
First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

Lessons from Philemon and Onesimus

Message #11 in the series

Lessons from People Like Us

Sunday, August 16, 2026 • Mike Hickman, Senior Pastor

⁷ Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. ⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. ⁹ I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. (Colossians 4:7-9, NLT)

Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. (Colossians 4:1, NLT)

Greetings from Paul

This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, ² and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house.

³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer

⁴ I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, ⁵ because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. ⁶ And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. ⁷ Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

Paul's Appeal for Onesimus

⁸ That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. ⁹ But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus.

¹⁰ I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison. ¹¹ Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both

of us. ¹² I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

¹³ I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. ¹⁴ But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced.

¹⁵ It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶ He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT. AND I WON'T MENTION THAT YOU OWE ME YOUR VERY SOUL!

²⁰ Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ.

²¹ I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more! ²² One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon.

Paul's Final Greetings

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. ²⁴ So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers.

²⁵ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (Philemon, NLT)