



## One chapter wonders - Philemon

- How does Christianity impact the details of inter-personal problems?
- Letter written to a slave owner about his recently converted runaway slave – shows the richness of grace

### 1. A Startling Solution

- Slavery – a fact of Roman life, seen as a form of employment
- But runaway/rebellion not tolerated. Runaways branded or executed
- Onesimus, thief and runaway becomes a Christian. What now?
- Paul's solution is a breath-taking display of grace, involving:
  - A foregoing of rights – Philemon
  - A repentant returning slave – Onesimus
  - A ready & forgiving welcome – Philemon
  - Another to pay what we owe – Paul
- It was a startling solution that would have a staggering impact
  - Grace in action in a deeply divided world
  - Immediate impact on Onesimus – Useless now becomes Useful.
  - Immediate impact on the church and society
  - Longer lasting impact – led to collapse of slavery

### 2. A Wonderful Picture

- The solution lay in looking at the problem through the lens of the gospel
- So the solution is a wonderful picture of the gospel
- “We are all the Lord's Onesimi” – Luther
  - We are all runaway servants facing the master's wrath
  - We have a master who is prepared to forego his rights
  - Repentant returning slaves need to go back to him
  - There is a warm and forgiving welcome
  - Because Jesus has offered to bear what we owe
  - We who once were useless, now are useful

### 3. The Practical Challenge

- Paul has high expectations from those who have experienced grace
- Several principles:
  - Remember you are an Onesimus too
  - Remember Christ's dealings with you
  - Lead by grace, not power, or manipulation
  - Don't always insist on your rights where you can show grace
  - Repentance doesn't mean that there aren't consequences & obligations
  - Be willing to bear the cost of sustaining a relationship
  - Look for ways to display the surprising grace of the gospel in your dealings with people



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S E R V I N G J E S U S C H R I S T T H E K I N G

www.newlifefellowship.ie - part of the reformed presbyterian church of ireland

Sabbath 8th June 08

Welcome to our service this morning - today we are remembering Christ's death for sinners as we take part in the Lord's Supper.

If you are a Christian and haven't joined with us for the Lord's Supper before, and haven't yet spoken to the elders about your faith in Jesus Christ, we'd invite you to watch, and come and speak to Mark before our next communion in September.

If you aren't a Christian, we'd invite you to watch as well, and if you have any questions, speak to Mark or one of the elders afterwards.

You're all welcome to stay for a bite of lunch after the service

#### Notices

|            |   |               |
|------------|---|---------------|
| Sab        | Evening Service at Mark & Judith's  | 8pm           |
| Tues       | No Bible Study  | 8pm           |
| Mon-Wed    | Synod meets in Faughan - Evening meetings of Synod open to all.<br>Monday - Opening evening - Message from the Moderator<br>Tuesday - College and other reports<br>News and speakers from other churches we are close to<br>Venue - Faughan RP Church, Drumahoe | 7.30pm<br>7pm |
| Wed        | Final night of Synod - Mission Vision evening<br>“Church Planting in the 21st Century”<br>David Vaughn - Reformed Baptist missionary working in Grenoble, France<br>Everglades Hotel, Derry   | 7.30pm        |
| June 16-30 | Mark & Judith will be away on holidays<br>Services will be taken by:<br>22nd June - Philip McCollum<br>29th June - Callum Webster<br>If you are able to host one of these men for lunch speak to Judith   |               |

Next Sabbath - Jude

Opening Psalm: 78:21-24

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