
Philemon: Christianity In Action

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Part 1

Introduction: This morning, we will begin working through Paul's letter to Philemon.

1. It's an unusual letter that challenges conventional thinking on several levels.
2. The story is rooted in the institution of slavery.
 - Philemon was a wealthy slave holder.
 - Onesimus had stolen from Philemon and ran away.
 - He met Paul, became a Christian and immediately faced a moral dilemma.
 - His Christian duty would require him to return to his master and make restitution.
 - Death was the normal punishment for this offense.
3. See what I mean, this is an unusual story.
4. It's also an important story because as it unfolds, we see Christianity in action and the providence of God.
5. Here's the plan:
 - We'll focus on the individuals.
 - We'll recognize the crisis they faced.
 - We'll see victory in Jesus.

I. Philemon

- A. A Wealthy Christian
- B. A Slave Holder
- C. He's Suffered A Wrong

D. He's Challenged To Forgive

II. Onesimus

- A. An Unjust Existence
- B. A Criminal Reaction
- C. A Transformational Experience
- D. A Moral Dilemma
- E. An Obedient Response

Conclusion: Let's pause here and consider what God wants us to do with this story.

1. Let's start with Philemon.
 - Have you ever suffered wrong?
 - How did you? Are you reacting?
 - Is God calling you to forgive?
2. Now let's consider Onesimus.
 - Have you experienced the unfairness of life?
 - How did you? Are you responding?
 - How does your faith instruct you?
 - Are you Obedient?
3. God calls us to be doers of the Word, to live our faith.
4. He calls us the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
5. Philemon and Onesimus are great examples ... how about you?