

PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SLAVE OWNERS PHILEMON 1-3,10

What were Paul's instructions?

I. Paul's instructions were **local**

Philemon 1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto **Philemon** our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, **Philemon 2** And to *our* beloved **Apphia**, and **Archippus** our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: **Philemon 10** I beseech thee for my son **Onesimus**, whom I have begotten in my bonds: **Philemon 22** But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. **Philemon 23** There salute thee **Epaphras**, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; **Philemon 24** **Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas**, my fellowlabourers.

Local = time & place specific

How do we know this?

1. A specific story:

- Paul was arrested in Jerusalem
- Paul was accused and tried there
- Paul appealed to Caesar

Acts 25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. **Acts 25:11** For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. **Acts 25:12** Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

- Paul was transported to Rome during the wrong season
- Paul arrived at Rome and was placed under house arrest
- Paul was confined for at least two years
- Paul was allowed guests- one was an escaped slave named Onesimus.

- Onesimus got saved

- Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this letter

2. Specific instructions

Philemon 1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto **Philemon** our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, **Philemon 2** And to *our* beloved **Apphia**, and **Archippus** our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: **Philemon 22** But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. **Philemon 23** There salute thee **Epaphras**, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; **Philemon 24** **Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas**, my fellowlabourers.

II. Paul's instructions were also **universal**

Philemon 1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, **Philemon 2** **And** to *our* beloved Apphia, **and** Archippus our fellowsoldier, **and to the church in thy house:** **Philemon 3** Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Philemon 25** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Universal = for all people, in all places, & through all ages

How do we know this?

- This Epistle was written to Philemon

- It was also written to Apphia and Archippus

Philemon 2 **And** to *our* beloved Apphia, and **Archippus** our fellowsoldier, **and to the church in thy house:** **Colossians 4:17** And say to **Archippus**, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

- **It was also written to the local church**
- **It was included in the Christian Canon-- the Bible**

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

III. Paul’s instructions are persuasive and not coercive

Philemon 8 Wherefore, **though I might be** much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, **Philemon 9** **Yet for love’s sake** I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as **Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Philemon 10** I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, **whom I have begotten in my bonds: Philemon 11** Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: **Philemon 12** Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: **Philemon 13** **Whom I would have** retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: **Philemon 14** **But without thy mind (γνώμη) would I do nothing;** that thy benefit should **not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. Philemon 17** **If** thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. **Philemon 21** Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, **knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.**

Nothing is more powerful than this:

- **Paul could command Philemon – as an Apostle with apostolic authority**
- **Paul appeals to their mutual love**
- **Paul beseeches / encourages him**
- **Paul appeals to his circumstances (old & in bonds / chains)**
- **Paul reasons with him**
- **Paul appeals again to a mutual relationship**
- **Paul demonstrates that this has cost Paul also!**

Frankly, help Paul needed and could ill afford to not have!

- **Paul refuses to act without Philemon’s mind (γνώμη = opinion, counsel)**

Changing hearts & minds = persuasion

Abolitionists:	1861 & before: many positions	Slave owners (from lesser evil to greater evil)
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