul's prayers.

And so he would continue to exercise a very dynamic and powerful ministry in prayer as through prayer, he went around to the various churches and to the various individuals, mentioning them by name. And here he speaks of how he is mentioning Philemon always in his prayers. And so Paul had, no doubt, a very extensive prayer list as he prayed for the churches, the specific churches.

And then as he prayed for those leaders within the churches by name, holding them up before the Lord. And so the tremendous power of prayer as he sat there in his jail cell, he was going out through prayer around the provinces of Asia, on into Greece, on back to Jerusalem, and doing a work for God while confined in that prison cell. Paul said, hearing of the love and the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.

So Philemon was a blessed brother in Christ, one for whom Paul gave thanks because Paul heard of the love that Philemon had and of the faith that was demonstrated towards all the saints in the communication of his faith. Paul in the next verse speaks of the communication of this faith, which is faith in action. He demonstrated his faith to the church by what he did for the church and what he gave to those in the church and to those in need.

As James said, you say you have faith. Well, you show me your works and I will show you your faith. And so Paul speaks of the faith that Philemon has that is actually proven or demonstrated in the fact that he is sharing with the church.

The word translated, communication here, is that Greek word *koinonia*, which actually means the fellowship or the sharing of what one has with others. The mutual sharing. Now, Philemon probably was a very wealthy man.

The fact that he had slaves. But, he was also one who was willing to share what he had with others who didn't have. And thus, it was a demonstration of his true faith.

That the communication or the *koinonia*, the fellowship or the sharing of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. So, that work of Jesus Christ within his life was demonstrated by his life and a life of love and a life of sharing with those within the body of Christ. Now, Paul gets to the subject matter.

Onesimus. Wherefore, well, let's see, I jumped verse 7 didn't I? For we have great joy and consolation in thy love because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. And so, Paul really rejoiced in the witness of this man's life and in the work of God within his life that was demonstrated through the works that he did.

Wherefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient or fitting, yet for love's sake, I would rather beseech thee. Now, Paul was the apostle. He had the authority as an apostle to enjoin or to order a person to do a particular thing.

And though Paul said, I could enjoin you, I could order you to do this, I'm not going to order you. I'm going to beg you. I'm beseeching you.

Jesus said to His disciples that the Gentiles loved to exercise lordship. They loved to rule over people. They loved to show their authority.

But He said, it shall not be so among you. For whoever would be the chief among you, let him become the servant of all. And so here is Paul.

He has authority as an apostle. Rather than coming on heavy with authority and saying, now Philemon, this is what I'm commanding you to do. He said, I'm begging you to do this Philemon.

He's appealing really to the love that he knows Philemon has. To the compassion that this man has demonstrated. And how much better it is when someone comes appealing to the higher nature of love.

Now, there are some who aren't moved much by love and so the Bible says you've got to save some by fear. And of course, some preachers really take that Scripture to heart and they dangle people over the pit of hell every Sunday in order that they might save some by fear. But there is another Scripture that says,

don't you realize that it is the goodness of God that brings a man to repentance.

Now, some are saved by fear. But that is a base motivation. Paul said it's the love of Christ that constrains me.

Drawn by the love of Christ. Higher motivation. And so he chooses to appeal to the higher motivation.

Begging Him because of the love that he knows he possesses. Wherefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to order thee to do that which is right or fitting, yet for love's sake I would rather beseech thee. Being such a one as Paul the aged.

How old was Paul? Paul at this point was probably in his late 50's or early 60's. But, he had endured such hardship for the cause of Christ that his body was a wreck. And he spoke of his oft sicknesses many times.

And so, though he was only around 60, he speaks of himself as the aged. And now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Again, not acknowledging a prisoner of Rome, but a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

And I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. Now, in the Greek text, the word Onesimus comes at the end of this sentence. So, Paul in the Greek text said, I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus.

Now, Onesimus was probably a name that had a strong reaction in Philemon's heart and mind. He had been a slave. He evidently had stolen some money before he ran away.

And Philemon was probably extremely upset over this. As you would be if someone that you had in your household that you trusted and all, would suddenly take some money and run off. When we were living in Huntington Beach, there was a little old man that came by and needing some help.

And he was sort of a transient, but our hearts went out to him. And so, we fixed up a place for him to stay. And we fed him and took care of him and gave him some money.

And we came home one day and found that he was gone and my power tools were also missing. Now, for several months, you mentioned that man's name to me and my blood boiled. I mean, I would have loved to have gotten hold of that fellow again.

That was the best body grinder and my tools were just, you know, I really, they were tools that I had inherited from my brother when he was killed in a plane crash. And I always have been a craftsman and loved working with tools. I couldn't afford them myself, but when I got them, you know, I really prized them and cherished them.

And to have this guy rip off my power after we had done these kindnesses to him, shown him nothing but kindness, and yet he turns around and rips it off. Oh man, I'll tell you. And so, Philemon probably had this same kind of reaction anytime you mention the name Onesimus, he's, oh boy, if I could just get my hands on that fellow, you know.

And so, Paul is careful not to mention his name at the beginning of the sentence. I beseech you for my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus. So, he cushions the name by indicating that there's been a change in this fellow.

That change that always takes place when one comes to know the power of Jesus Christ within their lives. And Paul goes on to speak of the change that transpired in the life of Onesimus, but he calls him my son, begotten in my bonds, which in time past, he said, was to thee unprofitable. But now he is profitable to you and to me.

Now, I want to beseech you for this young man. I know that he was unprofitable. I know what he did.

But he's changed. He's now very profitable to me and also to you. And I'm sending him again and I'm asking you to receive him.

That is, he who has been begotten from me and is part of me, he's out of my own heart, whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead, he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. Now, I know Philemon, you would like to be here to minister to me because of these bonds. You know, Paul had still a great work to do, but he would send those on errands.

He was bound by a chain to the prison guard. But he was having them write letters for him. He was sending them out on missions and errands.

And he said, I know Philemon, that you would like to be here helping me in this condition, but he's been here representing you, doing the work that you would like to be doing for me while I am here in these bonds. Onesimus being a slave, of course, had that miserable lot and life of a slave. One of the most horrible and heinous things that man could ever do to his fellow man is to bring one into slavery.

My heart goes out to those people who have become the slaves of the state in the communist countries. One of the greatest evils of man is the oppression of a fellow man. In the Roman Empire, slavery was indeed a horrible crime against humanity.

During the time that Paul wrote this epistle, there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. There was always the fear that these 60 million people may rise up in mass and it was always a constant threat to the Roman Empire. And thus, whenever a slave showed any sign of rebellion, such as running away, he was dealt with extremely severely.

Usually he was put to death in order to create fear in the hearts of the rest of the slaves that this is what happens if you dare to rebel against the authority. The least thing that would happen would be an F branded into the forehead with a hot branding iron to create the scar so that always he would have the mark of the fugitivos, that of a fugitive, the mark of the runaway slave. A slave had no rights, no rights of ownership, no rights of any kind.

There was no one a slave could appeal to. If you were beaten, if you were robbed, whatever, you couldn't appeal to anybody. There was no authority to protect you as a slave.

Your master had the sole and complete authority over your existence, which he had the right to terminate at any time he desired. Any time he wanted to, he could kill you, and he would not have to answer to any charges. Slaves were often beaten, kept in the most miserable condition by sadists who delighted in torturing them.

A miserable lot indeed. Of course, those who were masters were enjoined by Paul in the Ephesian epistle how to treat their slaves with kindness and love. But with Philemon, Paul is making an appeal now.

Philemon could, if he desired, put Onesimus to death. He should have branded him according to the customs with the F in his forehead. But Paul is saying, I want you to receive him.

I would have retained him with me. That in your stead, in your place, he might be ministering to me here in my bonds. But without your permission, I would do nothing.

That your benefit should not be, as it were, of necessity, but willingly. God does not want anything we do for Him or give to Him to be given out of necessity or out of pressure. God never uses pressure tactics on man.

Now, man often uses pressure tactics. I get some extremely high-pressured letters filled with hype from a lot of these evangelists who would have me to believe that God is broke. And they are telling me how much money to send and to send it immediately.

And even suggesting that if I don't have it immediately available to go down to the bank and borrow it and send it to them to bail God out of the jam that He is in. Because He overspent again last month. Pressure.

Paul said, I don't want to receive anything from you by necessity, by pressure, by manipulation. I would like to have kept him with me, but I wouldn't do it unless you gave your permission. Because I want what is done.

Though he would have been very helpful to me. I want what you do to me, not to be out of pressure, not out of necessity. I want you to do it willingly.

And so Paul, talking about our giving in his Corinthian epistle said it shouldn't be of necessity, of pressure. But every man should purpose in his own heart. And so let him give, for God loves a cheerful, or in the Greek, a hilarious giver.

So what you can give to God hilariously, give. But what you can't give hilariously, keep. It's better that you keep it than to give it to God grudgingly.

God doesn't want anything done in a grudging way. Now I can understand that. I don't like people to do things in a grudging way.

I've had people give stuff to me and then I heard that they were going around grudging about what they gave. And I take it back. I say, hey, I really don't need this.

Take it back. Oh no, I want you to... No, I won't keep it. You don't want people to gripe.

If they want to give because they love you, great. But if they're going to gripe about it and begrudge what they give, then I'd rather they not give. That's why when this fellow who gave us the house in Hawaii came up to us and said, I like my house back, we gave it back to him.

I don't want anything that a person has, you know, remorse afterwards that he's done it. And the same with God. If you want to serve the Lord, serve Him with a joyful, happy, willing heart.

If you want to give to God, give with a joyful, happy, willing heart. And if you can't give with a joyful, happy, willing heart, don't give. Better not to give because you're not going to get any reward for it anyhow.

You know, you give to God, and you say, oh, here we are, God, you know, and you give something to God, and then you go around griping about it, God just marks it off just as though you hadn't given it. You won't get any credit for it, so you might as well keep it. So Paul, I would like to have kept him with me.

He was really a blessing, a benefit to me, but I wouldn't do it without your permission because I want this benefit to me not to come as of pressure or necessity, but willingly. I want it to be from your heart, you willingly doing it. For perhaps He therefore departed for a season that you should receive Him forever.

Now, we don't know what God is working out so many times in our lives when we have disappointments. When Onesimus took the money and split, Philemon was no doubt very upset, and he probably was saying, why would God allow him to rip me off like that and take off, you know? Why would God allow this to happen and all? And Paul says, look, you don't know. Maybe this was all a part of God's plan to reach Onesimus with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Maybe you lost him for a little bit that you might gain him forever. For it was while he was in Rome that he came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Now he's a brother in Christ, an eternal brother in Christ.

So you lost him for a moment, but you gained him forever. He's now an eternal brother in the bond of Jesus Christ. An interesting thing during the hippie counterculture revolution, thousands upon thousands of young people left home.

Many of them ran away from home. And the parents were so upset and disturbed, their children ran away from home. Well, many of them in their searching found Jesus Christ as the answer for their quest of life.

And their parents lost them for a little while, but they gained them as eternal brothers and sisters in the Lord. God did the work in their heart. Sometimes a husband or a wife leaves, and there is such sorrow and grief.

But you don't know what God is working out. You don't know but what maybe they've left for a season that God might do an eternal work within their lives and bring things together as He wants them to be. It is important that we learn to just commit our ways unto the Lord.

Every situation. Well, Lord, You're in control. My life belongs to You.

And I know, Lord, that You are controlling the circumstances that surround my life. And so work out Your plan. And rather than getting all upset, rather than fretting, getting angry, it's best that we just commit it to the Lord and say, well, Lord, You're in control.

And I don't know what You're doing, but I just trust You, Lord. Now that is where faith comes in. If I only can believe God when I can see what He's doing, when I can understand His work, that isn't faith and that doesn't take any faith.

What takes faith is to have that rest and confidence when things seem to be going completely against me. But they oftentimes only seem to be going completely against me as when Jacob said, all things are against me. Why did he cry that? Because he didn't see everything.

He said all things, but he was wrong. All things weren't against him if he only knew the truth. Some of the greatest, most happy moments of his life were just around the corner.

That fellow down there in Egypt that seems to be so mean and hard is in reality his son Joseph who he has bereaved for so many years. And he's going to soon discover that his son is alive and he's going to be embracing Joseph again. He doesn't know the whole picture.

He only sees a part of it and he cries out in dismay. And we so often seeing just a part of the picture cry out in dismay. All things are against me.

Oh, no, no, no. You don't know the full cycle. You don't know the full story.

You don't know what God is working out. Just wait. Trust in the Lord.

Rest in Him. And let God work it out. And you'll see that God's plan was far wiser than anything you could have devised as He began to put together that eternal work in the hearts and the lives of your friends or in your own heart and life as you learn to trust in Him more completely.

It is so important that we learn to just commit things unto the Lord even those things that seem to be against us. And so, Paul's rationale is a very reasonable rationale looking at the consequences of Onesimus' running away. The consequence was that he came to Jesus Christ and became a brother in Christ and will share eternity now together with Philemon.

The end result is that he has become now a profitable person who was once unprofitable. And so, I want you to receive him, Paul said. Not now as a slave.

Paul is asking Philemon to release him from this obligation of a slave. But above a slave. I want you to receive him as a beloved brother especially to me, but how much more unto you both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So, Paul is asking for more than just forgiveness for Onesimus. He's asking for a total pardon even from the slavery that he once endured. I want you to receive him not as a slave anymore.

More than a slave. I want you to receive him as a beloved brother. Release him from that slavery.

If you count me therefore a friend, a co-laborer, I want you to receive him as myself. That you would treat him with the same kindness that you would treat me and have treated me. The same love.

That you would do for him the things that you've done for me. And if he has wronged you or owes you anything, put that on my account. You just charge it to me.

For I, Paul, have written it with my own hand. I will repay it. And here we have Paul the intercessor interceding with Philemon concerning this unprofitable slave who has now been converted to Jesus Christ.

Asking his relief and release from slavery to be received as a brother. To be received even above that as Paul himself. And to be forgiven any debt that he owes or at least that debt be charged to Paul.

Paul promises he'll reimburse. I will pay. That's intercession.

Now, the Bible says that Jesus is able to save to the uttermost seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us. Isaiah prophesied that He would make intercession for the transgressors. Paul in Romans 8 said, Who is He that condemns? It is Christ who has died.

Yea, rather, is risen again. And is even at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Jesus is not condemning you.

Does not condemn you. Has not condemned you. Will not condemn you.

Jesus said, I didn't come to condemn the world but that the world through me might be saved. Who is He then that condemns? It isn't Jesus. He's making intercession for you.

And even as Paul interceded for Onesimus so does Jesus intercede for you. Father, I want You to receive them no longer as sinners, but as those who have been washed in clans, as brothers, eternal sons of God. Father, I want You to treat them even as You treat me.

Glorified together with Him. Seated together with Him in heavenly places. The Father's blessing and grace and goodness to us as though we were His son.

And then finally, if they owe You anything, put it to my account. And so all of my sins are charged to Jesus. All of my guilt is charged to Him.

God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. If they owe You anything, put it to my account. I will pay.

And Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. I love the last verse of that song.

And when before the throne I stand in Him complete, Jesus died my soul to save, my lips shall still repeat, for Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, but He washed it white as snow.

And in His intercession for you and for me, He is asking that we receive with Him the honor and the glory of the eternal kingdom. That all of our guilt be transferred to His account. All of our debt, He has accepted the responsibility for.

So Paul said, I have written it with my own hand. I will repay it. However, I would make mention of the fact that you owe me even your own life.

Evidently, Philemon was one of Paul's converts. Paul had the opportunity of sharing with him the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. And so he owed to Paul his conversion.

That gift of eternal life that he had because Paul was the instrument God used in bringing him to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. So, if he owes you anything, put it on my account. However, I remind you that you owe me quite a bit, you know.

Even your very life. Yes, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord. Refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Now, in our culture and in our modern use of the word bowels, it is difficult to understand why Paul would say such a thing as refresh my bowels in the Lord. But we've got to realize that we're dealing with a different culture and different concepts of cultures. And according to the beliefs, and they may not be so far from right, according to the beliefs of the culture at that time, the deepest emotions of a man were not felt in the head, but were felt in the region of the stomach.

When the grief was extremely deep, it was felt down in the area of the stomach rather than in the head. When the experiences of joy hit the sublime point, it wasn't an experience that went on in your brain. It was an experience that went on deep inside of you, in the deep areas of you, which they called the

bowels.

And so we are told to have bowels of compassion and bowels of mercy. And now Paul is speaking about joy supreme, or the deepest kind of joy. This is the kind of one that is felt in this deep area.

Have you ever had an experience emotional so deep that you felt it, you know, sort of grabbed your stomach? You ever laughed so hard that you held your stomach? And because of that, they thought of this region of the stomach as being the area of the greatest joy and laughter and all. I mean, you really get to laughing, man. It, you know, hurts your sides.

Doesn't hurt your head. You don't feel it up here. You feel it down here.

And, of course, we, in our, you know, careful, well, expressions and so forth, probably a carryover of the Victorian age, we're a little reluctant to talk about certain portions of the body. And thus it does sound a little foreign to us. But the reference is to joy or sorrow or whatever in the deepest area of a man's being.

And so it is emotions of the deepest sort that he is referring to here. Let me have joy. Having confidence in your obedience, I wrote unto you, knowing that you will do more than I say.

Now, this is known as a presumptive close. And any of you who are aware of salesmanship knows what a presumptive close is. You have laid out all of the merchandise.

And here's a young girl and she's buying some, you know, things for her hope chest. And so she wants some towels. And so she's in looking.

She doesn't know if she's going to buy or not. But she's looking at towels. And you show her the quality and you tell her how nice they are.

And then you get out your little order pen and you say, now, which colors did you want? And it's presumption. I'm presuming that she is going to buy them. And so, what color do you want, you know? Presumptive close.

So, Paul is using this presumptive close on Philemon. I have confidence in your obedience. Having this confidence in your obedience, I wrote unto you, knowing that you're going to do what I ask, but you're even going to do more.

End the subject of Onesimus. Now, the close of the epistle. Now, also, I want you to prepare me a place to stay, for I trust through your prayers that I shall be given unto you.

So, fix up my room. I'll be there by the grace of God before long. There salutes thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. And so, these same ones that Paul joins with his name in the greeting to the Colossian church are joined in the greeting to Philemon as we come to the close of this little personal letter.

Next week, Hebrews chapters 1 and 2. So, we pray. Father, how grateful we are for the great high priest, Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven for us to there stand as our representative and to make intercession for us. How thankful we are, Lord, that you have taken our case and you have chosen to represent us before the Father.

We love you and we appreciate all you've done for us and we thank you, Lord, that one day you will present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Lord, you're so good, so good to us and we thank you for it. Amen.

Now may the Lord be with you and bless you this week abundantly. May you experience real growth in your walk with Jesus Christ. May the grace of God abound unto you in all things as you experience again the touch of God's love and of His Spirit as He strengthens you and as He guides you and as He helps you and as He works in you that perfect work.

In Jesus' name.

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