



# ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN

## Philemon 1, 7-21

### The Worthwhile Cross of the Christian

**Verses 1:** Paul writes this letter to a man named \_\_\_\_\_, their beloved fellow worker.

Paul is currently a \_\_\_\_\_ awaiting his day in court before Caesar. This has been a 4-5 year ordeal. He is there because he was called by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel of free and full forgiveness in Jesus, and he proclaimed it and was persecuted for it. Paul bore this cross willingly for Christ. What does it mean to “bear the cross” as a Christian?

**Verse 7:** What are some things we have and do as Christians here at St. Paul's that refresh the hearts of God's people elsewhere when they hear about it?

What are some crosses we bear as Christians now?

**Verse 8:** God's Word is truth. There is a right and a wrong. We pray in the Lord's Prayer, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” Jesus wants us to forgive. Paul could lean on the law to get the action he wants, but Paul leans on love.

**Verse 9:** Paul encourages him on the basis of love – self-sacrificing love, pictured perfectly in Jesus. Paul pointed Philemon to God's love for him in Christ. Paul pointed Philemon to see him, Paul – an example of God's love and an apostle, who had served long and now was suffering for the Gospel. What does looking at Jesus, and then at Paul who had served so faithfully and suffered for it, make us think about?

**Verse 10:** Onesimus was Philemon's slave. Onesimus ran away and left Philemon in the lurch. Onesimus became a Christian and was very helpful to Paul. Why does Paul appeal on Onesimus' behalf?

**Verse 11:** “Useless vs. Useful.” How could Onesimus become useful to both Paul and Philemon?

**Verse 12-14:** Why does Paul want to keep Onesimus with him?

Why would Philemon have liked to help Paul?

Why does Paul send Onesimus back to Philemon?

Philemon had the right to punish Onesimus severely, maybe even have him killed. What does Paul want Philemon to do?

What makes us trust brothers and sisters in Christ to be godly, good, forgiving and gracious?

**Verse 15-16:** The grace and mercy of Jesus Christ is the great equalizer. Paul shows how the good news of forgiveness in Jesus took a runaway \_\_\_\_\_ and turned him into a \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ. Philemon was receiving him back as a \_\_\_\_\_. How did God also change your identity?

Philemon may have been angry, hurt, and may have suffered loss because of Onesimus (especially if he stole something as well as left him a worker short). What could change Philemon's mind to help him forgive Onesimus and regard him as a brother and no longer as a slave?

**Verse 17:** Paul says, “welcome him as you would welcome me.” Jesus bore our sins on the cross and died in our place, and rose again. Because of Jesus God welcomes us as he would welcome Jesus. Why was Paul confident that Philemon would bear the cross of putting aside his anger and wrath, and instead forgive Onesimus, welcome him as a brother, and send him back to help Paul?

How does Jesus help us put aside our anger and hurt and forgive those who have sinned against us?