



# INTRODUCTION

- During St Paul third missionary trip in Asia Minor among the people of Ephesus he met a visitor who later converted under Paul's teaching, the man named Philemon, a slave-owner from the nearby city of Colossae. Paul addressed his "beloved brother" as a "fellow worker," a title given to those who served for a time alongside St. Paul.
- Onesimus had escaped from his owner, Philemon, and had run away from Colossae to Rome in the hope that he could disappear into that populous, urban environment. Once in Rome, Onesimus, either by accident or by his own design, came in contact with Paul, who promptly led the runaway slave to faith in Jesus Christ.
- St. Paul made a request. He wanted Philemon to forgive Onesimus, to accept the slave as a brother in Christ, and to consider sending Onesimus back to St. Paul, as the apostle found him useful in God's service. St. Paul did not minimize Onesimus's sin but rather approached the topic with gentleness and care.
- The main idea is the conversion St. Paul made in the life of Onesimus from a thief, a running slave to a deacon, whom he saw useful for preaching the word of God.

# CHAPTER 1

- ▶ Verse 1-3 The apostolic Greeting
  - ▶ **Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ** : To be a prisoner simply is not comfortable neither honorable; but as Paul was, *for the faith and preaching of the gospel*, this was true glory, and proper to move Philemon upon the request made to him.
  - ▶ **Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier** : Apphia (Philemon wife) Archippus : is the son . St. Paul is addressing the family whose property Onesimus was as a slave and they were all impacted by his actions.
  - ▶ **Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker.** : here St. Paul, in the highest degree of ministry, not only calls Timothy, an evangelist, his brother, but Philemon, an ordinary pastor, his dearly beloved fellow- labourer—an example of humility and condescension

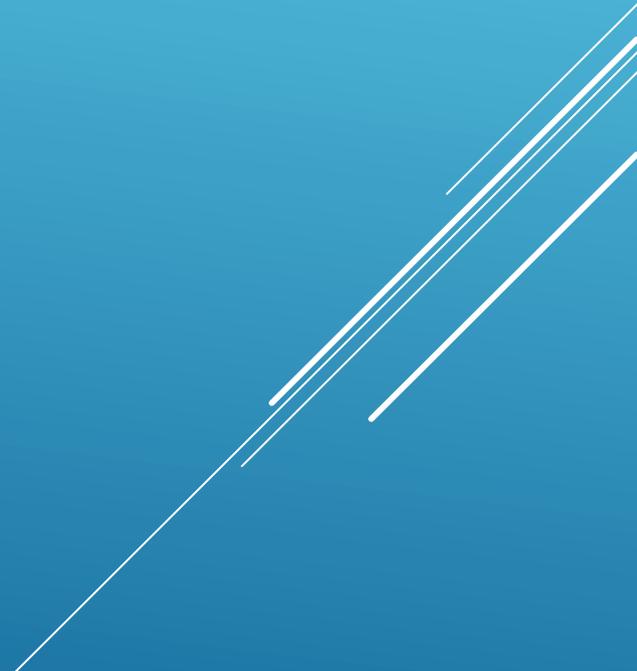
# CHAPTER 1

- ▶ Verse 4-7 Philemon's Love and Faith
- ▶ **I remember you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints** : in those verses St. Paul does not immediately at the commencement ask the favor, but having first admired the man, and having praised him for his good actions.

# CHAPTER 1

- ▶ Verses 8-22 Paul's Plea for Onesimus:
- ▶ **I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, <sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you:** Waiving the authority which yet he had to require, he chooses to entreat it of him.
- ▶ **I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus** : The main business of the epistle, which was to plead with Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, that he would receive him and be reconciled to him. Many arguments Paul urges for this purpose
- ▶ **I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self** : St. Paul is reminding Philemon on other accounts more in debt to him than what Onesimus owes him. The apostle glances at the benefits he had granted Philemon: "That he should accept the loss and forgive Onesimus.

# CHAPTER 1

- ▶ Verses 22- 15 Final Greetings
  - ▶ **At the same time, prepare a guest room for me:** St. Paul is hoping that his jail time will end soon intending to be Philemon guest also assuming that he will obey the orders and welcome St Paul when he arrives to Colossae
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# IMPORTANT SERVICE LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO PHILEMON

- ▶ St. John Chrysostom said that he wished we had more day to day conversations documented like this epistle because it's a lesson the taught on how to serve.
- ▶ If you think about Onesimus status “a criminal running slave” and how people can be labeled and judged in church when St. Paul gave us a lesson on how important this servant's soul is to God and not only for his salvation sake but also how he can be beneficial to the service and the salvation of other souls too. Paul saved Onesimus soul and he used him to be a servant and save others.