Philemon verses 8 – 25:- Conclusion:-

Verses 8 – 21: Paul's Appeal for Onesimus:-
Notice how Paul refrains from invoking apostolic authority to command Philemon to *"do what is required"* but appeals to his friend in love as one who has grounds to be heard as an ambassador and a prisoner for the sake of Christ.
As elsewhere Paul refers to his convert as *"my child Onesimus whose father I have become"* (verse 10) compare 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 15 and Galatians chapter 4, verse 19.
Playing on the meaning of the name 'Onesimus = useful or beneficial', Paul describes him as now being useful both to Paul himself, and to his master Philemon. Paul insists that whatever Philemon decides to do, it must be by *"consent , , , that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own freewill."* Onesimus returns to his master Philemon *"as more than a slave"* now he is *"a beloved brother"*. Whatever Philemon decides the status of his former slave has changed. This change of status 'in Christ' means that all are equal in the eyes of our Lord. This Letter and its teaching was applicable to the wider church where the conversion of slaves within a household meant that master and servants worshipped the Lord together. This was radical teaching and has been a stumbling block for churches down the ages. In verses 19 – 20 there is a reminder to Philemon that he he owes his conversion to Christ through the ministry of Paul. Having applied some 'emotional pressure' Paul is confident that Philemon will comply with his request!.

Verses 22 – 25: Final Request, Salutation and Benediction:-
Paul's trust that he will be released from this imprisonment echoes his comment in Philippians chapter 1, verses 25 – 26. *"Through your prayers"* – note that the apostle who is most insistent about the sovereignty of God (see Galatians chapter 1, verses 15 – 16 and Romans chapter 8, verse 29) is equally convinced that God accomplishes his purposes through human instruments. The apostle does not request prayer ; he takes it for granted that his 'partner' (verse 17) remembers him in his prayers.
Verses 23 – 24 – see again Colossians chapter 4, verses 10 – 14 and 15 – 17.
Note that the words *"your spirit"* in verse 25 is plural. The reference is to the whole group included in the salutation in verses 1 -2.

"Let brotherly love continue" Hebrews chapter 13, verse 1.

Help us to help each other, Lord –
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford
And feel his brother's care.

Help us to build each other up –
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope
And perfect us in love.

Up into Thee, our living Head,
Let us in all things grow,
Till Thou hast made us free indeed
And spotless here below.

Charles Wesley 1707 -1788

Terry Brighton 8 / 10 / 2026