



## The Epistle of Paul to Philemon

**Author:** Paul

**Place Written:** Rome

**Writing Completed:** c. 60–61 C.E.

### Greetings

**1** Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our<sup>a</sup> brother,

To Philemon<sup>b</sup> our beloved fellow worker, <sup>2</sup>and Apphia our<sup>c</sup> sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the congregation<sup>d</sup> in your house: <sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Philemon's Love and Faith

<sup>4</sup>I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,

<sup>5</sup>because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the holy ones, <sup>6</sup>and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective<sup>e</sup> through the accurate knowledge<sup>f</sup> of every good thing that is in you<sup>g</sup> for the sake of Christ. <sup>7</sup>For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because

<sup>a</sup> Lit *the*

<sup>b</sup> Gr *Philemoni*, meaning *loving*

<sup>c</sup> Lit *the*

<sup>d</sup> Gr *ekklesia* (“assembly;” “congregation, i.e., of Christians”)

<sup>e</sup> Lit *might become active or operative within*

<sup>f</sup> *Epignosis* is a strengthened or intensified form of *gnosis* (*epi*, meaning “additional”), meaning, “true,” “real,” “full,” “complete” or “accurate,” depending upon the context. Paul and Peter alone use *epignosis*.

<sup>g</sup> “In you” has strong textual support (P<sup>61</sup> ⲛ G P 33 1739Byz it<sup>s</sup> vg syr<sup>p</sup> h cop<sup>sa</sup> bo ar m al), while “in us” has weaker textual support (A C D K Ψ 81 614 it<sup>d</sup> syr<sup>hmg</sup> al).

the hearts<sup>h</sup> of the holy ones have been refreshed through you, brother.

### Paul's Plea for Onesimus

<sup>8</sup>Therefore, though I have much confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper, <sup>9</sup>yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—since I am such a person as Paul, an aged man,<sup>i</sup> and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— <sup>10</sup>I appeal to you for my child Onesimus,<sup>j</sup> whom I have begotten<sup>k</sup> in my prison bonds, <sup>11</sup>who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. <sup>12</sup>I am sending him back to you, that is, sending my very heart. <sup>13</sup>Whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my prison bonds for the gospel; <sup>14</sup>but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by necessity<sup>l</sup> but of your own free will. <sup>15</sup>For perhaps he was therefore parted from you for a while, that you would have him forever; <sup>16</sup>no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

### The Guarantee and the Reminder

<sup>17</sup>If then you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. <sup>18</sup>But if he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; <sup>19</sup>I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it, to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. <sup>20</sup>Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

<sup>h</sup> Lit *the bowels or inward parts*

<sup>i</sup> Or *an ambassador*

<sup>j</sup> *Onesimus* means *useful*

<sup>k</sup> I.e. *became a father*

<sup>l</sup> Or *compulsion*



### **The Guest Room**

<sup>21</sup> Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than what I say. <sup>22</sup> At the same time, prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

### **Final Greetings**

<sup>23</sup> Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, <sup>24</sup> and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers. <sup>25</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> One early MS adds *Amen*