

# PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON

## *Greeting and Prayer of Thanks*

From Paul, a prisoner for<sup>a</sup> Christ Jesus, and from my brother Timothy. To Philemon,<sup>b</sup> our dear friend and co-worker, <sup>2</sup>and to our sister Apphia,<sup>c</sup> and to Archippus<sup>d</sup> our fellow soldier, and to the community<sup>e</sup> that meets in your house. <sup>3</sup>Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to God for you all the time, as I mention you in my prayers. <sup>5</sup>Because I am hearing about your love, and about the faith that you show<sup>f</sup> towards the Lord Jesus, and to all the holy ones. <sup>6</sup>I'm praying that your partnership in the faith<sup>g</sup> will result<sup>h</sup> in your recognition of all the goodness that's in us in Christ. <sup>7</sup>Because I've had a lot of joy and encouragement from your love: you've refreshed the hearts of the holy ones,<sup>i</sup> my brother!

## *Paul Calls in a Favor on Behalf of Onesimus*

<sup>8</sup>So, although I have plenty of confidence in Christ that I could order you to do what's right, <sup>9</sup>I'd rather appeal to you on the basis of<sup>j</sup> love. I'll just speak as<sup>k</sup> Paul the elder<sup>l</sup>—and now, also as a prisoner for<sup>a</sup> Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I appeal to you about

<sup>a</sup> Lit. "Christ Jesus' prisoner." He is literally in prison.

<sup>b</sup> Prn. *fyee-lee-man*.

<sup>c</sup> Prn. *ap-fee-a*.

<sup>d</sup> Prn. *ar-kipp-us*.

<sup>e</sup> That is, the Christian community.

<sup>f</sup> Lit. "have," or "hold."

<sup>g</sup> Lit. "the partnership of your faith."

<sup>h</sup> Lit. "will become effective." Some translations have, "that the sharing of your faith will become effective by the knowledge of all the good that's in us in Christ."

<sup>i</sup> Lit. "...your love, because the innards of the holy ones have been refreshed through you."

<sup>j</sup> Lit. "because of."

<sup>k</sup> Lit. "Being such a person as."

<sup>l</sup> Or, possibly, "ambassador."

my child, Onesimus,<sup>b</sup> that I fathered while I was in prison.<sup>c</sup> <sup>11</sup>Once he was no use to you, but now he's valuable both to you and to me. <sup>12</sup>I've sent him to you—which means I'm sending my very heart! <sup>13</sup>I had wished that I could keep him here with me—that way, he could help me on your behalf, while I'm in prison<sup>d</sup> for the good news. <sup>14</sup>But I didn't want to do anything without your permission. That way, your good deed wouldn't be forced: it would be by choice.<sup>e</sup> <sup>15</sup>After all, maybe this was why he was separated from you for a while—so that you'd get him back forever. <sup>16</sup>But not as a slave anymore—no, more than a slave. Now he's a dear brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both humanly and in the Lord!

<sup>17</sup>So if you consider<sup>f</sup> me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup>And if he's done you any wrong, or owes you something, charge that to my account. <sup>19</sup>I, Paul, am writing this myself: I will pay you back. (That way I don't have to mention to you that you also owe me *yourself*!) <sup>20</sup>Yes, my brother, I'd like this favor from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

<sup>21</sup>I've written to you convinced that you'll obey me. I know that you'll do even more than I ask. <sup>22</sup>And at the same time, get a room ready for me too. Because I'm hoping to be given to you through your prayers.

### *Final Greeting*

<sup>23</sup>Epaphras,<sup>g</sup> my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, says hello to you. <sup>24</sup>So do Mark, Aristarchus,<sup>h</sup> Demas,<sup>i</sup> and Luke, my co-workers. <sup>25</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your<sup>j</sup> spirit!

<sup>a</sup> Lit. "of" See the nt. on v. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Prn. *oh-ness-im-us*.

<sup>c</sup> Lit. "chains."

<sup>d</sup> Lit. "chains."

<sup>e</sup> Lit. "...permission, so that your good deed wouldn't be as though according to necessity, but rather according to willingness."

<sup>f</sup> Lit. "hold."

<sup>g</sup> Prn. *epp-a-fras*.

<sup>h</sup> Prn. *arr-i-stark-us*.

<sup>i</sup> Prn. *deem-us*.

<sup>j</sup> This is plural.