

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother;

To Philemon, our beloved fellow-worker, ²and Apphia our sister, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and the church in your house;

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers; ⁵for I have been told of your love towards all God's people, and the faith that you have in our Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that your fellowship in faith may greatly increase your knowledge of every good thing that is ours in Christ. ⁷Your love, my brother, has given me great joy and comfort, because the hearts of God's people have been cheered through you.

⁸And so, though I am not at all afraid to tell you where your duty lies, ⁹yet for love's sake I prefer to make a request—I, Paul *an old man, and now a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I make a request on behalf of my child Onesimus, whose spiritual father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹He was *useless to you formerly, but now is very useful to you, and also to me. ¹²I am sending him back to you, and my very heart, too, with him.

¹³I should have liked to keep him here with me, to serve me on your behalf, where I am in prison for the good news; ¹⁴but I was unwilling to do anything without your consent, for then your kindness might have seemed forced, not of your own free will.

¹⁵Perhaps the reason why he was parted from you for a time

was that you might have him back for ever, ¹⁶a slave no longer, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, beloved most of all to me, and how much more to you, both as a man and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you think of me as a real friend, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any injury, or owes you anything, put that down to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back, not to mention to you that you owe your very self to me. ²⁰ Yes, my brother, let me have some profit from you in the Lord; cheer my heart in Christ.

²¹ I write to you in full confidence in your loyalty; I know you will do even more than I ask. ²² And will you at the same time get a guest-room ready for me? I hope that through your prayers I shall be given back to you.

²³ Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you; ²⁴ and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-workers.

²⁵ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.