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July 27, 2001

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Philemon

Greetings from Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. ²Also to Apphia, our sister; to Archippus, a worker with us; and to the church that meets in your home.

³Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you. ⁵I thank God because I hear about the love you have for all God's holy people* and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that the faith you share will make you understand every good thing that we have in Christ. ⁷My brother, you have shown love to God's people. You have made them feel happy. And this has given me great joy and comfort.

Accept Onesimus Like a Brother

⁸There is something that you should do. And because of the authority I have in Christ, I feel free to command you to do it. ⁹But I am not commanding you; I am asking you to do it out of love. I am Paul. I am an old man now, and I am a prisoner for Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I am asking you for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was in prison. ¹¹In the past he was useless to you. But now he has become useful* for both you and me.

¹²I am sending him back to you. With him I am sending my own heart. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me to help me while I am in prison

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

useless ... useful Paul here makes a play on words with the name Onesimus, which means "useful."

for telling the Good News.* By helping me he would be serving you. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then the good thing you do for me will be because you want to do it, not because I forced you to do it.

¹⁵Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever—¹⁶not to be a slave, but better than a slave, to be a brother that is loved. I love him very much. But you will love him even more. You will love him as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷If you accept me to be your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him like you would welcome me. ¹⁸If Onesimus has done anything wrong to you, charge that to me. If he owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹I am Paul, and I am writing this with my own hand. I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. ²⁰So, my brother, I ask that you do something for me in the Lord. Comfort my heart in Christ. ²¹I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask you. I know that you will do even more than I ask.

²²Also, please prepare a room for me to stay in. I hope that God will answer your prayers and I will be able to come to you.

Final Greetings

²³Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He says hello to you. ²⁴And also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke say hello to you. They are workers together with me.

²⁵The grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God forever.