Philemon – "All About Forgiveness"

"The Foundation for Forgiveness"

Philemon 1-7

I. Read Scripture

~ Please turn in your Bibles to Philemon (between Titus and Hebrews).

II. Prayer

III. Introduction to Series

⇨ For the next 2 evenings we will work verse by verse through the book of Philemon.

⇨ If you were to reads through this little postcard/letter you would quickly realize the theme is Forgiveness.

⇨ That is why I have entitled this study in Philemon: ***All About Forgiveness.***

? Is Forgiveness something to which you can relate?

? Do you need Forgiveness?

? Have you ever needed someone to Forgive you?

? Have you ever needed to Forgive someone else?

? Do you seek to bring reconciliation and forgiveness in relationships, even if you are not the one who needs forgiveness or the one who needs to extend forgiveness?

⇨ It would not be a stretch to say that there are people here in this room right now that need to seek forgiveness from someone they have sinned against.

- There are others here that need to seek to extend forgiveness to those who have sinned against you.

- And all of us here need to strongly encourage each other to obey God and seek and grant forgiveness.

⇨ Philemon is ***All About Forgiveness*** and will teach and challenge us all to be involved in the ministry of Forgiveness from all sides.

⇨ Remember that in order to answer the question, "What does this book mean to us today?" we must first answer the question, "What did the book mean for the original recipients?"

⇨ So, before we dive into Philemon, it is **imperative** that we understand the background of this little letter. If we do not understand the background properly, we will miss the whole point of the book and apply it incorrectly.

~ Let begin by examining:

1. **The Author**

   ~ Beginning first with:

   a. The Human Author

   ⇨ We see from the very first word of this little letter that *Paul* identifies himself as the author.

   ⇨ Paul also identifies himself as the author in verses 9 & 19.

   ? What do you know about Paul?

   ⇨ It is important to be reminded of the fact that Paul, formerly known as Saul, was a violent persecutor of Christians and in the case of Stephen gave approval of his murder.

   - Then while he was traveling to Damascus to imprison Christians, the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul and granted him new birth so that he would serve as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

- Obviously, Paul was a man who knew personally about the Forgiveness and restoration of God. This, from a human perspective, more that qualified Paul to write this letter.

⇨ Notice also that Timothy's name is included in the first verse.

⇨ Paul frequently mentions Timothy at the beginning of his letters (i.e. 2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 & 2 Thes.).

⇨ The mention of Timothy does not indicate that Timothy was the co-author, but instead it indicates that Timothy was in agreement with the contents of this letter.

⇨ Philemon and the church at Colossae must have been familiar with Timothy. Philemon probably met Timothy in Ephesus when Paul was there for 3 years.

⇨ Timothy's approval would have been a significant encouragement since he was known by those who would receive the message of this letter.

~ **We see that Paul was the human author.**

~ ***Let's now look at:***

b. The Divine Author

⇨ Just as with every other book in the Bible there is not only a Human Author, but there is also a Divine author who empowered the human author and assures that everything written down is without error.

~ ***This is clearly taught in:***

📖 2 Peter 1:20-21
20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

⇨ It was God, the Holy Spirit who moved Paul to write Philemon.

~ We also see that God was the Divine Author of Philemon in:

📖 2 Timothy 3:16-17
16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

⇨ The point here is that God is ultimately the author of every book in the Bible, which includes Philemon. (no red-letter version)

⇨ Since God is the author of Philemon, then the message of this book has authority in our lives as to how we are to understand it and live its truth out in this world.

~ Now that we know the Author, let's now discover:

2. The Recipients

~ Beginning first with:

a. The Original Recipients

⇨ In verse 1 we see that *Philemon* is the recipient of this letter from Paul.

- He was obviously played a significant role in the church of Colosse, because the church met in his

house (v. 2). He was led to a saving faith in Christ (v. 19) by Paul, most likely while visiting Ephesus (just south of Colossae) while Paul ministered there for 3 years.

- We know that Onesimus, the other main Character in this book besides Philemon, was from Colossae.

~ We know this, because of what we read in Paul's letter to the church at Colossae in:

📖 Colossians 4:9

9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number.

⇨ The fact that Paul refers to Onesimus as from Colossae here, points to the fact the Philemon lived in Colossae as well.

- *Philemon* was also a wealthy man as seen in the fact that he owned a large house (used for church to meet in (v. 2)) and he owned at least one slave.

⇨ Not only was this letter addressed to Philemon, but look with me at verse 2 to find out who else Paul meant to hear the contents of this letter.

⇨ Notice the first name in verse 2:

Apphia our sister = probably Philemon's wife. Paul may have addressed her, because normally the wife had the day-to-day responsibilities of the household slaves.

⇨ Now Notice the next name mentioned in verse 2:

Archippus our fellow soldier = possibly Philemon's son. He was involved in some

recognized area of ministry as seen in what Paul writes about him in:

📖 Colossians 4:17

17 Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

⇨ Now look with me at the last phrase in verse 2:

the church in your house = this points to the fact that this letter was meant to be read not only by Philemon and his family, but also to the church as a whole.

⇨ Also look at the word *'you'* in the beginning of verse 3. This is a plural *'you.'*

⇨ This reinforces the fact that this letter was meant to be read to the church in Colossae as a whole.

- This would be a great accountability for Philemon and Onesimus to do the right thing.
- It would also serve as a catalyst to bring about the seeking and granting of forgiveness among others in the church.

⇨ Even with the fact that the contents of the letter were to be shared with Philemon's family and church, the letter is still a person entreaty from one friend to another.

- This is evident by the fact that the pronouns used in verses 4-21 are first person singular.

~ Let's now discover:

b. The Current Recipients

⇨ Since God had planned for us to also read Philemon, we too are meant to find truth we can apply to our lives from Philemon.

⇨ Again only after we have discovered the application for the Original Recipients can we then discover the application to our lives.

~ God through Paul is the Author

~ The Recipients are Philemon, his family and the church at Colossae and those living in 2026 and beyond.

~ Now that we know the author and the recipients let's look at:

3. The Purpose

⇨ To help us better understand the Purpose of this letter to Philemon from Paul:

~ Turn with me to:

Colossians 4:7-9

7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.
8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;
9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

⇨ Here we see that Paul sent Onesimus back with Tychicus who was going to deliver the letter to the **Colossians** (book of) as well as this more personal letter to Philemon.

- The fact that Tychicus was personally escorting Onesimus back to Philemon would have helped Paul communicate to Philemon the extreme importance and seriousness of his letter to him.

⇨ So Paul sent this letter and Philemon's run-away slave, Onesimus, back to his master Philemon in Colosse. Evidently, Onesimus had stolen from his master (v. 18) and then had run away to Rome. Rome was obviously a large city where Onesimus could hide out. Onesimus met Paul during Paul's 1st imprisonment in Rome where he was under house arrest and Paul led Onesimus to a saving faith in Christ (v. 10). Onesimus had become a faithful brother in Christ to Paul (v. 11), but Paul knew the right thing was to send Onesimus back to Philemon to make things right between these 2 men who were now both Christians.

- Paul was being the agent by whom God would allow Forgiveness to run its course in the life of Onesimus and Philemon.

⇨ So, the main Purpose for this letter was to allow Onesimus to seek the Forgiveness of Philemon and to encourage Philemon to Forgive Onesimus.

⇨ As I said earlier this book is **All About Forgiveness.**

⇨ AS we study Philemon it is extremely important to keep this background in mind. If we neglect it, we will surely interpret it incorrectly and therefore we will apply it incorrectly.

⇨ This is the reason I have taken this much time on the background.

⇨ Now with the short time we have left, let's take a brief look at the first 7 verses in Philemon.

IV. Read Philemon 1-7

V. Exposition

Proposition:

As we study Philemon 1-7 I want us to discover 2 Major Truths about Forgiveness that will lead to a Life of Forgiveness to the Glory of God.

1. **The Foundation of Forgiveness**
2. **The Profile of those Who Forgive**

~ Let's briefly look at verses 1-3 where we will discover:

1. The Foundation of Forgiveness

(3 Components in the Foundation of Forgiveness)

~ The 1st Component in the Foundation of Forgiveness is:

a) Humility

⇨ Look with me at the first part of verse 1:

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus

⇨ Notice how Paul refers to himself.

a prisoner of Christ Jesus

- This is the only place that Paul uses this phrase in a salutation of a letter.

⇨ Normally he uses refers to himself as an Apostle of Christ Jesus, which stressed the authority God had granted him.

⇨ Yet, here in Philemon where he is going to ask Philemon to Forgive Onesimus, he refers to himself as a *prisoner of Christ Jesus*.

⇨ Here is the first place we see Paul lay down the **foundational component** of **Humility**.

⇨ Instead coming with **authority**, Paul comes in **Humility.**

? Whose Prisoner was he?

? Was he a prison of Rome and Nero?

⇨ In a sense, yes, but ultimately he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

⇨ Paul's relationship with and service to Christ Jesus is the reason he is a prisoner. He is not ultimately in prison, because of Nero, but because of God's plan.

⇨ Paul has **Humbled** himself under God's authority and was therefore willing to submit to God's Plan for his life.

⇨ By referring to himself as a *Prisoner of Christ Jesus*, Paul was demonstrating to Philemon the importance of **Humility.**

⇨ He was reminding Philemon that when you humble yourself before God and HIS plan for your life, you will have to make personal sacrifices, you will have to endure personal injustices and offences in your life of which Paul knew all about.

⇨ Philemon would not miss this illustration of **Humility**.

⇨ Now look at how Paul refers to Philemon at the end of <u>verse 1</u>:

To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker

⇨ Paul refers to him as a *beloved brother*.

⇨ The word *brother* or *friend* (NIV) is not there in the original, it is added to help clarify.

⇨ The word beloved is the Greek word ἀγαπητῷ (agapetos) - designates a close and intimate relationship with Paul.

⇨ He also refers to Philemon as a *fellow worker* = Philemon was committed to the same thing Paul was committed to, namely the ministry of the Gospel.

⇨ Paul is counting Philemon as an equal, not a subordinate.

⇨ Look at the last part of verse 19 in Philemon. *Not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well*

⇨ This shows that Paul led Philemon to Christ.

⇨ Yet in the beginning of the letter, Paul does not refer to himself as the Mentor and Philemon the one being Mentored.

⇨ Instead, Paul **Humbles** himself and says to Philemon, we are on level ground, we are peers.

⇨ Imagine how Philemon felt to have the great Apostle Paul say this about him.

⇨ No doubt Philemon sensed the **Humility** in Paul's words.

⇨ Paul's example of **humility** to Philemon would go along way when he considered whether to obey God and grant forgiveness to Onesimus.

⇨ In Order to Forgive Onesimus, Philemon would have to follow the example of Paul and lay the **Foundation for Forgiveness** of **Humility.**

⇨ In the same way if we are ever going to obey God in the area of Forgiveness, we too will have to do it in **Humility.**

⇨ Pride has no place in Forgiveness, yet so often that is how we approach it.

⇨ We often hold out Forgiveness to people, as if the greatest thing they could ever receive in their lives is our Forgiveness.

⇨ Or we come to people asking for Forgiveness almost lording it over them that they must Forgive us.

? Will we follow our Savior's way of Forgiveness in **Humility** or will we follow the worlds way of Pride that will not please God and allow HIS forgiveness to practically operate in our lives?

⇨ Let's be people who begin with **Humility** in the area of Forgiveness and therefore bring glory to God.

~ Let's now discover the 2nd Component in the Foundation of Forgiveness:

b) Determination

⇨ In order to understand this Component of the Foundation of Forgiveness, we must be reminded that Paul is in Prison when he is writing this letter.

⇨ Now look again at the last 2 words in verse 1:

fellow worker = a worker in the Gospel

⇨ Also look at the words Paul uses to describe *Archippus* in verse 2:

fellow soldier = a great compliment to Archippus
= one who engaged in the same conflicts, faced the same dangers, fought for the same goals, and was loyal,

refusing to desert his post, regardless of the consequences he might face

⇨ Paul is calling *Philemon* a *worker* and *Archipuss* a *soldier*, but by using the word *fellow*, he is also referring to himself as a worker and a soldier.

⇨ Paul was not only a *worker* and *soldier* in the past while he was not in prison, but he was currently a *worker* and *soldier* even while he was in prison.

⇨ Paul did not let his circumstances dictate whether or not he faithfully served the LORD.

⇨ He also did not let being in prison keep him from seeking to help Onesimus and Philemon be reconciled through Forgiveness.

⇨ Here we see **The Determination of Forgiveness.**

⇨ Paul was **Determined** to see the Process of Forgiveness come to fruition in the lives of Philemon and Onesimus.

⇨ Paul's **Determination** would serve as a great example to Philemon as he was faced with Forgiving Onesimus which involved some grim circumstances.

⇨ **Determination** is Foundational in the area of forgiveness.

⇨ If we are going follow God in Forgiveness, we too will have to show **Determination**.

⇨ Sadly to say, the concept of **Determination** is hard to find in the body of Christ today.

⇨ We have way to many excuses as to why we fail to serve God as we should.

⇨ We allow our circumstances to dictate whether or not we faithfully serve God whole heartedly.

⇨ I would doubt if any of us have known the pain that Paul endure during his life as a Christian.

⇨ Yet, in all this he still did not let these circumstances keep him from fulfilling what God had called him to do.

⇨ One thing The LORD has called us all to do is to be People who seek Forgiveness, grant Forgiveness and help others walk through the process of Forgiveness.

⇨ IN order to be People of Forgiveness we must be People of **Determination.**

⇨ Obeying God in the area of Forgiveness can sometimes be very difficult, and it will be impossible if we are not **Determined** to ignore our circumstances.

⇨ I have heard all kinds of excuses by people who chose not to forgive or who will not seek forgiveness.

⇨ The most popular one is, ***"If they make the first move, then I will forgive them."***

⇨ Just think, If God were to have waited for us to make the first move, we would all still be hopelessly lost in our sin.

⇨ Instead, in spite of man's continual rejection of God, HE was **Determined** to provided Forgiveness for all who would Trust in Christ Alone.

~ This is evident in:

📖 Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⇨ Let's be a People, who make the first move and therefore show ourselves **Determined** to be People of Forgiveness in every situation, in order that God might be Glorified.

⇨ This is a high calling, but thankfully there is power to fulfill it as we will see in a moment.

~ We have now discovered 2 Components in the Foundation of Forgiveness:

The Humility of Forgiveness
The Determination of Forgiveness

~ Let's now discover the 3rd Component in the Foundation of Forgiveness:

3. Source

? What is the Source or Origin of Forgiveness?

? What enables or empowers us to Forgive?

⇨ Look with me at verse 3:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇨ First, Notice the word:

Grace = this is the source of our Salvation.

⇨ Paul was overwhelmed by the Grace of God.

~ He of course wrote extensively about Grace in his letters explaining how we who are sinful are made right with God.

~ For example:

📖 Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

⇨ Paul understood that were it not for the Grace of God, he would be hopelessly lost in his sin.

⇨ IN reading this word, Philemon would have been reminded how God Graciously saved him from his sin.

⇨ Now notice the word:
peace = this is the result of our Salvation by Grace
📖 Romans 5:1
1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

⇨ Philemon would have been reminded that he was once an enemy of God, yet by God's Grace he now had peace with God.

⇨ Now notice the last phrase in verse 3 of Philemon:
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇨ Here is the Source of *Grace and peace*.

⇨ By using these familiar words in his greeting, Paul was reminding Philemon where the **Source** of all Forgiveness is Found.

⇨ The **Source** is found in *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

⇨ Philemon would have been reminded of the truth that he might have just read in the Letter to the church of Colossae (book of Colossians), where Paul wrote:
📖 Colossians 2:13-14
13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

⇨ In being reminded of how forgiven he was through the Grace of the Cross, he may have then been reminded of what Paul wrote to him and the rest of the church at Colossae in:

📖 Colossians 3:13

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

⇨ In order for Philemon to Forgive as Christ had Forgiven him, He needed to understand that this could only be accomplished by Christ in HIM.

⇨ Remember that Grace is not only unmerited favor, but it is also the desire and power to do God's will.

~ We see this truth in:

📖 1 Corinthians 15:10

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

⇨ The ministry of Forgiveness can be a tough thing.

⇨ That it is why it is imperative that we understand with Philemon what the **Source of Forgiveness** is.

⇨ It is through Christ Alone by HIS Grace Alone.

⇨ Let's quit making excuses and allow HIS Grace to Empower our Determination in the area of Forgiveness.

~ So far, we have discovered the 1st Major Truth about Forgiveness in our passage for this evening:

1. The Foundation of Forgiveness

~ Let's now briefly look at verses 4-7 where we will discover the 2nd Major Truth about Forgiveness in our passage for this evening:

2. The Profile of those who Forgive

⇨ Before we discover these 3 truths, let me say something very important. Many people read verses 4-7 casually and say that Paul was trying to "grease the skids" or "butter up" Philemon, in order to manipulate Philemon into forgiving Onesimus.

⇨ This is the furthest thing from the truth.

Paul is not trying to 'grease the skids' or 'butter up' Philemon so that he would forgive Onesimus, instead Paul is praising Philemon's Character expecting that Philemon would exemplify that same character when it came to Onesimus.

⇨ Paul bases his appeal to Philemon on Philemon's character.

⇨ Let's now look at:

The Profile of those who Forgive (3 Attributes)

~ Let's now discover The 1st Attribute concerning the Profile of Those Who Forgive.

~ The 1st Attribute is They:

a) Produce Thanksgiving

⇨ Look with me at verse 4:

4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,

⇨ The fact that Philemon Possesses the Character that Forgives others will Causes Paul to Give Thanks for him.

- IN other words, Philemon's Character Produced Thanksgiving in Paul.

⇨ The Thanksgiving Philemon's Character Produced in Paul was both God-Centered *(God)* and Ceaseless (*always).*

⇨ Obviously there was something about Philemon's Life that caused Paul to give thanks in a **God Centered** and **Ceaseless** way?

? How would Paul currently have known about the God honoring life Philemon was living?

⇨ Look at the beginning of verse 5:

because I hear

- It is also in the present = *I keep hearing of*
    - this indicates that Paul hears presently of Philemon's great character, not just the past.

? From whom was Paul getting his information about Philemon? From whom was Paul *hearing*?

~ It wasn't like they had telephones, e-mail and video conferencing.

⇨ Look at the following verse:

📖 Colossians 4:12

12 ***Epaphras, who is one of your number****, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.*

~ Also look at:

Philemon 23

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

⇨ It is most likely that ***Epaphras*** was the founder of the church at Colossae and we see from these verses that he was in Rome when Paul wrote the letters to the

Church of Colossae and this letter to Philemon (the one who hosted the Church of Colossae in his house).

⇨ It seems as if ***Epaphras*** had updated Paul about the exemplary Christ-like character that Philemon Possessed.

⇨ We also know that ***Onesimus***, Philemon's slave, was with Paul in Rome. He too could have let Paul know of Philemon's Godly life.

⇨ Philemon's Christ-like Character was obviously extremely Evident to all.

⇨ Paul's Ceaseless Thanksgiving to God for Philemon had to be a great encouragement to Philemon. Not only initially, but also as a catalyst to continue honoring God with his life.

? Does the Character in our lives Produce Thankfulness that is God Centered and Ceaseless in others?

? Do other Give Thanks for the way they see Christ exemplified in our lives?

? Do you Notice the Godly Character in others around you?

⇨ If so, I want to challenge you to Thank God for them and tell them.

~ Let's now discover The 2nd Attribute of the Profile of Those Who Forgive.

~ The 2nd Truth is They:

b) Produce a Life of Love

⇨ Notice the 1st word in <u>verse 5:</u>

because

⇨ Paul is now going to tell us why he is so thankful to God for Philemon.

⇨ Simply put it is because the Philemon **Produced a Life of Love.**

~ Let's look at 2 aspects of Philemon's Love Producing Life.

~ First:

1. The Foundation of Love

⇨ Look with me at all of verse 5 with me again:
because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;

⇨ The grammatical structure of this verse links *"love"* with *"all the saints"* AND it links *"faith"* with *"the Lord Jesus."*

⇨ In fact, the NIV shows this link when it translates verse 5 in the following way:
because hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

⇨ With the understanding that *Faith* is linked mainly with the *Lord Jesus* and *Love* is linked mainly with *all the saints*, we can then conclude that **The Foundation of Love is:**
the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus

⇨ Paul knows that Philemon's Life Produces Love, because it is Founded in his Faith in the Lord Jesus.

⇨ Philemon's Life of Love is **Founded in** and **Flows from** his continuing and active faith in the Lord Jesus.

⇨ Faith is the Root of Love.
~ and ~
⇨ Love is the Fruit of Faith.

⇨ IN fact, without Faith in Christ it is impossible to truly Love someone.

⇨ Consider the truth found in:

📖 Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⇨ This is the standard of all Love. It is selfless and self-sacrificing. It gives 100 % expecting nothing in return.

⇨ Only Faith in Jesus Christ will enable a person to love like that.

⇨ Paul is Thankful to God for Philemon because his life Produces Radical Love which is Founded in his Faith in Christ Jesus.

~ Not only do we see the Foundation of Philemon's Love Producing Life, but we also see:

2. The Demonstration of Love

⇨ Look again at the phrase in verse 5:

I hear of your love toward all the saints

? How was this love Demonstrated in Philemon's life?

⇨ We see how it was demonstrated from verse 6:

6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

⇨ Notice the word:

fellowship(sharing) = κοινωνία = generosity, mutual participation

⇨ This is word is exemplified in the early Church in **Acts 2:44-45** (turn with me there)

44 And all those who had believed were together and had

all things in common;
45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

⇨ This is truly a **Demonstration of Love.**

⇨ Notice that it is:
*the fellowship of **your faith***

⇨ We see again that the Demonstration of Love must flow from the Foundation of Love, which is Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇨ Now notice the word:
effective(active) = ἐνεργὴς = productive; we get the word energy from this word

⇨ Notice the word:
knowledge = to possess information through experience

⇨ Lastly Notice the phrase:
every good thing = refers to something that is done or performed

⇨ So in putting this all together it is saying This: as Philemon actively engaged in Christian koinonia(fellowship, serving, sharing) he would attain a knowledge that leads to maturity.
~ And the Knowledge leading to Maturity would lead to more Love of the Saints (Christians).

⇨ Paul is not just praying that this would happen, but the wording and the context show that this must have already been happening in Philemon's life and Paul was praying that it would become even more *effective or active* or energized.

⇨ Philemon Demonstrated his love in a selfless, sacrificial way to the other believers in the Church of

Colossae and Paul was asking that God would continue to empower him in the **Demonstration of Love** so that Philemon would continue to Mature as a God Honoring Man.

⇨ Now notice the last phrase in verse 6:

for Christ's sake (for the sake of Christ –ESV*, in Christ* – NIV*)*

⇨ This idea here is that When this type of Love was Demonstrated in Philemon's Life, God would get the Glory. It would be done for GOD's Sake.

⇨ It is evident to see that Philemon **Produced a Life of Love.**

⇨ Philemon's love for all the saints in this way would surely be tested when Paul asks him to forgive Onesimus.

⇨ The **Demonstration** of this kind of **Love** is another way to know that a person has been transformed by the Grace of God in such a powerful way that they would forgive others, just as God in Christ has forgiven them.

? Are we willing to Love other brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of what it might cost us?

⇨ By the Grace of God, let's allow our **Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ** to continually **Produce in us a Life of Love.**

~ We have now discovered the first 2 Attributes of the Profile of Those Who Forgive.
~ They:
Produce Thanksgiving
Produce a Life of Love

~ Let's now discover The 3rd Attribute of the Profile of Those Who Forgive.

~ They:

c) Produce a Life of Encouragement

⇨ Look with me at verse 7:

7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

⇨ Paul also says the reason he gives thanks to God for Philemon is because Philemon **Produced a Life of Encouragement.**

~ Let's first consider:

1. The Definition of Encouragement

⇨ Notice Paul says that Philemon's love had brought him *joy* and *comfort.*

⇨ Consider the meaning of the word:

Joy = delight, gladness

⇨ Also consider the word:

Comfort = *paraklesis* = call alongside; encouragement

⇨ Now look at the words in the 2nd half of this verse:

hearts = inner organs; speaks of deep desires or emotions

refreshed = to cause to rest;

- A military term speaking of an army resting from a march

⇨ The insinuation here is that the people alluded to in this verse are those who were hurting, possibly struggling with doubt or discouragement.

⇨ We begin to get a picture of **The Definition of Encouragement** given here by Paul when we consider the words he uses in this verse to describe what Philemon's Life Produced.

⇨ He brought *joy* and *comfort* and he brought *rest* to those who were hurting in the deepest part of their emotions.

⇨ I love the way that it is written:

the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you

☉☉ Did you know that Abraham Lincoln (arguably one of our best Presidents) used to carry around newspaper clipping stating that he was a great leader.

⇨ Something about that Clipping Refreshed his Heart in the midst of one of the most difficult times in our country's history (Civil War).

⇨ We all need to be Encouraged by having our hearts Refreshed.

~ ***Not only do we see*** **The Definition of Encouragement** ***but we also see:***

2. The Extension of Encouragement

? How far did Philemon's Encouragement Extend?

⇨ Look at the first part of verse 7 again:

For ***I have come to have*** *much joy and comfort in your love,*

⇨ Paul says **I** have come …

⇨ Philemon's Encouragement Extended all the way to Paul who was in Rome over 1,000 miles away as the bird flies and a lot longer by boat and foot.

⇨ Philemon's Encouragement was so great that it Extended beyond where he was physically.

⇨ Now look again at the last part of verse 7:

the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

⇨ Here we see that his Encouragement Extended to the people with which he had personally shared his life.

⇨ IN fact this was the very thing that Encouraged Paul so much.

⇨ Philemon's Encouragement we not just your every day run of the mill Encouragement.

⇨ Just think, he had Refreshed the ***hearts*** of the Saints.

⇨ Philemon's Encouragement Extended beyond the mere surface of things, it extended to the ***heart.***

⇨ Now Notice the last word in verse 7:
brother = the place of this word at the end makes it emphatic

⇨ Paul has been so deeply encouraged by Philemon's Life of Christ-likeness, that he humbly and lovingly calls him brother.

⇨ This was not a casual remark by Paul, but a term that was rooted in a deep love and admiration of Philemon.

⇨ A Life that Produces Encouragement is one that Refreshes others by pointing them to the truth of God's Word, which is the only place of Truth and therefore comfort and encouragement.

⇨ Let me also remind us that A Life that **Produces Encouragement** Fits the Profile of Those Who Forgive.

⇨ It is another way to know that a person has been transformed by the Grace of God in such a powerful way that they would forgive others, just as God in Christ has forgiven them.

? Does your Life Produce Encouragement?

? What are you doing or what are you planning to do, to Encourage the Saints?

⇨ Praying with someone, sending them a note, spending time with someone just listening, etc…

VI. My Response

1. **The Foundation of Forgiveness**
   a) Humility
   b) Determination
   c) The Origin of Forgiveness

2. **The Profile of those who Forgive**
   a) **They Produce Thanksgiving**
   b) **They Produce Love**
   c) **The Produce a Life of Encouragement**

⇨ We will pick back up tomorrow and do the rest of Philemon.

⇨ However, as we close - I want you to see that Paul has not even asked Philemon to Forgive Onesimus yet.

⇨ He has laid the groundwork to now ask Philemon to do something that will be hard and if done – can only be explained by God's work in Philemon's life.