



Transformational Forgiveness

November 18, 2018

Imagine walking into a movie thirty-minutes late and then leaving before the final fifteen minutes.

So, here is what we know...

Philemon 1:8-21

⁸ Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹ yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

¹² I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. ¹³ I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. ¹⁴ But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. ¹⁵ Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever— ¹⁶ no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰ I do wish, brother, that I may have 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 ask.

The call to [grace](#) and [forgiveness](#)

The undermining of the [system](#) of [slavery](#)

New **Thinking**:

- He is family (Paul's spiritual son)
- He is loved
- He is valuable, useful, gifted
- He is no longer a slave!
- He is your brother in Jesus Christ
- Jesus breaks down every barrier!

Paul is not affirming slavery and injustice, he is undermining it! Injustice will always fail and fall in the presence of the grace and love of Jesus. But it often takes time!

New **Actions** and **Lifestyle**:

- **Gentle appeal** and not harsh demands! (v.8-10)
- The **dignity or relationships** and not selfishly using people (v.11)
- **Close engagement** and not unfeeling distance (v.12-14)
- **Spiritual family** and not fleshly abuse (v.15-16)
- **Self-sacrifice** and not stingy self-protection (v.17-20)

The story of Onesimus is our story!

The story of Philemon is our story!

We are recipients of transformational forgiveness!

We are called to share transformational forgiveness!