

The Holy New Covenant

A Letter to Philemon

⁰¹ From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and from Timothy, our brother. To: Philemon, our co-worker (you to whom we give ourselves, for your good, expecting nothing in return); ⁰² also the group that meets in your home; Apphia, our sister; and Archippus, our co-soldier. ⁰³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you help in time of need and peace.

⁰⁴ I always thank my God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. ⁰⁵ I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and for your giving of yourself to all of the saints, for their good, expecting nothing in return. ⁰⁶ I pray that you will actively share your faith with a real understanding of every good thing, which we have in Christ.

⁰⁷ I feel very happy and encouraged because of your giving to others, for their good, expecting nothing in return. Brother, you have lifted up the hearts of the saints. ⁰⁸ And so, in Christ, I have plenty of freedom to order you to do what you should do. ⁰⁹ But because of giving myself to you, expecting nothing in return, I would rather encourage. I, Paul, am an old man and also now a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus. He became my child while I was in prison. ¹¹ Before this, he was not useful to you but now he is useful to you and me. ¹² I send him — my very heart — back to you. ¹³ I was wanting to keep him for myself. While in prison for the Good News, he could have helped me as your servant. ¹⁴ But I did not want to do anything unless you knew about it. Then your goodness would not be forced. It would be because you really wanted to do it.

¹⁵ Perhaps this is why Onesimus was separated from you for a while. Now you can have him back forever. ¹⁶ Onesimus is not really a slave anymore. No, he is more than a slave; he is a brother — to whom we give ourselves — especially a brother to me. But this is even truer for you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷ If you think of me as your partner in the Faith, accept Onesimus as you would accept me. ¹⁸ If he did anything wrong toward you or if he owes you money, put that on my bill. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: "I will pay you back." (I won't mention that you owe me your very life.)

²⁰ Yes, brother, I hope in the Lord that you will lift up my heart in Christ.

²¹ As I write this letter, I'm sure you will obey. I know that you will do even more than I am asking for.

²² Oh yes, prepare a guest room for me. I hope to be given back to you because you are praying for this.

²³ Epaphras, my cellmate in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you. ²⁴ My co-workers — Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke — send you their greetings too.

²⁵ May the help in time of need of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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