

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon

The Character of Philemon

Philemon 4-9

1. Paul's Prayer on Account of Philemon's Faith and Love (vs.4-5)

Paul had not planted the church in Colossae (Col 1:7) and had not even met anyone from that church (Col 2:1). His knowledge of the Colossian Christians, and therefore the content of his prayers for them and specifically for Philemon, was dependant upon second hand reports from Epaphras and Onesimus (Col 4:9).

A. Faith in Christ

The noteworthy thing was not that Philemon had faith; it was noteworthy that his faith was directed toward the Lord Jesus in both profession and action (cf. Col 1:4; 1 Thess 1:8-9).

B. Love of the Saints

Philemon's love is not a mere feeling of affection for the vague idea of church; it is a definite love that is expressed to all of those in the church (cf. 1 Thess 1:3). Philemon had true Christian love for all of the saints (cf. Rom 5:8).

2. Paul's Prayer Building Upon Philemon's Faith and Love (v.6)

Paul had no question that Philemon was a true believer, and his plea of mercy for Onesimus was predicated upon his salvation and upon his obvious desire to live in light of the reality of his salvation (cf. vs. 8-10).

3. The Effect of Philemon's Faith and Love (v.7)

Paul relates his personal experience of both love and joy that he would not have otherwise had were it not for Philemon's diligent love which had the effect of fully and deeply refreshing the saints with whom he came into contact.

4. The Result of Philemon's Faith and Love (vs.8-9)

A. He is Obedient to the Truth of God when it is Given

Paul is confident that if he were to give him a proper command in Christ that Philemon would see its truthfulness and obey (John 14:15).

B. He is Mature Enough to Know the Truth and Obey It

Because of his love for Philemon, rather than issue a command to do what is proper, he wants to strongly encourage him to do what is right.