

PAUL'S GRACE APPEAL (Philemon 1:17–25)

Dr. John Niemelä Water of Life Bible Class March 6, 2025

Introduction:

Review:

1. Paul wishes grace and peace from the Father and Christ to the household of a beloved fellow-worker, Philemon, and to the [Colossian] church in his home (1:1–3).
2. [Paul thankfully prays for his loving & faithful friend to gain a greater recognition of Christ's work in His body to energize him] because he is thankful that Philemon already refreshes believers (1:4–7)
3. [Based on praying for Philemon to gain a greater recognition of Christ's work in the body of Christ] Paul appeals for Philemon to receive voluntarily the formerly useless Onesimus as a beloved brother forever, tho Paul could have commanded this & tho Paul wanted to keep Onesimus (8-16)

Exposition:

[As an inference from Paul appealing to Philemon, rather than forcing him] Philemon should receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul, because they are partners (17)

[The reason Philemon ought to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul is because] Paul, who saved Philemon's life, commits to repay anything Onesimus stole (18–19)

A mistranslation in verse 19: “not...that” (*hoti...mē*) ≠ “**that...not** (*mē...hoti*)”

[Thus] Paul urges Philemon to give him joy and to refresh him in the Lord (20)

Paul appeals to Philemon, because he knows that he will do more than he asks (21)
What does Paul ask?

What might Philemon do that exceeds Paul's request?

Paul requests that Philemon prepare the guest room, because he expects (through Philemon's prayers) to visit him (22)

[As an inference from Paul appealing to Philemon, rather than forcing him] he ought to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul

because they are partners,

and (2) [because] Paul—who saved Philemon's life—commits to repay anything stolen by Onesimus,

so Philemon ought to give Paul joy and refresh him in the Lord—which he will do—because Paul knows that he will exceed Paul's request;

and Philemon ought to prepare the guest room for Paul, because he expects to visit (17-22)

Paul's fellow-prisoners and fellow-laborers in Rome wish grace from the Lord Jesus Christ upon Philemon (23–25)

What evidence do we have concerning Philemon's response to this letter?

Application