

Bible Study for August 29 – Sept 4, 2022

Read: Philemon 1-21

Notes:

If you read the entire lesson, congratulations! You have just read an entire book of the Bible! But don't let its small size fool you, for this letter was included for a reason.

While Paul was in prison, he was aided by a runaway slave named Onesimus. The slave's owner, Philemon, was a Christian friend of Paul. In this letter, Paul makes a bold request: that Philemon would receive Onesimus back as a Christian brother, rather than a runaway slave who could legally be severely punished. Paul's argument is that, in Christ, we are all partners. We are all brothers and sisters, invited into Christ's family, free to forgive and be forgiven. Paul even goes so far as to make the offer to personally pay for any costs Onesimus has incurred, setting the example of Christ payment for our sins.

Questions to Ponder:

What qualities in Philemon does Paul commend in verses 1-7?

How does this prepare the way for Paul's plea in verse 8?

Does the fact that Onesimus has become a Christian lessen the seriousness of his crime? Why or why not?

Given Paul's concern and need for Onesimus, why do you think Paul returned Onesimus to Philemon?

Like Onesimus, do you have something you need to return to make things right? Do you have someone like Paul who can help you do that?

When do you feel obligated to forgive someone: when they confess their sin? When they later change their behavior? When someone else intercedes for the offending party?