

Philemon:
The Redemption of a Runaway
Short Books of Powerful Messages, Part 1

- We are all runaway thieves in need of that much grace, and the grace of the cross transforms everything.

1. A Unique Epistle!

- A. His shortest book.
- B. His most personal book.
- C. A most controversial book.
- D. The only book where Paul's does not mention Jesus' death & resurrection, but it is all about living out the Gospel.
- E. Paul uniquely introduces himself as a PRISONER, v.1, 9.

2. An Amazing Story!

A. He Runs:

- Onesimus ("PROFITABLE") the slave of Philemon ("AFFECTIONATE") may have stolen and then ran away from Philemon (v.15,18). Running, he went to Rome to be safe from capture, to slink away, blend in and disappear into the subculture of a great city. But God has loving eyes of grace upon him and did not want him safe, but SAVED.

B. He is Redeemed:

- Somehow, this deserting slave meets the imprisoned Apostle and is delivered (v. 10). The fugitive is forgiven; the runaway is redeemed and becomes Pauls' partner, **son, beloved brother** (Col.4:19; Phil 16), and **minister** to Paul in his chains (v.13).

C. He Returns:

- Paul must legally seek to have Onesimus return to Philemon. But what if?? Philemon could legally deal harshly with Onesimus and have him severely beaten or even put to death.

3. A Gracious Intercessor!

- Paul appeals to his "partner" Philemon in the Gospel (v.6, 17) to receive Onesimus back, not as a slave but to receive him as:

A. As Paul's Heart, v.12

B. A Partner Forever, v.15

C. A Beloved Brother

D. As Paul Himself, v.16,17: Without suspicion & forgiven!

4. A Powerful Result!

- Church history indicates three amazing things about Onesimus & showing that he certainly became profitable.
 - A. He became the pastor of the church in Ephesus (after Timothy)! (Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch)
 - B. He was instrumental in collecting and preserving letters written by Paul into one place! (FF Bruce)
 - C. He was martyred during the reign of Emperor Trajan.