

Philemon 1:8-25**Divine Persuasion**

Paul in Roman prison (**prisoner of Christ**) appeals to Philemon **wealth** to forgive & receive back his fugitive slave Onesimus who escaped & ran 1200 miles to Rome & by God's providence encountered Paul & became a Christian.

Paul puts Philemon & church to the test to see if the fellowship of their faith is genuine. Onesimus repented & now wanting to do right. Paul's praise for Philemon turns to appeal. Does their Christianity have Lord's **redemptive value**? Will Philemon & Church forgive Onesimus & receiving him back.

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do that which is proper, 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus

Therefore looks back to Paul's praise of Philemon's love, faith & reputation among the saints. His praise is genuine—praise before duty

Serious issue Paul lays out & will stretch Philemon to be more like Jesus in the area of forgiveness.

Paul could order w/ Apostolic authority but rather appeals to him & puts decision between him & Lord. Paul aged, wisdom & loves sake, prisoner

Mk 10:42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles domineer over them; and their people in high position exercise authority over them. **Not w/ you greatest is servant**

Those w/ little authority go on power trip & not servant—**Cop---Shepherding movement**

Because of who I am & authority I have as apostle, I could order you-**put upon you as a duty**—but love controls my ministry--aged mellowed. Paul sets pattern for those in authority—**mother who manages home, pres of company, pastor over flock**—don't demand but appea--love is motivation.

Fear can make people obey but love persuades the heart. **Rev 2:6 hate**

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Paul exhorts to forgive O...*sweetness of speech causes persuasiveness*

Praise before duty. Praise where praise is due is much different than flattering a person to get something from them...*spreading a net. Pr 29:5*

Paul's apostolic authority could command Philemon to do what is right but unwise to do so. If P has no choice it out of fear, coercion, manipulation. With a choice it trains as true servant of Christ...do what he should do from love & obedience to Heavenly Father.

Paul uses wisdom *aged* father in the faith & weakness in prison--unable to enforce. 'Whoever is first is servant of all'..Some don't respond to love & need prodding by commands. They stay stagnant in faith w/o growth when forced by command instead of willing response to love & HS promptings.

Ps 32:8,9 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. 9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you.

10 I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

Onesimus **profitable** *Col 4:7-9 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. 8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.*

Paul's spiritual son, as Timothy, Titus Paul led to Lord. O before useless but now useful to P & me—**a changed man**

Appeal 2x for O, **parakaleo call to ones side** HS parakletos. Paul goes to bat for O '**no greater love than this**...My child a man,begotten saved thru Paul in prison. Onesimus carries the letter- Philemons heart racing—trusted slave betrayed & stole--thinking Paul got one sided story

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2Cor 5:17 NKJ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* O a new creation true to his namesake profitable.

12 And I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.

I not only have sent O back to you but I send my heart as well—if I could keep him w/ me I would as if he is sent from you to minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospels sake.

But I'd not do that w/o your permission. It would not be right to compel or force you to do what is right but it must come from your own free will. No benefit, spiritual growth, or reward if you do it by my command but if you do it out of a willing heart there is great reward. Always error on the side of grace, Paul is very gracious here.

15 For perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever, 16 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.

God is sovereign & working If O left for a time under back circumstances, he now is back a changed man. **Adverse situations work eternal purposes.** Always keep God's eternal perspective in view in time of adverse circumstances. We focus on immediate--God looks to eternal. **All things work together for good....** I blame God because I don't see the future. God's word will always keep us focused on eternal things & excited for the work He's doing in us now.

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*Eph 2:1-3 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2**in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3**among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

If a thing made is not serving the purpose for which it is made it is useless

The great violinist Paganini willed his exquisite violin to the city of Genoa, on condition that it must never be played again. Wood when used & handled wears only slightly. Unused it begins to decay. This once magnificent, lovely toned violin has become worm eaten & useless because of idleness.

True conversion brings change...repentance first Jn/Jesus turn from sin & turn to Jesus. Often restitution Zac 4x's O slave on the run to slave sent back home to serve--profitable, useful – before salvation had the name but **unprofitable**, useless but after Jesus came into his life **useful** Paul goes to bat tells P he is profitable to me and you. Not just a convert but a very part of me...he's in my heart, son in the faith. Paul looks at O as Jesus looks at US *Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Providence God at work in worse situations to bring us around to His plan. When we think things are going so wrong God is doing right. P wondering why O ripped him off after all I've done for him

***17** If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. **18** But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).*

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Receive him back not as a slave but as you would receive me, a brother in the Lord. In Christ there is no distinction of people, not difference or division ***Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*** We are all accepted in the beloved. Paul is interceding on behalf of Onesimus as Jesus does for us...He ever lives to make intercession. Paul will repay what O owes...as Jesus paid in full our debt of sin...Satan accuser of bro makes case and God the Father says case dismissed my son paid it all. In end Satan accuser cast out of heaven

Rev 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Paul Intercedes for O w/ divine persuasion...you owe me your life...Philemon saved under Paul's ministry ***Ps 32:1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!***

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

I know you & want to benefit from you & you do so by refreshing me in Christ by forgiving O and receiving him back. I trust your obedience in this and will go above the things I am writing to you in regard to O. Spiritual connections are far greater and deeper than emotional or physical bonds

22 And at the same time also prepare me a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you. 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers. 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.