

# CHAINED but Free



Philemon: No Longer A Slave May  
14, 2014

## Key Verse

No longer as a slave, but more than a slave—as a  
dearly loved brother.

Philemon 1:16 (HCSB)

## Brief Overview of Paul's letters from prison:

- **Philippians** – Living with purpose and power in difficult circumstances.
- **Ephesians** – Restoring a relationship with God through Christ and demonstrating that restoration in relationships with others.
- **Colossians** – Knowing Christ as God and experiencing the new life made possible through a personal relationship with Him.
- **Philemon** – Practicing forgiveness in Christian relationships.

## Background

- Written approximately 61-62 AD during Paul's first Roman imprisonment.
- Slavery in the 1st century Roman Empire was central to both economic and political stability. Runaway slaves dealt with severely to lessen potential rebellion.

## • 3 main characters of the book

**Philemon** – a leader of the church in Colossae, owned slaves, converted under Paul's preaching in Ephesus.

**Onesimus** – a slave owned by Philemon, ran away from Philemon (probably stole money and/or goods), converted under Paul's preaching in Rome.

**Paul** – Imprisoned for the gospel, father in the faith to both Philemon and Onesimus, central character in 1st century church used by God to establish doctrine and church practice

- **purpose** – Paul is sending Tychicus with letters to the church at Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21) and Colossae (Colossians 4:7) and Onesimus (Colossians 4:9) with this letter to Philemon. The central purpose is to convince the offended slave owner that Onesimus is a brother in Christ now and should not be treated as a runaway slave. Onesimus was wrong and needed to make things right.

## Restoring Relationships in the Body of Christ

- Challenge the offender to \_\_\_\_\_ and demonstrate repentance through life change.
- Stay focused on our foundational purpose to bring \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ. (vs. 6)
- Know that our demonstration of love and faith towards Christ and other believers \_\_\_\_\_ the church. (vs. 7)
- Trust that a person changed by Christ becomes \_\_\_\_\_ to His work. (vs. 11)

(continued)

- See that believers are \_\_\_\_\_ with one another. (vs. 12)
- Understand that God is at work in all situations to \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_. (vs 15-16)
- Refuse to focus on our personal \_\_\_\_\_. Hold on to the \_\_\_\_\_ life. (vs. 16)
- Challenge the offended to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. (vs. 18-19)
- Remember your \_\_\_\_\_ has been paid...your \_\_\_\_\_ cleared from your account. (vs. 18-19)
- Listen to others as they challenge you to \_\_\_\_\_ Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive. (vs. 21)

### **The Rest of the Story**

- Paul was released from this imprisonment around AD 63-64 and continued mission work.
- He was imprisoned a second time during the Neronian persecution around AD 66.
- He wrote 2 Timothy from this imprisonment.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. There is reserved for me in the future the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing.*

*2 Timothy 4:6-8*

- Tradition maintains Paul was beheaded approx. AD 67-68