

They had no clue their faith in Jesus would have such an impact on their community and cut through not only that ancient evil barrier of slavery BUT *every* barrier you can think of!

Our lives are little windows – what do others see?  
Are our lives (stories) telling *The Story*?

## Philemon: A Story That Tells The Story

**Philemon**

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### **Love the Gospel, Live the Gospel, Advance the Gospel**

- Describe some ways the letter to Philemon has encouraged or challenged you. Did you learn anything new?
- Why do you think this letter is included in the New Testament? What's so significant about it? What does Paul ASK Philemon to do?
- How does Paul reflect / model Jesus to Philemon, to Onesimus and to us?
- Why is faith in Jesus never a private matter?
- Why did Onesimus return to Philemon? Do you think it was easy? Was it risky?
- What does it mean to say, "IN CHRIST we *belong to one another*"? How does this belief go against our individualistic culture? How can we actively fight our cultural leanings?
- Where in your life does reconciliation need to happen? What barriers are standing in the way? Do you think it will require something of you to make it happen?
- How does the Gospel of Jesus cut through any and every barrier – cultural, political or personal?
- How is your life (story) telling *The Story*? Can you give an example? How does our church community tell *The Story*?

## 1. The effect of the Gospel in Philemon's life (Philemon 1-7)

**V6** "*active in sharing your faith*"

*Koinonia* = Participation, sharing, partnership; spiritual fellowship

We're fooling ourselves if we think our faith is a private matter.

## 2. The appeal of the Gospel for Onesimus' life (Philemon 8-16)

An appeal for Onesimus *"on the basis of love"*

Onesimus' name ironically means "useful" – he was anything but that to Philemon but according to Paul, Onesimus is a different man.

- Put yourself in Onesimus' position
  
- Now put yourself in Philemon's position

Paul speaks into the community of faith and calls them to live within society in an alternative way, completely counter-cultural, reflecting an allegiance to Jesus their King!

- **Colossians 3:11-14**
- **Galatians 3:28**

## 3. The story of the Gospel told through our lives (Philemon 17-25)

Does this sound at all familiar? Paul is acting as a mediator.  
**2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

When we extend forgiveness to others, when we repent and make things right and work at reconciliation, what are we doing? We're telling *The Story*. It's being told a million times over.

**Colossians 4:9** - *This* is who Onesimus is now!