

Living in Light of God's Truth

“Perhaps”

Philemon 1-25

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / June 28, 2026

Philemon 1-25 “Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ² and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: ³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. ⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²² At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given 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 the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: **Thanks Be To God!**

I. Your Faith Should Bless Others – Not Just You.

A. Be known for your love.

Philemon 4-5 “I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus **and for all the saints...**”

B. Refresh the hearts of others.

Philemon 6-7 “...and I pray that the **sharing of your faith** may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.”

C. Your faith is a community project.

Colossians 3:15-16 “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, **teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom**, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

a. We **teach** one another by helping each other understand God’s truth.

b. We **admonish** one another by helping each other apply God's truth.

II. Your Faith Should Help You Trust God When You Can't See The Whole Story.

Philemon 15 "For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while..."

The Bible doesn't call us to resort to the cliché, "Everything happens for a reason." We don't have to pretend we know exactly what God is doing. But we can trust Him enough to say, "Perhaps He's accomplishing something bigger than I can presently see."

- A. **Joseph looked back:** "God meant it for good." (Gen. 50:20)
- B. **Mordecai looked ahead:** "Who knows...?" (Est. 4:14)
- C. **Naomi looked around:** "The Almighty has dealt bitterly with me." (Ruth 1:20)
- D. **Paul looked upward:** "God works all things together for good..." (Rom. 8:28)

*Mature faith doesn't understand everything God is doing.
Mature faith trusts that God is doing more than you can presently see.*

Mature faith says, "Perhaps..." and assumes the best of God.

III. Your Faith Should Help You Extend Grace To Difficult People.

A. You can see people differently.

Philemon 16 "No longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother..."

B. You can receive people differently.

Philemon 17 "So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me."

C. You need to remember why.

Philemon 18 "If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account."

We've truly received God's grace when we're willing to extend it to others.

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. In what practical ways are you refreshing, encouraging, teaching, or strengthening other believers?
2. Where in your life do you need to say "perhaps" instead of demanding an explanation from God? Is there an unwanted circumstance where God may be accomplishing something bigger than you can presently see?
3. Who is your Onesimus? Who is the person you are most tempted to define by their worst decision, greatest failure, or the way they have hurt you?
4. What would it look like to "receive" that person differently? Are there practical ways you could extend grace, pursue reconciliation (where appropriate), or begin seeing them through the lens of the gospel rather than through the lens of their past?
5. When you struggle to extend grace, how does remembering that Jesus said, "Charge that to My account," change your perspective? How should Christ's grace toward you shape the grace you extend to others?