

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Philemon Chapter 1:1-12

Pastor Charles A. Hall – St John Baptist Church

In all of Paul's writings there is little doubt that the Apostle Paul authored this epistle, he refers to himself three separate time in this very brief writing. Paul writes this epistle during his first imprisonment in Rome, where he also wrote Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. It is believed that Paul wrote Colossian and Philemon around the same time frame between A.D. 60-63.

This epistle centers around three key individuals the Apostle Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus who was a slave in Colossae. Onesimus run away from his master Philemon after he had robbed him, however in the process of running away he met the Apostle Paul, and heard the gospel and received salvation. Onesimus became a very faithful helper to Paul in his ministry after being saved. Paul eventually sent Onesimus back to his master Philemon, along with another helper in the ministry Tychicus who delivered Paul's letter to the church of Colossae. In Paul's letter to the church in Colossae, where Philemon was associated, Paul requested that Philemon receive Onesimus no longer as a slave, but rather as a brother. The Apostle Paul in an act of brotherly love assumed Onesimus debt as his own. Paul in his writing told Philemon to put Onesimus debt on his account.

This brief letter serves three important areas, first it reveal more about the personal character of the Apostle Paul than any of his other letters. Second this epistle provide important insight concerning slavery during the ancient Roman world, and thirdly this letter further illustrate the truth of Paul's writing to the church of Galatia in the Galatians 3:28 where Paul states:

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one on Christ Jesus. **Galatians 3:28***

Verse 1 – This verse is extremely powerful because it shows several important facts about Paul and his ministry. First, even though Paul was in the roman jail he did not consider himself a prisoner of Rome, but rather a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Second, it confirmed again the apostle's fondness of his spiritual son Timothy, and thirdly it points out his relationship with Philemon which was one of close friendship in the ministry of the gospel.

Verse 2 – Paul greets Apphia who is most likely Philemon's wife, and Archippus who may have been Philemon's son, but most likely one of the minister in the church which was meeting in Philemon home.

Verse 3 – Paul greets Philemon and other believers in the church that is meeting in his home with his signature greeting "Grace to you (undeserved favor), and peace (reconciliation and harmony), from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ".

Verse 4 – Paul tells Philemon that he gives all credit and honor to God for putting him in his spirit often.

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to Philemon Chapter 1:1-12

Pastor Charles A. Hall – St John Baptist Church

Verse 5 – Paul tells Philemon of the testimony that he has heard about him, how he shown his love toward our Lord Jesus Christ and toward other believers as well.

Verse 6 – Paul tells Philemon that he is exalting his faith in hope that it might stir up the good gifts God has placed in him.

Verse 7 – Paul tell Philemon that his testimony of love of God and brethren have given him and his associates great joy and comfort, and the hearts of other believers have been refreshed by him.

Verse 8 – Paul speaks in his writing to Philemon as a brother in Christ, and as a friend rather than as an apostolic authority, to ask him to do what he knows is right, rather than what he wants.

Verse 9 – As a follow on to the prior verse, Paul tells Philemon that his request is out of love, and he pleads with him as an old man, and now one who is also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Verse 10 – Paul continued to beg Philemon on behalf of his spiritual son Onesimus, who became his spiritual son while he was in jail.

Verse 11 – Paul tells Philemon that even though Onesimus may have been his slave in times past, but he was unprofitable to him, but now he is profitable to him and also to Paul.

Verse 12 – Paul tell Philemon that he is sending Onesimus to him again, but this time receive him as if he were my heart.