

Philemon

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 July 1973

Preacher: Jarvis, J (1901-1976)

- [0 : 0 0] In humble dependence upon the help of the Holy Spirit, I would seek to direct your attention to the Epistle of Philemon, verses 15 and 16.
- The Epistle of Paul to Philemon, verses 15 and 16.
- For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me.
- But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. Verses 15 and 16 in the Epistle to Philemon.
- For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me.
- [1 : 3 4] But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. This little epistle has been very much upon my mind and spirit over the past two days.
- We looked at it for a little while at Folkestone on Thursday evening. But it has seemed to have been brought back again in considering our morning subject.
- Because we have here a gracious working out of that which we were considering in the morning.
- Be still and know that I am God. And that is what the dear Apostle is here advocating unto Philemon.
- Philemon was a member of the church in Colossae. Onesimus was his slave, of whom the Apostles here writing.
- [2 : 4 8] And Onesimus had done that which was considered very wrong.
- And there is no doubt it was wrong. Because it is undoubtedly that he was a slave who was bought with a price.
- And he had run away, as it were, from the authority of Philemon.
- But during that time of his absence from Philemon's, authority, he had come in contact with the Apostle Paul.
- It must have been so, because the Apostle Paul never went to Colossae. So he must have come in contact with him away from Colossae.
- [4 : 0 6] If I read the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Paul never went there. And he speaks of it as those whom he had never been in contact with.
- And yet he loved them for the truth's sake. Well, Onesimus had departed.
- And he come in contact with the Apostle Paul. And the Apostle Paul had preached to him. And Onesimus had been quickened.
- Born again. Which is what we must all know something about if we are to be found in the right way.
- None can come into the way without being born again, coming through that straight gate.

[5 : 26] For straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. Few there be that findeth, says the word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Own words.

But this one, Onesimus, had come in contact, and the Apostle speaks of him with such loving expression.

One whom I have begotten in my bonds. is well to note as we look at this epistle, how the Apostle, as it were, appeals unto Philemon.

And in appealing to him, he emphasizes what the, what Philemon has entered into as he, as it were, builds up his argument.

And, not to go too much into that, but he speaks of hearing of his love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward the saints, that the communication of thy faith may become effectual, may be acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

[7 : 11] The Apostle could see in Philemon the works that come, as James puts it, by faith.

James says, faith without works is dead. And he says, show me thy faith by thy works. And this is what the Apostle is looking at.

He sees these works that came forth in the life of Philemon through the grace that had been imparted to him, through the grace of God that had been granted unto him.

They brought forth good works. That's what the grace of God will do. And he uses this, as it were, as an argument to bring this matter home to him regarding his slave.

And he says, now, for love's sake, yet for love's sake, I rather beseech thee, being such an one as poor the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ, I beseech thee, for my son Onesimus, not your slave, Philemon, not your slave, but my son, my son in the faith, is what he is pleading, which in time past, was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me.

[9 : 11] he is, as it were, as I said at the outset, reminding, calling Philemon to take notice and now at this time not to stand and argue regarding Onesimus' position of what he was as a slave, but he says, be still, be still, Philemon, and know that I am God, that God is God, and that is God's own gracious work.

Onesimus left your service and came into my company and through the mercy of God he was born again and through God's mercy he remained with me and attended unto me for, he says, whom I would have retained with me that in my stead, in thy stead, he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

Onesimus was ready and willing to stay and be with the apostle and the apostle was willing for him to stay that he might minister unto him.

This is the love that attends the work of grace, my dear friends. Do we know anything of it?

This love that seems to rise above all other things and would seek the comfort and the blessing of God upon all with whom we come in contact?

[11 : 30] The apostle says, but without thy mind would I do nothing. The apostle recognizes Philemon's authority, recognizes that Philemon is the owner as it were, in a natural way, the owner of Onesimus as a slave.

Therefore, he says, I would not keep him if you want him to come back. I would not keep him without your authority, without you giving permission.

Therefore, I am sending him again, whom I have sent again. Thou therefore receive him. Mark how the apostle puts this, that thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels, mine own heart comes with him Philemon.

my heart goes with him. Therefore, receive him as if you would receive me. Receive him.

But without thy mind would I do nothing that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

[13 : 16] that you with a willing heart, a willing mind, receive him back again. Not as a slave, he says.

For perhaps therefore, he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever.

forever. Oh, what a different standing, as it were, there is now between Philemon and Onesimus.

What a different association there must be here now. There is no doubt that originally Philemon served his master well, Onesimus, I say, served Philemon well, his master, but there was this point, this thing that happened, and that it was, he ran away.

He ran away. But there is one thing we ought to note, or feel we should note regarding this, and that is the divine appointments of our God.

[14 : 55] I do like to look at these, and to dwell a little upon them, because it was not by chance that Onesimus, as it were, ran away, and came in contact with the apostle Paul.

It was not mere chance. No, there is no doubt there was divine ordering in it, as there is divine ordering in the case of everyone that is born again.

There must be because they are born from above. Therefore, it must be divine ordering that brings it to pass, and that is what happened here.

Onesimus, when he ran away from his master, I doubt if he had any thought, concern, as to where he was going.

As we have read at different times about slaves and so forth, who have run away from their masters, and you can get quite a few accounts of it, especially the slaves of southern America, of the southern states of America, when they used to run away, there was no definite direction, although if you read carefully, you will find that they were graciously directed in more cases than one.

[17 : 01] There are some of those slaves there who were brought in contact with godly people and became themselves, born-again Christians.

And so it was in this case, as Onesimus came in contact with the apostle Paul, and came under his gracious teaching and instruction, instruction, and that God so blessed that instruction that the heart of Onesimus was wrought upon.

His soul was born again, and he became one of whom Paul said, my son, my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds, begotten.

this sets forth, my dear friends, what I've just been saying, the new birth, because that is what the new birth is.

One is begotten of the Spirit of God, born again, and the apostle had a very gracious feeling toward Onesimus because he was one who was his son in the faith, as he says of Timothy.

[19 : 05] Therefore, because of this, and because he was a gracious man, and because of all that attended Onesimus and his service with Philemon, the apostle sends him back.

There's no doubt he had many a talk with him regarding what he should do, and he sends him back.

And he says, for perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldest receive him forever. You see, the status of a slave was this, that the service might go on for so long, and then he was to be released.

but now he says he has served thee forever. He won't want to go away again now, Philemon.

He won't want to go away again now. He'll stay with you. He'll remain with you. But do remember this, Philemon.

[20 : 27] Do remember this. You receive him, not now as a servant, but one upon whom the grace of God and in whom the grace of God has had a gracious effect.

One who has been born again, you receive him not now as a servant, but above a servant. He is no more a slave to you, Philemon.

He's no more a slave, but he is a brother, a brother in the Lord, a brother in the work of grace, a fellow citizen with the saints, as we read in the Ephesians day.

Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints. No more strangers, he is no more a slave, but now a fellow citizen.

So he says, not now, do not receive him now as a servant, one who is just as it were some chattel in your community that you are to receive him as a brother in the Lord.

[22 : 10] Lord. There is a reference in the Corinthians I was looking at and for he that is called in the Lord being a servant is the Lord's free man.

likewise also he that is called being free is Christ's servant.

There is as it were an opening up on this point. He is no more a servant to him.

He is a free man now. He is a free man. He is also Christ's servant. So he comes back to you not now as a servant but above a servant a free man a brother beloved man.

Oh do we know do we not know just a little my dear friends of this have we not beloved brethren whom we love dearly for Christ's sake and the apostle was here bringing this before find you a brother beloved and he says specially to me oh he is a brother beloved to me he and I are deeply united in the things of God our hearts are bonded together in the bonds of Christ therefore he is specially a beloved brother to me but how much more unto thee think of it

[24 : 46] Philemon how much more unto thee should he be a beloved brother both in the flesh and in the Lord oh how the apostle appeals thus unto Philemon and is it not as I said at the outset a opening up as it were of that word that we looked at be still Philemon and know that I am God not Paul but that it is the work of God Philemon be still look consider it is the work of God in that he comes back to you now a born again

Christian a saved man one for whom Jesus died one who is alongside you in church fellowship along not only that more than that my dear friend alongside you in his union with Christ oh my dear friends it is much more than church fellowship although we love to feel and think that church fellowship is this but I feel the apostle is as it were setting something more before Philemon and we might also look at it too further in that and he says

I will be exalted among the heathen I will be exalted in the earth just how and to what extent the reaction was in Philemon's home and the district around we've got no account of but as we read in that chapter in Colossians we get Onesimus mentioned there and speaks of him there as being a gracious man but how much more unto thee both in the flesh and in the Lord and now the apostle graciously follows up this argument as he says if thou count me therefore a partner receive him as myself

Philemon you know what your thoughts are concerning me you know we touch on that little later you know just what my ministry has been to you you know what you have declared regarding your love to me and your association to me if thou count me therefore a partner receive him as myself receive him as though I had come see how the apostle as it were brings before Philemon what the grace of God has done he is no more a slave Philemon but he is one like myself receive him as though it was myself and if he have wronged thee or oweth thee ought or if he has done thee wrong or if he oweth thee anything put that to my account for love's sake we touched on just now my dear friends it says here back in the ninth verse yet for love's sake oh the love that the dear apostle was manifesting here toward this one who was one time a slave and not only to him but to

Philemon as well and as he manifested it to all whom he felt loved and served his God that love that the apostle Paul had reached out to them and he says for yet for love's sake receive him not as a slave but as if it was I myself that came I wish I had the ability my dear friends to open this up to you bring it before you but it does set before us what the love of Christ can do in a sinner's heart what it can do in controlling the old nature that is ours and how we feel and need it sometimes do we not this one does in right that that love might abound toward us and in us controlling what we are in of ourselves if thou count me therefore a partner one who is a member as it were with you of the church of

[31 : 37] Christ for Leemon receive him as myself if you accept me if my person my presence is of any value to you if you feel any going out in your soul and spirit toward me any love toward me then receive him as myself receive him if he have wronged thee or owe if thee ought put that to my account I'll bear the cost I'll settle that account don't press him with it oh love my dear friends for love sake for love sake I pull now I do like the way the apostle follows up this argument he says

I pull I've written it with mine own hand I will repay it I'll honor my word Philemon I'll not go back on my word I will repay it albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides he is bringing this point right home as it were to Philemon is evidently set before us here that Philemon was another one who was begotten in the ministry of the apostle

Paul Philemon was evidently one who had come under the sound of the gospel he was evidently one who had been born again under the apostles preaching therefore he said the apostle says to him thou I do not say to thee how thou owe us unto me even thine own self you see he's bringing this point home to him Philemon you know what you were you know from where you were taken he might have added to him or spoken to him in the line of the words we read in the morning he has brought me up out of a horrible pit out of the miry clay that

Philemon might could easily have said that there's no doubt about that I feel in that the apostle appeals to him in this way thou know always unto me even thine own self besides yea brother let me have joy of thee in the Lord refresh my bowels in the Lord oh let me see let me hear that thou receive Onesimus as a brother as one who is born of God that thou as one born of God receive him that you come together truly in the bonds of the gospel that your reception of him shall be as one who receives a brother in

Christ not now as a servant but above a servant a brother beloved beloved turning aside for a few moments my dear friends I would look at it in this way we have said times see what the grace of God can do and here we have a beautiful wondrous example of it it is one of those portions of scripture that are not often read it is a little account as it were hidden away and yet it has just as much significance

[37 : 20] I feel as the stopping of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus or the Philippian jailer or Lydia we often mention those and speak of them but this is just as much significance I feel because it is a sinner born again a sinner brought into the community the grace of God at work in divine calling in effectual calling and that is where we've got to come to my dear friends it must be an effectual call and it is definitely laid before us here as the apostle

Paul speaks of this was effectual calling because Onesimus had been indeed called Philemon had indeed been called and they were products we might put it of the ministry of the dear apostle for how wondrous my dear friends is the work of grace in calling sinners out of nature's darkness into the marvelous night of the gospel how effectual is that work of grace in its calling in its work we said about

Saul of Tarsus we said about the Philippian jailer Lydia and many more we can look at here we have these two how wondrous it is singled out of the earth teeming millions to be made manifest as a child of God has that call come unto us have we known it you and I I believe we have many of us but God help us to give diligence godly diligence to make our calling and our election sure not to settle down upon the leaves of a profession not to settle down in a satisfied condition but that there may be that gracious exercise we read in the epistles exercise thyself unto godliness and again having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof oh what a state and condition that is to be in having a form of godliness and denying the power that which is set before us in this little account here sets forth the power that attended in calling and quickening these folk these souls and I say what a solemn place to be in to have a form and deny the power oh my dear friend that our souls may ever be seeking begging that we may be brought under the power to know the power of this working in our hearts in our souls that we may be like the dear apostle as he writes to the

Philippians he says that I may win Christ and be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law not having that righteousness that hath not the power no but that which is by of God by faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering being made conformable unto his death having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof I say my dear friends what a solemn condition to be in god grant that we may be delivered from it that we may know of a certainty what this power is and that we may be enabled to do as the apostle said unto

Philemon yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee being as one poor the aged and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ I beseech thee for love's sake my dear friends I believe this all that we knew more of it if we know anything of the love of Christ in our souls the love of Christ to us the love of Christ in saving us delivering us then it will bring forth that love unto his people unto his children everywhere and there will be that in our hearts which we often use in the benediction a love to all who love the Lord

[45 : 17] Jesus Christ in sincerity everywhere yet for love's sake may the Lord help us to think on these things and that they may be made very real unto our souls I feel to have come very short in bringing this forth but think on it my dear friend just read again that little epistle and what the dear apostle how the dear apostle pleads with his fellow Christians he is not pleading with those who are not Christians he was pleading with those who are fellow heirs in the covenant of grace he pleaded with them the

Lord help us as we would think on these things amen and number 1092 which is simplicity 236