

### Philemon

- **Read: the whole book!**
- **What can we deduce?**
  - Paul in prison, probably in Rome
  - To Philemon, whom we don't hear about elsewhere
  - But associated with Onesimus (v10) and Archippus (v2)

- **Read: Colossians 4:7-9, Col 4:17**
- **So we assume that Philemon lived in Colossae**
  - Perhaps Apphia is his wife and Archippus their son
- **The church in Philemon's home**
  - So presumably fairly well-off
  - Verse 3, 22, 25 – 'you' is plural; elsewhere singular – addressed to Philemon personally

- **Who was Onesimus?**
  - Verses 15-16
  - Verse 10
  - A slave of Philemon
    - NB slavery just assumed, as part of (fallen) society
    - What things should we live with, and which are incompatible with the Gospel?
    - Temporary nature of human life and existence
  - Had come to Paul – presumably run away from Philemon

- **Paul's dilemma: to send him back or not?**
  - If Onesimus had left without Philemon's permission (which is what it sounds like), Paul would be stealing if he kept him
  - If he sent Onesimus back, Onesimus could be put to death if a runaway slave
- **Paul's course of action?**
  - To send him back but with an appeal letter
    - which we are now reading!
  - With Tychicus?? (See Col 4:9)
    - Minder or advocate?
    - See Eph 6:21 – the messenger? Importance of communication!

- ### Paul sends Onesimus back...
- **Now a brother not just a slave**
    - For Christians the law is just a starting point...
  - **Carrots and sticks!**
    - Dear to Paul
    - Philemon owes his (eternal) life to Paul
    - Paul offers to repay anything Onesimus owes or has stolen
    - Oh, and prepare a room for me....!
  - **Carrots and sticks on our Christian journeys**
    - There are times when we need to feel held to account
    - Commitment, but human frailty...

**Tying in with other people we know:**

- **Mark**
  - Had gone with Barnabas (his cousin – Col 4:10)
  - Had been the case of the rift between Paul and Barnabas
  - Evidently now reconciled to Paul
    - Though we don't hear of Paul and Barnabas together again
  - Writer of a gospel!
- **Luke**
  - The doctor (Col 4:14)
  - Writer of a gospel!

**Pastoral care involves:**

- Taking full account of human nature
- Being honest with the person concerned
- Expecting them to respond as a child of Christ
- Expecting some respect for the right use of authority by church leader / apostle
- Challenges...
- Reflects God's dealings with us...

