

ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN THE FAITH: Part 1
Philemon 1:1-7 Dr. John Niemelä Water of Life April 9, 2015
Introduction

1. Paul Greets Philemon: Our Introduction to the Book (Philemon 1:1–2)

Author: Paul (P 1:1; C 1:1) [P = Philemon; C = Colossians]

Date of writing: Fall of 61 (Paul has been imprisoned one and a half years in Rome)

Place of writing: Rome [During Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Feb. 60–Mar. 62)]

Paul's companions: Timothy (P 1:1; C 1:1)

Epaphras, a native of Colossae imprisoned w/ Paul (P 1:24; C 4:12)

Mark, who in Pamphylia left Paul [per Acts 13:13] (P 1:24; C 4:10)

Aristarchus, Paul's cellmate (in Ephesus) & Rome (P 1:24; C 4:12)

Demas who later forsook Paul [2 Tim 4:10] (P 1:24; C 4:14)

Luke, a fellow worker of Paul (P 1:24; C 4:14)

Those sent by Paul: Tychicus, Paul's mailman [Ephesians 6:21; C 4:7]

Onesimus, a slave who accompanied Tychicus (P 1:10–12; C 4:7–9)

Main recipient: Philemon, in whose home the Colossian church meets (P 1:1)

Other recipients: Apphia who probably was Philemon's wife (P 1:1)

Archippus, fellow worker [likely = Philemon's son] (P 1:1; C 4:17)

Destination City: Colossae (Archippus & Onesimus linked in Philemon & Colossians)
Note: Paul had not been in the Colossian church: Col 2:1

Message of 1:1-2: Paul wishes grace + peace from the Father & Christ to household of a beloved fellow-worker, Philemon, + his [Colossian] house church.

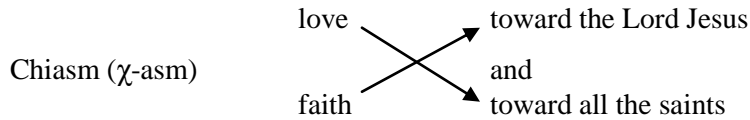
Lesson 1: Paul's journeys did not resemble a commando raid, but an aircraft carrier task force.

2. Prayer for Greater Recognition of Christ's Work in Phil. to Increase His Faithfulness (1:4-7)

A. Paul thanks God [for Philemon] by continuing to mention him in prayer (1:4)

The last time Paul was within 100 miles of Colossae was in May of 56

B. [Paul continues praying thankfully for his friend Philemon] because he has heard about Philemon's love for all saints and his faith in Christ (1:5)



Paul has heard about his continued faith, not his initial faith (he already knows that).

C. [The object of Paul's thankful prayers for his loving and faithful friend is] that greater recognition of Christ's work in Philemon would greatly activate Philemon (1:6)

What does sharing of your faith mean?

The word sharing is *koinōnia*. It refers to a participation of some type:

Rom 15:26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the *fellowship* of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ?

2 Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what *fellowship* has righteousness with lawlessness? And what *communion* has light with darkness?

2 Cor 8:4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the *fellowship* of the ministering to the saints.

2 Cor 9:13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal *sharing* with them and all men

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Gal 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of *fellowship*, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Philippians 1:5 for your *fellowship* in the gospel from the first day until now,

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any *fellowship* of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the *fellowship* of His sufferings, being conformed to His death

Meaning of: Every good thing which is in us in Christ Jesus

D. [Paul thankfully prays for his loving and faithful friend to gain a greater recognition of Christ's work in himself to greatly activate him] because **he is thankful that Philemon already refreshes believers (1:7)**

Paul's desire for Philemon to be activated by acknowledging what God has done in him is not a rebuke. It is a call to greater Christlikeness.

Lesson 2: Paul commends Philemon and Archippus for being involved in ministry, but he commends Onesimus as being committed to ministry.

Appendix 1: Books Written on Paul’s Trips

Trip	Passage	Date	Books Written	Near Colossae?
1st Mission	Acts 13–14	48–49	1: Galatians	Pisidian Antioch
2nd Mission	Acts 15–18	50–52	2: 1–2 Thessalonians	Ephesus
3rd Mission	Acts 18–21	53–57	3: 1–2 Corinthians, Romans	Ephesus
1st Roman Jail	Acts 28	60–62	4: Ephes, Colos, Philm, Philippians	
Post Roman Jail	1 Timothy, Titus	62–67	2: 1 Timothy, Titus	
2nd Roman Jail	2 Timothy	67	1: 2 Timothy	
Paul Executed	68?			

Between 48 and 57, Paul ministered at locations within 100 miles of Colossae. The fact that Paul mentions that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) serves as a recommendation of Mark (whose image needed rehabilitation after he had left Paul’s team just before he came to Pisidian Antioch). On the third missionary journey, Paul was in Ephesus for almost three years.

However, Colossians 2:1 indicates that Paul did not minister in Colossae. This suggests that Philemon had traveled to meet Paul, when he was within 100 miles of Colossae.

However, it is pertinent to ask whether Paul did anything to encourage such people as Philemon to travel to Ephesus. I believe that the number of people who were with Paul in Rome who knew the Colossians is instructive. Members of Paul’s team spent part of their time accompanying Paul and part of their time ministering in various locales surrounding the places that Paul himself actually visited. Hence, I would describe Paul’s missionary activity as resembling an aircraft carrier task force, rather than a commando raid.

My sense is that this was not unique to the time that Paul was in Ephesus. My take on the New Testament data is that this was Paul’s normal procedure everywhere. The book of Acts focuses on Paul’s travels, but the New Testament indicates that his team members coordinated their travels with his—between them, they blanketed the territory.

As an aside, most people date Ephesians approximately one year prior to Ephesians and Philemon. I rather doubt that, because the same messenger (Tychicus) would have traveled 1000+ miles one way for each trip. It does not seem to be in keeping with Paul’s procedures to have Tychicus travel to and from Ephesus one year and then to repeat that trip in going to Colossae. I would expect Paul to send Tychicus on one trip to conduct ministry in Asia Minor for a period of time before having him return to where Paul was. Two round trips in the space of a little over one year suggests some travel at times when the weather would not be cooperative.

Appendix 2: Persons Known to Readers of Colossians, Philemon, & Ephesians

<p>P 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and <u>Timothy</u> our brother, To <u>Philemon</u> our beloved friend and fellow laborer, 2 to the beloved <u>Apphia</u>, <u>Archippus</u> our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:</p> <p>P 1:10 I appeal to you for my son <u>Onesimus</u>, whom I have begotten while in my chains.</p> <p>P 1:23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 as do <u>Mark</u>, <u>Aristarchus</u>, <u>Demas</u>, <u>Luke</u>, my fellow laborers.</p>	<p>C 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and <u>Timothy</u> our brother. C 4:7 <u>Tychicus</u>, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with <u>Onesimus</u>, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here. 10 <u>Aristarchus</u> my fellow prisoner greets you, with <u>Mark</u> the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and <u>Jesus</u> who is called <u>Justus</u>. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12 <u>Epaphras</u>, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 <u>Luke</u> the beloved physician and <u>Demas</u> greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house. 16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to <u>Archippus</u>, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."</p>
<p>Ephesians 6:21 But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, <u>Tychicus</u>, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.</p>	