

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon

Introduction to Philemon

Philemon 1-3

1. A General Outline of Philemon

- A. Introduction and Greeting (vs.1-3)
- B. The Characteristics of a Forgiver (vs.4-7)
- C. The Actions of a Forgiver (vs.8-18)
- D. The Motives of a Forgiver (vs.19-25)

2. Themes in Philemon

A. Forgiveness of Others in the New Testament

- I. Seek Reconciliation and Forgiveness (Matt 5:23-24)
- II. Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11ff)
- III. Forgive a Repeat Offending Brother (Luke 17:3-4)
- IV. Seventy Times Seven (Matt 18:21; cf. Amos 1:3, 6)
- V. Parable of the Unforgiving Slave (Matt 18:23ff)

B. Masters and Slaves in the New Testament

I. Slaves

- a. Seek Freedom, Be Content in Christ (1 Cor 7:21-24)
- b. One in Christ with All Other Believers (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11)
- c. Obey Masters Sincerely as to Christ (Eph 6:5-6; Col 3:22;
- d. Be Well Pleasing to Masters to Adorn the Gospel (Titus 2:9)
- e. Regard Masters as Worthy of Honor to Honor Christ (1 Tim 6:1-2)
- f. Obedience is Not Contingent on the Kindness of Masters (1 Pet 2:18)

II. Masters

- a. Remember: Slave and Master Have One Master (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1)
- b. Give Up Threatening Slaves (Eph 6:9)
- c. Treat Slaves Justly and Fairly (Col 4:1)
- d. Remember that You and Your Slave Have One Master (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1)

3. The Introduction and Greeting of Philemon (vs.1-3)

A. The Author: Paul (v.1a)

B. The Recipients (vs.1b-2)

I. Philemon and His Family (cf. Col 4:17)

II. The Church that is in His House

C. The Blessing of Greeting (v.3)

We often move quickly past these greetings and miss their beauty (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2). It is God's grace with which He lavishes upon us that we are then able to have and experience peace (Rom 5:1; Matt 5:9).