



# The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon

## *The Opening Remarks*

### *Philemon 1:1-3*

- I. THE SENDERS OF THE EPISTLE (Philemon 1:1)
  - A. Paul
    1. His apostleship
      - a. By the will of God (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1)
      - b. Not of men (Galatians 1:1)
      - c. By the commandment of God (1 Timothy 1:1)
      - d. According to the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1)
    2. His condition—"a prisoner of Jesus Christ"
  - B. Timothy
    1. His identity
      - a. Early on he was more commonly known by his longer name, Timotheus (Acts 16:1; Acts 17:14-15; Acts 18:5; Acts 19:22; Acts 20:4; Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 6; 2 Thessalonians 1:1).
      - b. The transition to Timothy began in 2 Corinthians 1:1, but he continued to be called by both through the prison epistles.
      - c. The transition was complete by Paul's first epistle to Timothy and continued in Hebrews. Note: The only time Timotheus appears after this point is in the postscript for 2 Timothy and perhaps this was only so that the connection could be made that Timothy (2 Timothy 1:2) is Timotheus (see postscript).
    2. His spiritual kinship—"our brother" (2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Hebrews 13:23)
- II. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE EPISTLE (Philemon 1:1-2)
  - A. The Individuals (Philemon 1:1-2)
    1. Philemon (Philemon 1:1)
      - a. Our dearly beloved
      - b. Our fellowlabourer
    2. Apphia, our beloved (Philemon 1:2); Note: Thought to be Philemon's wife
    3. Archippus, our fellowsoldier (Philemon 1:2; Colossians 4:17); Note: Thought to be Philemon's son



## B. The Church (Philemon 1:2)

1. A congregation of believer's met in the house of Philemon.
2. The fact that the epistle is addressed to three people, but then singularly to the church "in thy house" points to two truths.
  - a. It would appear that the three dwelt in one house.
  - b. It would seem as though Philemon was the head of that house.
3. Based upon the wording of Colossians 4:17 it is quite possible that Archippus served the preacher.

## III. THE BLESSING OF THE EPISTLE (Philemon 1:3)

### A. The Recipient of the Blessing

1. The shifting pronouns
  - a. Singular pronouns
    - (1) Thy (Philemon 1:2, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 21)
    - (2) Thee (Philemon 1:4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23)
    - (3) Thou (Philemon 1:5, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21)
    - (4) Thine (Philemon 1:19)
  - b. Plural pronouns
    - (1) You (Philemon 1:3, 6, 22)
    - (2) Your (Philemon 1:22, 25)
  - c. Mixed pronouns in Philemon 1:6
    - (1) Singular—thy
    - (2) Plural—you
2. The likely indications
  - a. Paul addressed the epistle to three people plus a congregation.
  - b. There are times where the focus is on the main recipient, Philemon.
  - c. There are other times where those in his house or the church meeting in his house are included or brought in to the discussion.

### B. The Nature of the Blessing

1. Grace
2. Peace
3. Note: Grace and peace appear together in the form of a blessing seventeen times in scripture (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 1:3; Revelation 1:4). In every case, grace precedes peace!

### C. The Source of the Blessing

1. God our Father
2. The Lord Jesus Christ



## The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and Philemon

### *The Praise of Philemon*

#### *Philemon 1:4-7*

- I. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR PHILEMON (Philemon 1:4-6)
  - A. The Expression of Paul's Thanks (Philemon 1:4; Romans 1:8-9; Ephesians 1:15-16; Philippians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:3)
    1. The statement of thanks—"I thank my God"
    2. The means of thanks
      - a. The assurance of thanks—"making mention of thee"
      - b. The frequency of thanks—"always"
      - c. The place of thanks—"in my prayers"
  - B. The Cause of Paul's Thanks (Philemon 1:5; see 1 Corinthians 13:13)
    1. The news of Philemon's virtues—"Hearing of"
    2. The description of Philemon's virtues
      - a. Love
      - b. Faith
    3. The beneficiaries of Philemon's virtues
      - a. Toward the Lord Jesus
      - b. Toward all saints
  - C. The Hope of Paul's Thanks (Philemon 1:6)
    1. The confidence in Philemon—"the communication of thy faith"
      - a. Generally speaking, communication involves taking that which is personal or private to someone else and making it common or sharing with another. The communication can be words (2 Samuel 3:17) or material possessions (1 Timothy 6:18).
      - b. We verbally communicate those things which we think are important. If we find something that we genuinely enjoy, we want others to know about it so that they too can enjoy it.
      - c. Apparently, Philemon communicated his faith to others around him, partly through his actions, but likely through his willingness to speak of his love for the Lord and faith in the Lord.
      - d. As believers, the Lord has given us a tremendous opportunity to speak to others about our wonderful salvation and the many benefits experienced daily.
      - e. Paul said of the believers at Rome that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world (Romans 1:8).



- f. It is our duty to communicate what the Lord has done for us.
  - (1) God has called the saved to be His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), and as such, Christians are to take God's truth to a lost and dying world. This message must be communicated.
  - (2) Due mostly to man's ever increasing dependence upon technology, Christians have lost their effectiveness in communicating with others.
  - (3) This may seem insignificant, until one considers how it has weakened our ability to communicate our faith.
  - (4) Fewer people today will knock on a door and tell a stranger that he must be born again.
  - (5) Even fewer will stand upon a street corner and communicate the words of God to those who pass by.
  - (6) The saved must once again become willing to go forth and tell family and stranger alike that Jesus saves.
- 2. The hope for Philemon—"may become effectual"
  - a. Paul knew Philemon would communicate his faith.
  - b. His desire was that Philemon's communication would be blessed with effectiveness.
  - c. This required two things.
    - (1) Philemon's communication of the faith had to be a scripture-filled communication.
    - (2) The communication had to be believed (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
- 3. The expression of Philemon—"by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus"
  - a. Apparently, the communication of Philemon's faith involved him giving personal testimony of "every good thing which" was in him.
  - b. In the end, he pointed others back to the fact that anything good in him was because of Jesus Christ.

## II. PAUL'S JOY IN PHILEMON (Philemon 1:7)

### A. The Nature of Paul's Joy

- 1. Great joy
- 2. Consolation
  - a. The word *consolation* means the alleviation of distress of mind.
  - b. Its association with comfort is not by mistake (Jeremiah 16:7; Romans 15:4-5; 2 Corinthians 1:4-7; 2 Corinthians 7:4-7; Philippians 2:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

### B. The Cause of Paul's Joy

- 1. Philemon's love
- 2. Philemon's refreshing
  - a. The refresher—"by thee"
  - b. The refreshed—"the bowels of the saints are refreshed"