

## “Why Salvation Matters”

### Philemon 1:11-14

October 18, 2020

#### Philemon 8-10

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper,

9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you — since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus —

**10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,**

- Like slaves in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, there are 2 kinds of people in the world today: 1. Those who have been set free by the power of God. 2. Those who are still on the run. Onesimus was on the run until he was set free.

- Onesimus wasn't captured by the Roman authorities, but he was captured by the King of kings.

#### Paul

1. The knowledge of a runaway slave.
2. The fragileness of Onesimus.
3. His relationship with Philemon.
4. The dynamics of Philemon's house-church.
5. The revolutionary implications to the Roman world.

#### Philemon

1. His relationship to Paul.
2. His relationship to Onesimus.
3. His relationship to his family.
4. His relationship to his church.
5. His relationship to the community.

#### Onesimus

1. The risk of leaving a “big city” and being caught.
2. His relationship to Paul.
3. His relationship to Philemon.
4. His relationship to his fellow-slaves.
5. It could all blow up.

### *If we follow the world –*

Options –

1. Don't get involved.
2. Not worth the risk.
3. Get involved and have Onesimus punished to the full extent of Roman law.
4. Result: Uphold the institution of slavery as it exists. Nothing changes.

### How does Paul handle it?

#### **Philemon 11-14**

**11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.**

12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart,

13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;

14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.

**11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.**

- Onesimus is a changed man.
- Philemon knows him as a runaway and as a thief.
- Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ changes one internally that results in change externally.
- This is what this entire book hinges on.
- If his conversion is false, everything fails.
- Onesimus does not have to change his name but only live out the meaning of his name – “useful.”
- Notice the dual beneficiaries.
- Those transformed by Christ, like Onesimus, make a significant contribution to the Church and to society. The chief way to change society is to change the heart of individuals.

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“Christianity is the power which makes bad men good.”

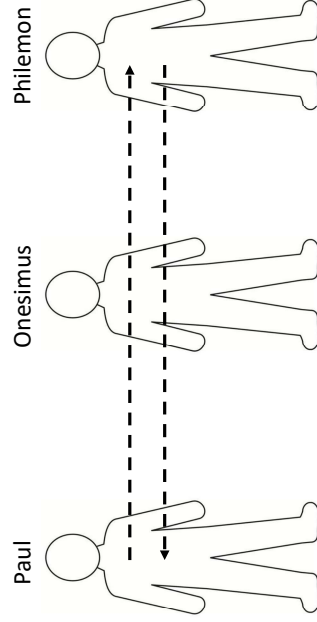
- James Denny

## 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart,

- Onesimus is coming back to Philemon in the flesh.
  - He is going to make the trip because he wants to.
  - “But really you are getting me.” -Paul
- “heart”** – σπλάγχνα – inward parts – spleen, intestine, liver, bowels. The deepest part of you that is really you.

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Paul is ministering to Philemon through Onesimus.  
Philemon is ministering to Paul through Onesimus.  
\*Talk about being useful!!

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### How valuable is Onesimus?

- “I’d like to keep him for myself.” – Paul
- **“minister”** – διακονεω – to serve, to attend to, to minister.
- Prisoners in the Roman Empire depended on outsiders to meet their physical needs.
- New believers have a lot to offer.
- Here is Paul making a disciple.
- Paul never lost sight of his mission – “the gospel.”

## 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.

- Onesimus is still a slave of Philemon and not to Paul.
- **“compulsion”** – αναγκη - to cause distress, to bend an arm to cause it to ache.
- **“free will”** – εκουσιον – voluntarily, willingly.
- Following the Lord Jesus and doing His will is not by force.
- We don’t put pressure on people. No arm twisting.
- We use encouragement, persuasion, love, grace, kindness, patience, to move people to action.

## 2 Cor 9:7

- 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under **compulsion**, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- 1 Peter 5:2**
- 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under **compulsion**, but **voluntarily**, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

“No sacrifices are acceptable to God  
but those which are freely offered.”

- John Calvin

The only hope of the world is not found in  
social reform  
politics  
self-improvement  
organizations and movements that protest.

It is

only

found in the

life-changing power of Jesus Christ.