

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

A PILGRIM'S WALK THROUGH

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON



Reading: Philemon 1:8-18

Introduction

- From the inspired hand of Paul.
- Philemon is the 18th of 27 New Testament books.
- Just one chapter of 25 verses.

1 Background To The Book

- Philemon is one of Paul's '*Prison Letters*'.
- Written initially to an individual rather than a church.
- Philemon meaning '*friendly*' - a wealthy believer in the Colossian church.
- An owner of slaves.
- Apphia - His wife.
- Archippus - his son. (See Colossians 4:17).
- Onesimus - meaning '*profitable*' - a slave.

2 The Runaway Slave

- Onesimus was one of Philemon's slaves.
- He stole something of Philemon's before going on the run.
- He journeys to Rome and is led to the Lord by Paul.
- He becomes an assistant to the imprisoned apostle.

- He comes clean about his past to Paul.
- Paul knows he has to return to his master.
- [Vs. 10] Paul calls him '*my son*'.
- [Vs. 11] Paul defends him calling him '*profitable*'.
- [Vs. 12] Paul is sending him back as '*a brother*' now to Philemon.
- [Vs. 17] Appeals to Philemon to receive him as he would receive Paul.
- [Vs. 18] Asks Philemon to put Onesimus's debt on Paul's account.

3 The Return Of Onesimus

- Onesimus is the postman of Paul's letter to Philemon.
- Their meeting must have been initially awkward.
- However, it is Philemon, not Onesimus who is on trial.
- Would Philemon do the '*Christian*' thing?

4 Who Is Your Onesimus?

- Who do you perceive has trespassed against you?
- Jesus: "*Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.*"
- Christianity is doing what Jesus said. Are you doing it?
- Who do you need to receive as a brother/sister?

5 What Became Of Onesimus?

- Some think he went on to become the bishop of the church at Ephesus at the turn of the 1st century and that under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit he collected Pauls letters including the letter to Philemon telling his own story.
- The story of a runaway slave-saved by Jesus, defended by Paul, forgiven by Philemon and encouraged to lead the church.

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