

57-Philemon-01-Transcript

[Music]

well greetings brethren and welcome to another wednesday night bible study uh obviously you can see for me here it's not wednesday night it's actually uh wednesday morning um i'm traveling overseas attending to some personal business and while i'm away i thought rather than lose momentum i'll just go ahead and pre-record these studies and then god willing when i get back towards the end of the month pastor murray and i will be together with you live and we'll do some q a uh with you uh with a live session and then on uh back to uh the book of psalms we finished us up to book three of uh the book of psalms we're now taking an intermission from psalms and what i want to do is uh finish with the prison epistles the prison epistles are four epistles that were written by the apostle paul that is um ephesians philippians philemon and colossians and so god willing what we'll do over the next couple of weeks here we'll cover philemon tonight and then god willing will cover the book of colossians next then we'll come back to book four of the psalms again we'll take our intermission and what i'd like to do in the next intermission is return to the book of isaiah you'll remember that we did second isaiah beginning in chapter 40 to 66 which is really the new testament isaiah

we skipped over first isaiah
which is 1-39 which is some called old
testament isaiah
so we'll return to that god willing and
then conclude this whole series with
psalm a book five of the psalms
so let's go ahead and we'll open with
the word of prayer and then we'll get
into tonight's
study heavenly father our great god
almighty
we come before you we live in tumultuous
times lord
yet we are honored to be alive at this
time
we are honored to carry the banner for
jesus christ
in this very evil world and we know
father that that will come with a lot of
hatred a lot of persecution
uh we have signed up for this father
we're your servants
and we just pray god that we can do
exploits in your name
in the mighty name of jesus christ and
that we can honor
your name father we praise you we
glorify your name
we ask this uh intervention on our study
tonight this blessing on our study
tonight
in the mighty name of jesus christ amen
so we are going to study the book of
philemon it's a very short book
it's one chapter but as i mentioned it's
part of the prison epistles
these are epistles that the apostle paul
wrote
while he was imprisoned and you'll see
here as we begin
in um philemon uh chapter one
you'll see that
just get like scriptures up here you'll
see that um

he identifies himself as a prisoner uh
but not a prisoner of rome
he says paul a prisoner of jesus
christ so he acknowledges that he is in
prison
but he's imprisoned by the will of the
lord and he's accepting the will of the
lord
and this is a very interesting way that
he opens the letter
to philemon because if you look
at colossians 1 1 which is the very next
verse here we see
paul an apostle of jesus christ by the
will of god
and timothy our brother so it's paul and
timothy writing the letter together
but paul identifies himself with the
colossians which will study god willing
next week
he identifies himself as an apostle of
jesus christ
here when he's writing to philemon it's
again
paul and timothy but he identifies
himself as a prisoner
of jesus christ and i think there are
two reasons for this
number one is this is a personal appeal
to philemon there's a situation that
philemon
is in that paul is making a very
personal appeal to him
to address the situation and we'll see
that as this letter unfolds
and i don't think paul is trying not to
exert any sort of authority here
he's appealing to philemon he's
requesting philemon to make this
decision
secondly i think he's demonstrating to
philemon that
we don't always get our own way that
you know obviously paul's will would be

to be free but the
lord's will is that paul be imprisoned
and then he wrote these four epistles
from prison
and he was able to convert the you know
the the roman guard
from prison he was able to do many
things from prison including
converting onesimus so he acknowledges
that
he he's not having his own way and i
think he's demonstrating by example to
philemon
we don't always get our own way we're
seeking the will of the lord
so he doesn't identify himself as paul a
prisoner of jesus christ and timothy our
brother
unto philemon our
dearly beloved and fellow laborer they
love this man
philemon is highly regarded he's well
loved
and he's acknowledged as a fellow
laborer
that this christian walk i think
sometimes we get confused
the influence of the uh traditional
christian world
sometimes we get confused and we think
that christianity
is about going to services instead of
going we don't go on sunday we go
sabbath so we attend services on sabbath
we sing a few hymns we listen to the
preacher
and then we go home and then we get back
to our lives
and we think that that's christianity
christianity is about labor
and paul acknowledges philemon
as a fellow laborer we are co-workers
together
in this calling and and that's how we

should see ourselves as christians
that we are working together we are
co-workers we are contributors
to advancing this great work of god so
we see the contrast between um how paul
opens this letter
to philemon versus how he opens the
letter to colossians and
philippians and and ephesians and others
where he's an apostle
of christ here he's a prisoner of jesus
christ
if we look at how he opens to
philippians
again it's paul and his assistant
timothy the servants of jesus christ
to all the saints in christ jesus which
are at philippi so here they acknowledge
themselves to be slaves of jesus christ
to the philippians
but here this letter is to all the
saints in christ jesus which are at
philippi
with the bishops and the deacons and
we've studied the book of philippians
it's in the archives
but we identified at that time to take
note that the bishops and the deacons
were included with the rest of the
brethren or philippi
and the letter was to everybody and that
bishops is plural
that in philippi there's not just one
elder over everybody
there's plurality of eldership because
goes unsaid grace be unto you and peace
and we're going to see this in
the letter to philemon as well there's
this uh blessing of grace and peace
from god our father and from the lord
jesus christ so both from the father
and jesus christ notice the holy spirit
is not mentioned as a third person
and then he says this and can be very

similar when we look at philemon
i thank god upon every remembrance of
you
now and the the you hear when we studied
philippians it's plural
it's the whole congregation always in
every prayer of mine
for you all making requests with joy
so so there's paul is praying for the
philippian
congregation and and he's doing it with
joy there's no burden on his heart
unlike when you look at his relationship
his contentious relationship
with the corinthian brethren here with
the philippians he has great joy
in ministering to this congregation and
he makes requests for them
he's praying for something for them and
he's praying for their fellowship
in the gospel from the first day until
now
and then he's confident of this thing
and we're going to see a similar
parallel structure
in philemon he's confident of this very
thing
that he which has begun a good work in
you will perform it
until the day of jesus christ so he
opens uh
philippians wishing upon them grace and
peace this blessing of grace and peace
grace being sort of the traditional
greek greeting and peace in the greek
but in the hebrew shalom there's this
peace of god this this grace well
there's this blessing of forgiveness
from god
and then shalom the peace that comes
with that
upon the congregation and he's confident
that over time that what god has begun
in this congregation

he's going to complete now paul is
opening philippians and again it's in
the archive
knowing that there is a problem brewing
in the congregation
which they have to address but he's
confident
that they will in fact do that we're
going to see a parallel
structure as we uncover the book of
philemon so back to philemon verse two
now what's interesting and what kind of
shocked me when i was reading this
a couple of things stood out to me one
was
i always just assumed that i hadn't read
the letter for a while and maybe that's
the case with you as well
i hadn't read philemon for a while and i
just always assumed that
the apostle paul was writing to
philemon as i started to look at the
letter more carefully i see it's paul
and timothy writing to philemon but not
just the philemon
they're actually writing to the whole
congregation the
issue is with philemon the the issue in
the request is the issues with philemon
in the request is to philemon
but the letter is to the whole
congregation and i was actually very
sensitive to this because we just
received a letter uh
from one of our brothers out east uh
brother morley thank you so much for
your letter
and and because i was studying philemon
when i was reading his letter a very
encouraging letter which we
appreciate and uh it was to
myself and pastor murray um and deacon
jan
and and to the whole congregation to the

brethren in burlington
and so i'm reading this i'm thinking
wait a minute this letter is not just to
us
it's to our whole congregation and there
as i shared it with our congregation
and i think that as you read the new
testament
you see within the new testament there
are
many many points where paul is very
public
in fact christ is very public and i
think sometimes we
try to be overly cautious and overly
confidential
when we do have to be confidential but
there are times when things must be
exposed
there are times when we must be very
transparent with our congregations
both good and bad and we need to follow
the example
that's laid down for us in scripture so
here
this letter which involves a very
personal matter
between philemon and onisimus
that even though it's a personal matter
between the two
it has broader implications
it has implications that will affect the
whole congregation and maybe even
broader than that
and so even though it's a personal
matter between two people
paul writes to the whole congregation
and exposes what is going on
to the whole congregation and in a way
it puts some subtle pressure
or maybe not so subtle pressure upon
philemon
to do the right thing so it's uh
verse two it's two philemon and

to our beloved afia and
many believe that afia is philemon's
wife so it's
philemon and it seems appropriate or
reasonable
that it's to his wife as well and to our
beloved afiyah
and archipelas our fellow soldier
and to the church in your house and
you'll see in colossians 4 verse 17
and say to archipelas take heed to the
ministry
which you have received in the lord that
you fulfill it
so so what we see here in terms of who
the letter is too it's two philemon
who seems to be a man of some means he
seems to be a fairly wealthy individual
uh he's also the master of onesimus
and this is the issue is between
philemon and onisimus
it seems like it's uh to his wife as
well because the church
meets in philemon's house so it seems
like he has enough means that he can
actually host
the whole congregation but then
archippus seems to be the the the the
elder
that is uh ministering to this household
so we have the elder archipelas we've
got afiyah
and philemon being the hosts people with
some wealth
being the host of the congregation and
then the congregation meeting
in their home and the letter being to
all of these people
verse 3. now in verse 3 and we covered
this
in philippians the being sensitive to
the pronouns
so this is a second person plural
grace to you you know in in texas maybe

they'll say grace to y'all
right this is grace to you plural so
after naming who the letter is
to it's these multiple people really
let's just say the church that meets in
philemon's home
uh then he's offering grace to the whole
church
and peace so that traditional greeting
of grace and peace
from god our father and the lord jesus
christ we saw that
in colossians as well in fact most of
his letters he opens that way
then again following what we saw in
philippians here in philemon but there's
a twist
i thank my god making mention of you
always in my prayers so the same way
that he thanked god
for the philippians and was making
requests
to god for the philippians we're seeing
the same pattern here
except in philemon 3 u is
plural and then in philemon 4
paul focuses his attention now on the
singular
on philemon himself so i thank my god
making mention of you philemon always in
my prayers
hearing of your love again singular
second person singular
hearing of your love and faith which you
have toward the lord jesus
and toward all saints and there's a bit
of a chiastic structure here
where we have love faith the lord jesus
and the saints so the love and the faith
and then the faith is to jesus and then
the love is to the saints
so love and saints go together and faith
in jesus christ together he doesn't have
faith toward all the saints

he has faith toward jesus and love
toward all the saints
and this is the new the way he's so
hospitable
he's hosting the church in his house
he's looking after the brethren
he's he's truly a fellow laborer
and paul hears of all of his work
and i should mention as well i should
have said this that the
philemon his home is in the city of
colossae
and so that when we study colossians
next week
that's the congregation that philemon
belongs to
and his household is there and onesimus
was his slave there onesimus served him
there and when we say slave most of us
when we hear the word slave
immediately we conjure up images of the
atlantic slave trade
and and uh what happened in north
america what happened in the uk
uh the way that the africans were
enslaved that this brutal
brutal system of enslavement
that that's not what we're talking about
here really
what we many of us don't understand
number one uh what we don't conjure up
images of
is the arabic slave trade which was
far worse it was which was devastating
that we don't have black families
in arabia because all of the men were
castrated immediately
when they went into the uh when they
crossed the desert and went into
arabia as slaves and they were
brutalized
it was a far bigger far more intense far
more
brutal slave system but it's quiet

nobody talks about it
uh the muslims get a pass nobody there
criticized them
and all it is is all about the american
slave trade the american slave trade
even though it was america in the uk
that ended slavery
that that to great cost and
and and uh personal sacrifice and loss
of life they went around the world
and ended slavery and in the 1960s even
forced saudi arabia
to formally abolish slavery although uh
slavery continues
in the middle east to this day and and
the enslavement and the auctioning of
africans
continues in the middle east to this day
so that's not what we're talking about
here when we say
uh onisimus was the slave of philemon or
philemon was the master
of onisimus this was the economy
globally the whole economy this is the
way the economy functioned if we were
born in this time
it would be out of our it would be
impossible for us to imagine
any other system this is just the way it
was done
and some people voluntarily went into
slavery
maybe they were in debt and they just
said okay i will go into
slavery i'll go and become a slave to
pay off my debt
and that's just the way it works there
are things that we do today
uh you know we we put on our pants and
shirt and
do our shoes and and we just do things
we take them for granted
uh and we can't imagine it any other way
and yet in the future

people are going to look back to this time and say why did people do this why did they behave this way it's just the way things are done right now and we can we don't even think about it so that's what we have to be sensitive though when the bible is talking about slavery and and paul is going to send onisimus back into his uh slave master relationship with philemon don't think of either the atlantic or the arabic slave trade just try to imagine an employer and an employee think of it more that way so philemon has great faith toward jesus and great love toward all the saints now verse five is parenthetical so we read verse five let's go back to verse four and then skip the parenthesis so the parenthesis just tells us that philemon has great love toward jesus it's our great love toward the saints and great faith toward the the lord and that faith to the lord is actually expressed in the great love that he has to the saints and paul has heard of all of this most likely from onesimus himself so let's go to verse four i thank my god making mention of you always in my prayers so paul is constantly praying for philemon what is he praying for i thank my god making mention of you always in my prayers that the communication of your faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in

christ jesus this sounds a lot like what
he said to the philippians
that he's making mention of them always
in in his prayers
that he that has begun a good work in
them will complete it
that he has every confidence that's
going to happen now the word
communication here is koinonia
in the greek which is better translated
fellowship
that the fellowship of your faith may
become effectual so he has this great
love towards the saints which is born
from his faith in christ now
that faith and the fellowship that comes
from it
paul is always thinking of philemon and
constantly praying for him
that the koinonia of his faith
may become effectual so so it may emerge
to greater effect by the acknowledging
of every good thing which is in you in
christ jesus
so so there's something that the holy
spirit puts
in us we don't fully understand it and
it isn't fully mature
and while we're in this walk the various
trials we go through and situations we
find ourselves in
this thing that's in us via the holy
spirit it matures
it grows stronger it emerges to great
effect
and so paul sees something in philemon
that is only possible by the holy spirit
and it's demonstrated by the great
um love that he has toward all the
saints this this faith that he has in
christ is demonstrated by this great
love
and paul is looking at all of this which
we would look at and think this is

phenomenal
paul is looking at all of this and
saying this is just the beginning
i'm i'm praying that now that i see this
in you
i'm praying that the full maturity of
christ may emerge in you so that you can
really do the work of god
that the koinonia of your faith may
become effectual
by the acknowledging of every good thing
which is in you in christ jesus
so there's a power in philemon that is
only possible
through jesus christ and in all of us
especially in this time
we need to acknowledge this power that
there's a lot of reason for us to hate
each other
there's a lot of reason for us to hate
if we follow the media the marxist media
that wants to just really overtake our
thinking and persuade us to be
haters there's a lot of reasons for us
to invite division
in the church but this is immature
the mature christian does not dredge up
the past
even going beyond before we were even
born and
and blaming people for things that they
have nothing to do with
uh in order to conjure up this hatred
and live out this hatred and despising
uh this is the devil's work and that
does not
that's not what the holy spirit enables
the holy spirit does not enable us to
hate
holy spirit enables us to love and
that's the test for philemon here
and i think this this is a very personal
letter and yet it's part of the canon
it's a very personal letter and yet paul

is writing it to the whole congregation
because paul is saying look philemon
if you don't get this right if you
cannot mature
in christ your conduct
can have a devastating effect on the
whole congregation
again very similar to what we saw in
philippians which is in the archive was
the first study we did
when we began this series years ago
um this this uh contention between
cintiqli and yodya in the congregation at
philippi
a very personal conflict
and paul writes about it to the whole
congregation to say
this needs to be addressed because if
this goes unchecked
it could have very disruptive effect on
the whole congregation
and so all of us have to see that this
letter to philemon although it's very
a very personal situation may it help us
to reflect
on our own situations and are we as much
as possible
living peaceably with all men especially
brethren
especially brethren we cannot allow
contention in the church especially not
now
you know i wake up here in the uk on um
an undisclosed location in the uk here
on wednesday morning and see where the
state of affairs are
in the u.s election and this is this is
going to be
a period of intense turmoil blood will
be spilled
i can't see anything i can't see this
happening any other way if these people
are serious
power is a very serious thing and and

people
uh will do anything if they have given
themselves over
to power and so a
very contentious situation we need to be
careful not to get swept up in this
in this uh this zeitgeist of the age
which is an age of hatred
a period of hatred we need to be very
careful not to get caught up in this
and especially especially be sure
we are not siding with non-believers
against believers we can't do this and
let us learn from philemon
that he has to acknowledge this this
gift of the spirit that's in him that's
going to enable him to mature and grow
beyond
whatever happened in the past verse 7
for we have great joy and consolation
in your love so again this great love
that you have for the brethren
which is demonstrating your faith in
jesus christ this is bringing us great
joy
and comfort because the bowels of the
saints
are refreshed by you brother again this
is you know
up to verse three we were talking or
even verse four we were talking to the
whole church
uh then i think it was beginning in
verse four yes verse four
uh the letter now pivots and it's now
paul speaking directly and specifically
to philemon acknowledging uh this great
faith that he has in christ
and acknowledging how this faith is
demonstrated
in his love for all the brethren but
then praying
that what he sees is this is just early
stage christianity

praying now that he can actually mature
into
to the fullness full stature of christ
by acknowledging this thing that's in
him that's going to enable him to do
this
but what he's seen what policy gives
timothy and paul
great joy and comfort in this love that
he has to the saints
because the bowels of the saints are
refreshed by you
brother meaning that the the deepest
feelings of the saints
are are are being comforted so if
brethren are under persecution or
they're going without or
they're impoverished or whatever pain
they're they're
they're experiencing when they come to
philemon
uh and afiya they're looked after and
and and they're able to
to have such comfort at the depth of
their emotion
from philemon and paul is just like this
for paul and timothy this is amazing it
brings them great joy
because of this because of this evidence
of philemon's faith and great love for
the brethren
therefore though i might be much
bold in christ to command you
that which is appropriate that which is
proper
i could do this so uh this is a really
easy
matter for me to solve i'll just tell
you what to do and you do it but
because of this evidence that i see of
your great faith in christ
and your great love for the brethren
even though i could command you to do
what's right

yet for love's sake
i rather beg you so this great faith you
have in christ
demonstrated by the great love you're
showing to the brethren
when i look at that great love which is
evidence of your deep faith
i'm not going to command you for the
sake of that agape love that i see
emerging in you i'd rather beg you
than command you and again that's why he
opened up
saying he was a prisoner not an apostle
being such a one as paul the aged
paul the aged and now also
a prisoner of jesus christ so this is a
man that is
in his final years and an elderly man
and the experience that he has
in this walk and the evidence he sees of
this great love
that philemon has for the brethren the
evidence of the holy spirit working in
philemon
he'd rather get get down on his knees
and beg philemon
to do what's right rather than command
him to do what's right
and again reinforces that he's a
prisoner of jesus christ
that he's unable to move around freely
he can't just have his way
he's accepted his his lot
according to the will of christ and by
example
he's hoping that philemon will grow into
this level
of maturity now he says for love's sake
for the sake of agape he'd rather beg in
other words
for the sake of the development and the
maturing
of agape love in the congregation he
sees it a wiser move

the apostle is looking at the situation
and believes it's a wiser move
to beg philemon to do what's right
rather than to command him
now again philemon we we need to re
read it with an end time view
why did this book get canonized why is
this letter
uh something that we should read in the
end time
well in matthew 24 and verse 10
jesus christ says and then at this time
just ahead of us or maybe we're in the
time now just
emerging now this this beginning of
sorrows
and then shall many
be offended in other words not a few
many shall be offended even though
christ
in john 14 15 16
warns us ahead of time so that we will
not be offended
he says still many will be offended many
and shall betray one another
they are going to put something ahead of
christ
they're going to have another agenda
that is far more important to them
that they get far more riled up about
than christ
shall betray one another and shall hate
one another
so we're ready for this we accept this
we we cannot
reverse prophecy this is the prophetic
word of god we accept it
but we don't have to be this for love's
sake
we can take these trials that we have
and for agape's sake
we can do the right thing and we can
grow in agape
in the very time that christ says agape

will fail
in some in most i should say he says and
many false prophets shall rise and shall
deceive many
it's because of false teaching it's
because of false ideas getting into the
brethren's heads
that iniquity shall abound
they will do the bidding of these false
teachers instead of people who are
standing up and speaking against
iniquity reminding brethren of their
obligations to each other
reminding brethren of the the
instructions in torah
we we reminding brethren of the harsh
prophetic word
from jesus christ and from from from
from
all of his servants no
we see that the brethren don't like that
the brethren wants smooth things
so we back up we put it in reverse we
slow down
and we give them smooth things and we
have become false teachers
and then because it's all smooth and
it's all just yeah jesus loves
everything and jesus tolerates
everything and do as you like it's all
good
iniquity abounds and
the agape not just the regular
human love the divine agape
of many shall wax called
so what we're seeing if we you know link
this to philemon
and paul's wisdom to say philemon
there's something you need to do here
you need to exercise
a muscle a spiritual muscle in order for
you to mature
and your part in the koinonia
become effective we need to look at this

and say wow
this is how we grow in agape that we
find ourselves in these situations which
humanly
we can justify humanly we can say we
have a right to be angry
humanly we can say we have a right to
protest humanly we say we have a right
to hold a grudge
okay that's that's the human condition
but paul was praying constantly for
philemon
that he would acknowledge that thing
that is in him that would enable him to
grow up
in christ and for agape's sake rather
than command him to do it
he pleaded with him to do it so we need
to exercise
and find these situations where for
agape's sake we can exercise
the right course of action to develop
our agape rather than allow the agape
to wax cold which is the prophetic curse
upon the covenant people back to
philemon 10.
so now we're deep into the letter and we
finally find out what it's about
so verse 10 we finally see what is this
about
i'm begging you so i don't i could have
commanded you but i'm not
i'm begging you i beseech you for my son
onesimus
whom i have begotten in my bonds
so this again we see the power of paul's
acceptance of his imprisonment
and just how fruitful he was in this
imprisonment they
they meant it for him for evil god meant
it for him for good
and so now he's pleading for onesimus
nissimus comes from colossa he somehow
find him

found himself to be with paul
while he was with paul he heard the
gospel
so when he was with philemon in
philemon's home he was not a christian
but leman was a christian the church
met in his home
uh archippus was uh clearly a minister
there
but onesimus was just a servant and he
did not convert
with the household so he
did something we don't know what exactly
but it's something that caused philemon
to suffer loss
he did something and it looks like he
maybe perhaps stole
something from philemon and then fled
and then he found himself with paul
and listened to the gospel from paul and
accepted it
and was baptized by paul or by somebody
in paul's
uh community and had the laying on of
hands
and received the holy spirit and so paul
considers him
his son in this calling because he had
begotten it he is the one that had it
caused the holy spirit
to be imparted uh and embedded
in onesimus so he sees onesimus as a son
so maybe put this in a modern context
if we maybe put this in a modern context
it would be like you are um
let's say you're an american and you're
a retailer
and you have your shop and you have your
employees
and there's one onisimus by the way the
name means useful
so there's an employee that you have
called useful
and meanwhile what you didn't realize

is that the whole time he's been
stealing from or she's been stealing
from you
and not only that maybe this
you get you caught your part you're part
of an urban area
where there's rioting and you're
watching the news
and you see your shop being rioted and
on the news you actually see
your employee called useful being one of
the rioters one of the looters
going into your shop and and breaking in
so trying off against police officers
chanting for justice
but on the periphery opportunism so what
we've been seeing for the past
couple of hours here is this standoff
and
skirmish between police and these
protesters what you're seeing right now
is police squeezing the protesters
they've actually surrounded us
they're coming in from all angles
they're trying to put this out
we've seen a significant amount of
looting with demonstrators and ride
police facing off
in the center of town looters struck
this auto parts center nearly picked
clean
another store looted people going in
people coming out with arms full of
goods
and police nowhere in sight looters
scampering down the street with arms
full
a county-wide daytime curfew seemingly
ignored as darkness fell police arriving
lining up and zip tying suspected losers
and
so try to push yourself maybe your
o'reilly
and you have this retail auto parts shop

and you're watching the news and you see
your own employee
on the news and then maybe they run off
and you have suffered great loss and yes
you can claim insurance but there's a
um i forget what they call that first
part that you have to pay
uh a deductible so there's a deductible
maybe it's significant
uh you have to dip into your savings to
cover the deductible
and then you know the insurance maybe
they cancel you they don't want to cover
you anymore
or maybe they say they they don't cover
rioting
uh and looting you're on your own and
all your life savings went into this
you've suffered significant loss
and you still your employee runs off and
then you get a letter
from a minister in the church saying
you need to to re-employ useful
would you you you called him useless he
was of no harmful
not useful harmful uh and now you're
being asked to take him back so maybe
put yourself in that in that mindset
and this is now the situation that
philemon is in
where this person who harmed him
and ran off paul is now writing to him
and begging him
saying that onesimus has been converted
oneismus is now a christian and maybe
you're suspicious about that
but paul is interceding for onesimus and
i think paul would be very sensitive to
the need for intercession
because he himself needed it you
remember in when we studied the book of
acts which is also in the archive
acts 9 27 how barnabas took paul and
brought him to the apostles

and declared unto them how he had seen
the lord in the way
and that he had spoken to him and how he
had preached boldly at damascus in the
name of jesus
so barnabas interceded for the apostle
paul and that's how paul's ministry
began and his acceptance
among the christian community began when
he had such a horrible track record
and so he would be very much sensitive
to the need for inter
session here in philippians philip
philemon 11 then
he goes back and
get my scriptures up in philemon he goes
back
to this this need for uh philemon to
forgive onesimus
and he says yes which in time passed was
to you
unprofitable so onesimus means useful
and he says yes in the past he was
useless
but now he's profitable to me now he's
useful to me
now that he's converted now that he has
the holy spirit
he has been extremely profitable to me
and to you
you don't realize it yet but you are
receiving spiritual blessings
as a result of the work that onesimus is
now doing
whom i have sent again so it appears
that onesimus himself
is the courier so paul writes this
letter
gives it to anissimus says to anismus
you need to go back
to your master he he is rightfully he's
your master
you need to go back to him that's the
situation you're his slave

you need to go back to him and again
when we say his slave don't think of the
atlantic or the arabic slave trade just
think of the economic system
uh within the roman empire within the
whole world at the time
and which has been throughout most of
most of man's history
whom i have sent again so so i've sent
him back to you
and so animus has the letter he's
giving this letter to philemon but the
letter is to the whole church
and so very unessimus is with philemon
paul paul having sent him whom i have
sent again
you therefore receive him
receive him that is my own bowels
that the depth of love that i have for
this man i i cannot express to you how
much i love homelessness
and how helpful he has been in this
ministry
and i'm sending him back to you receive
him
as someone who has the depth of my
affection
whom i would have retained with me
so i i did not want to send him back if
i had my own way
i would keep him here with me whom i
would have
retained with me that in place of you
he might have ministered unto me in the
bonds of the gospel
so i'm being imprisoned because of
preaching the gospel
onesimus has been an extreme blessing to
me
like i can't believe it he's been a gift
from heaven literally
i just this man came he was converted i
you know prayed over him to receive the
holy spirit he received the holy spirit

and it was like catching fire and he has
been incredible
he's been incredibly useful to me and
this has been a blessing to you
because he's your servant and i've been
praying these blessings upon you
and i don't want to see him go and so it
breaks my heart it's like somebody
tearing him from my heart
to send him to you so i want you to
receive him
as someone that i have incredible depth
of affection for
who i wanted to keep with me that he
might minister to me because you're
unable to minister to me
here in my imprisonment but
without your mind or without your
consent
would i do nothing so it kind of you
know
it was on my mind to just be so useful
to me so helpful
i wanted to keep him but unless i have
your consent i'm not going to do that
so without your consent what i do
nothing that your
benefit should not be as it were of
necessity
but willingly so if i were to keep him
here and write to you
and just say oh nissimus is converted i
know that you guys had some situation in
the past
i'm just going to keep him he's so
useful to me i'm just going to keep him
here
then you know he knows philemon is not
going to say no you send him back right
away
uh philemon would say okay but then that
would be of necessity he would have no
choice in the matter
so what paul is doing is sending

onimus back to philemon and then
saying it's up to you
you do whatever you think is best
for perhaps he therefore departed for a
season
that you should receive him forever so
whatever situation you guys had in the
past and yes it was unpleasant
and yes you suffered loss but maybe the
reason for all of that
was so that he would come to me hear the
gospel
be converted and now be part of this
community
forever for perhaps he therefore
departed for a season
that you should receive him forever not
now
as a servant or a slave but above a
servant
a brother so let me just finish the
verse
not now as a servant but above above a
servant a brother beloved
especially to me but how much more unto
you
both in the flesh and in the lord
so this is interesting this verse it
seems
between the lines if you read between
the lines it seems that the apostle
is asking philemon to set the slave free
set him free make him a freeman so that
you can receive him as more than a slave
in the flesh
but regardless of the situation in the
flesh he's more than a slave
in the lord receive him as a brother in
the lord receive him as part of the
koinonia
receive him as if you would receive me
not now as a servant but
above a servant a brother beloved and
this again this verse 16

again you know to go over this uh
black lives matter curse and plague and
cancer
that is covering the western world which
is so hypocritical and
deceptive uh which is now creeping into
the church of god you know from verse 16
you see how clearly we can't allow
human matters to infiltrate
the spiritual relationship that even
though this man might be a slave
in the human world in the fl in the
world of the flesh in the world of the
spirit
he is a beloved brother and who knows
maybe he would even be raised to uh the
the role of a minister
and that in philemon's own home
alongside
archipelas onesimus even though he's a
slave of philemon
he might be an elder in colossi
that might be paul's intention that this
man is so he really gets it
and he's so spiritually gifted and
endowed
that i i will ensure that he has raised
to the
the to the eldership to minister with
archipelas
and so even though he's a slave in the
flesh he's an elder
in the spirit and we this is how we have
to see things and how we have to see
breath when we can't be that we're
looking at brethren
and looking at the color of their skin
looking at brethren and holding them
accountable for things that they had
nothing to do with
this this is the cancer of marxism and
we can't be if we have to be
inoculated from this and verse 16 shows
how on the human level

he's a slave but let's remove the flesh
and think of on the spiritual level
and receive him above a servant a
brother
beloved that's who he is that's
impossible especially to me
but how much more to you both in the
flesh
and in the lord so he went from being
the name useful
to being useless and paul's saying no
he's really really useful now
if you count me therefore a partner
receive him as myself if you see me as
part of the koinonia
if you count me as part of the christian
fellowship
then receive onesimus the way you'd
receive me
which makes sense if he's part of the
fellowship he's part of the body
when paul wrote to the romans in 12 4 he
said
for as we have many members in one body
it's one body
and all members have not the same office
so
we being many are one body in christ
and every one members one of another
so if you count me a member of the body
and you would the way that you would
receive me
as a member of the body we are members
of the same body
you need to receive onesimus the exact
same way
maybe he's even gifted the same way as
paul
so whatever part of the body paul
functions in
whatever member of the body he is that
analysis is the same part of that body
the same type of member so receive him
the way you'd receive

me and then first when he wrote to the
corinthians or
corinth around the whole passover and
agape meal situation
he says for he that eats and drinks
unworthily eats and drinks damnation to
himself
not discerning the lord's body and this
is now the test for philemon
can you discern the lord's body can you
see a difference
between the flesh and the spirit can you
see onesimus in the spirit
and discern that he's part of the lord's
body and the same part of the body
perhaps as i am
back to philemon yeah actually when i
when i read um when i read the next
couple of verses i actually laughed out
loud i actually burst into laughter
just the craft of this letter he says
if he has wronged you so again put
yourself in the situation where
you're a retailer you've worked hard to
build up your shop you've been really
good to everybody you've been really
good to
to me as maybe your employee and and
meanwhile i've been pilfering your
goods and uh when i have an opportunity
now to loot your shop
uh with friends and family uh you see me
on the news looting your shop and then i
run off
and i have cost you a great deal and now
i'm converted i repent of all of that uh
you hear from an elder uh maybe pastor
murray is now writing to you
to say how useful i've been in the
ministry
or to his ministry to support his
ministry and
because pastor murray knows that i'm
actually your employee

he's sending me back to you and then he says this
if he has wronged you which he has or owes you anything put that on my account it's almost like the um the uh what do you call that the senior moment i'm having here the uh i can't i can't remember the jesus christ in the gospels there when the person is uh next to dead and everybody's passing by and and not paying any attention and one man stops and looks after him and and you know just bounds up his wounds and everything and gets accommodation for him and says you know if he's if he's done if he owes anything else here's some money to look after him if anything else is old put it on my account i'll look after it uh and so paul is saying the same thing if he has wronged you or owes you anything put that on my account now this is the part this is the verse that made me laugh out loud i paul have written it with my own hand i will repay it so you put it on my account whatever it is just let me know the amount and i'll pay you i'll pay you what he owes albeit i do not say to you how you owe unto me even your own self besides so when i read this i just laughed just like wow paul is amazing with his his his his language so this man has harmed you he's somehow set you back uh take him back and if there's anything that he owes you i'm gonna pay it i'm writing this with my own hand i'll pay you what he owes

now bear in mind you owe me even your
own life
so you think about what you're going to
ask me to pay you back when you actually
owe me
your own self yes brother
let me have joy of you in the lord
refresh my bowels in the lord
so let me see this spiritual growth
let me see your let me see your
development as a true christian
you've been operating really well but
that's sort of been in um pleasant
conditions and fair conditions
how will you operate in a storm let me
see the depth of your conversion now
yes brother and again brother he's a
beloved brother
paul loves both these men let me have
joy of you in the lord refresh my bowels
in the lord give me this deep joy even
though i'm in prison
let me hear of this that i can have deep
deep joy
having confidence in your obedience i
wrote unto you so the same way that he
had confidence
in the philippian church that they would
do what is right
uh here he has confidence in philemon
that he will do what's right having
confidence in your obedience i wrote
unto you so i could have commanded you
but i'm not i'm begging you instead but
i'm still confident that you're going to
do the right thing
knowing that you all will also do more
than i say so i'm confident that even
though i'm
uh saying this i remember what i was
trying to say earlier that the good
samaritan
that the the story of the good samaritan
where put it on my account if there's

anything else only
having confidence in your obedience i
wrote unto you
knowing that you will also do more than
i say
so this is really really good so if paul
really sees the the depth of conversion
of this man it's a very difficult
situation
paul is confident not only he's going to
do what he's asking is going to go
beyond then he goes on to say
but with all prepare me also a lodging
for i trust that through your prayers i
shall be given unto you so don't
i want you to receive on this back
prepare lodging for him to take him back
in your household
but prepare for me too because i i
believe that through your prayers and
the prayers of the brethren
i'm going to be released that this
imprisonment is not unto death for me
i'm going to be released and when i'm
released i'm going to come and visit you
and i want to see how you get on and i
want to see how you and onisimus are
getting on
and so i think this puts additional
pressure on philemon
to do the right thing but with all
prepare me also a lodging
for i trust that through your prayers i
shall be given unto you
there salute you epaphras
my fellow prisoner in christ jesus so
apophis is also there
in prison with him and in colossae
we see that paphras is uh from colossi
in colossians 1 7.
as you also learned of the paphras our
dear fellow servant
who is for you a faithful minister of
christ so you have another elder here in

colossa

uh we'll just finish off philemon marcus
aristarchus demas luke

my fellow laborers the grace of our lord
jesus christ be with your spirit and now
we move to the plural uh yours so this
is to the whole church again

the grace of our lord jesus christ be
with your spirit amen

so that is the book of philemon

wonderful little letter one one chapter
letter 25 verses

and yet it packs a punch and we've got
to ask ourselves

why is it included in the canon if it's
such a personal matter

and why should we care about it those
upon whom the ends of the world have
come

and i think what we can see very clearly
is the significant role

of agape in the christian life

and that there's agape expressed in fair
conditions

but agape is not really developed
and matured unless it's exercised in

very very difficult circumstances

where most humans would fail most
mortals would fail

and would hate one another here

with the power of the holy spirit we can
rise above

petty human situations and stay

in the koinonia and the koinonia think
of um

think of a partnership if you think
about a legal firm

or an accounting firm where let's say
there's a hundred

uh partners and every one of them has
equity in the firm 100

there's 100 lawyers or 100 accountants
but they're all partners

and they all have equity in the firm and

they all care about the outcomes
of the firm because they're owners
that's what this koinonia is like
it's it's a purposeful fellowship that
we are we are partners together
and we have equity in this venture
and and it's in this koinonia that
agape must be exercised it's in this
coin

with without agape there is such
disruption so when christ says
many shall hate one another it shall
betray one another in the end time and
iniquity shall

abound in the end time that is the
destruction of agape that is the
destruction of the koinonia

but there's always a remnant there is
always a faithful remnant

so let's uh take admonition from the
admonition that

paul was giving the very subtle
admonition that paul was given to
philemon

and let's work together to not just have
faith

depth of faith in jesus christ and his
word

but to have that reflected in our love
for all the saints

god bless you brother jesus christ is
lord

you