

“Abundant Grace”

Philemon 18-22

November 1, 2020

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18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

- What account does Paul have? He is in jail. He has nothing with which to repay.
- Philemon is asked to respond with forgiveness and mercy.

18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

- Paul now tackles a big problem and objection that Philemon might have – “What about the damages?” “Paul, he ripped me off.” “Am I supposed to absorb that? Really?”

- Onesimus, no doubt, is destitute.

“if” – 1st class cond. – “if and I assume it to be true.”

- “Whatever damages he has done, I’ll pay for it.”

- **Damages** – 1. replaced Onesimus with another slave – 500 denarii (500 days wages). 2. Stole money and possessions to fund his fugitive life.

- Justice would require repayment. Onesimus could work it off.

- So here is **abundant grace!**

- The law would order Philemon to take Onesimus back. Case closed. Paul could have done that. Used his authority.

- But grace operates differently. Grace is gracious. It goes above and beyond. It goes the extra mile.

- Grace always goes beyond duty.

- Grace does not need coercion to motivate it. It does what it does because it comes out of one’s heart. It is irresistible!

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19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

- Paul's handwriting is his guarantee of payment.

1 Cor 16:21

21 The greeting is in my own hand — Paul.

Gal 6:11

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

Col 4:18

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand.

2 Thess 3:17

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.

19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

- The fact that Philemon owes Paul an even greater debt, will in fact cancel out Onesimus' debt.
- Think about this:

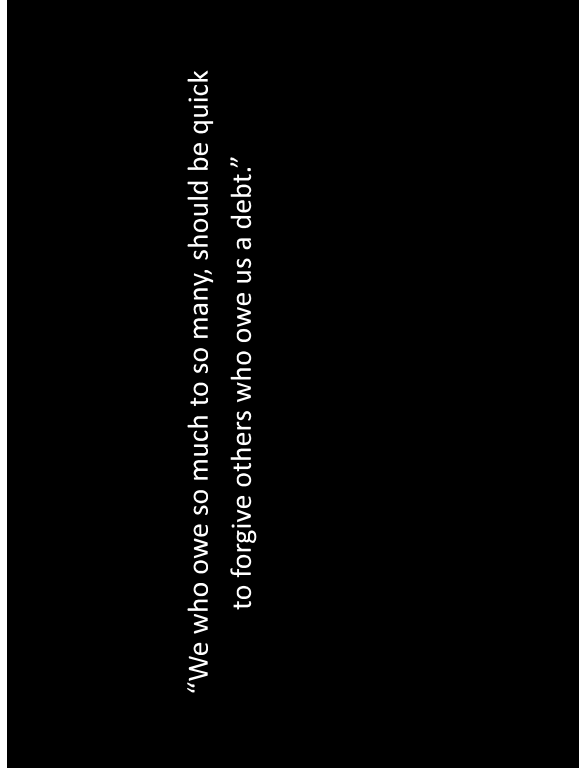
Onesimus owes Philemon a material debt.

Philemon owes Paul a spiritual debt.

Onesimus owes Philemon a temporal debt.

Philemon owes Paul an eternal debt.

*Paul had led Philemon to Christ. That is a debt Philemon could never repay.



"We who owe so much to so many, should be quick to forgive others who owe us a debt."

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20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

"benefit" – ονιννημι – to gratify, to derive pleasure or advantage from, to receive joy.

7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

"refresh" – αναπαυωω – stop-rest-be refreshed, cease from labor, to hold-up, in order to recover and collect your strength.

"heart" – σπλαγγνα – inward parts –spleen, intestine, liver, bowels. The deepest part of you.

- In a hard and difficult world, God has provided for the believer a place of rest and joy – other believers.

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- Paul's confidence is based on 4 things:
 1. The character of Philemon. (4-7)
 - Love for God and other believers
 - Faith in God and other believers.
 - Concern for the spiritual welfare of other believers.
 2. The removal of all barriers. (18)
 3. The graciousness of Paul. (18b,19a)
 4. The debt to Paul that Philemon could never repay. (19b)

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- Paul is anticipating that all of this will fall together, therefore Philemon is to prepare for Paul to come for a visit.
- Hospitality is critical to the work of God.

Rom 16:23

- 23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you.
- Some think this is added pressure on Philemon to require him to reconcile with Onesimus. I don't. 3 reasons:
 1. Paul doesn't operate that way. That's not grace. That's law.
 2. Paul wants a reunion. Paul wants Philemon to imagine how sweet the fellowship is going to be between the 3 of them, and really for his family and the whole church.
 3. Paul wants there to be joy, happiness, celebration, and praise to God for His providential hand in bringing this all about – from the escape of Onesimus, to him meeting Paul, to the salvation of Onesimus, to the forgiveness by Philemon of Onesimus, to the now reunion of all 3 of them.

But this will come about through prayer . . .

4. Prayer Principle: When our biblical prayers align with His sovereign plan and its timing, then our requests will be granted.

5. Because we do not know His sovereign plan or its timing, we trust Him for the best answer. God is not my personal "genie." I am a "partner" with Him in the accomplishing of his will in this world. I have a subordinate part - prayer.

1 John 5:14,15

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

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Prayer – "the first wireless connection."

This gives us insight into how Paul views prayer

1. Paul was dependent on the prayers of other believers.
2. Nothing is impossible with God. Paul is in jail. What are the "chances" of his release? 0% and 100%.
3. What is going to have to happen for Paul to be released?
 - Earthquake – possible.
 - Escape – no.
 - Charges by the Jews dropped – most likely.

"hope – ἐλπίζω – to expect, to trust.

"given" – χαρίζομαι – to grant as a favor, rescue, grant, deliver, to grace someone.

4. It is by God's sovereign plan and through our prayers that God grants grace for the things that we request.

Phil 1:12-13,18-19; 2:23,24

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

18 . . . Yes, and I will rejoice,

19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

2:23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me;

24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

1 Thess 2:18

18 For we wanted to come to you — I, Paul, more than once — and yet Satan hindered us.

Application: *Examine your prayer list. How many of your requests do you expect God to answer?*

“Don’t forget to pray today, because
God didn’t forget to wake you up this morning.
He wants to hear from you.”

Grace meets us where we are, but does not leave us
where it found us.

Therefore a drop of God’s grace is worth more than an ocean
of the world’s comfort.