

Philemon

By Linda Thorson

Story 257: Onesimus - Philemon

To Philemon and Apphia
My dear beloved friends
And Archippus and to the church
Of faithful, loyal, men
To those who gather in your home
To worship Jesus Christ
To every faithful follower
Who loves and serves Most High!

God's grace and peace to all the saints
From Timothy and I
To all our brothers in the faith
Who spread the word of Christ
I always thank my Savior God
As I remember you
For all your love and loyalty
Inspires this servant too!

I've heard about your faith in Christ
And how you love the word
Especially, how you love the saints
And love the gospel heard
I pray for you, dear Philemon
Through Jesus Christ, the Lord
That God bestows His peace and grace
To emulate Him more!

I pray He gives you boldness, friend
To actively share Christ
With confidence and eagerness
To plant the seeds of light
So you have understanding, friend
That's solid and complete
To know all things we have in Christ
To share with those you meet!

You've given me encouragement
And given me great joy
For you've refreshed the hearts of saints
That's caused me to rejoice
And though I have authority
To order you to do
The very thing you ought to do

My plea's been sent to you!

For my request is based on love
That calls us to forgive
So I'm appealing for your slave
Who turned to Christ and lives
He came to me when I was bound
And he became my son
He came to Christ like you and I
And follows Christ the One!

He's not a mere possession, friend
He's met the Lord by faith
So he's been ushered into light
By grace of Christ the Way
Now both of us are prisoners
And slaves to Jesus Christ
Though I'm an old man serving God
We both embrace the light!

Yes formerly, Onesimus
Was valueless to you
But now this man is useful, friend
To me and yes to you
I hope to send him back to you
Who is my very heart
And pray that you accept this man
That God has set apart!

I would have kept him here with me
To preach the gospel's News
To help me while I'm bound in chains
To testify the truth
To bring the saints encouragement
By sharing what God's done
For now our brother, Onesimus
Is sharing Christ the Son!

I chose to not do anything
Until you had agreed
So any favors done by you
Would be spontaneously
Perhaps his separation, friend
That was not very long
Occurred so you might have him back

For *good* where he belongs!

No longer as a slave for you
But *better* than a slave
Returning as a friend of God
Who trusts the Lord by faith
Onesimus is dear to me
But dearer yet to you
For now you both can serve the Lord
By planting seeds of truth!

So if you think of me this way
As partners saved by grace
Then welcome him as you would me
As one who's come to faith
And if my son has done you wrong
Or owes you anything
Then know his debt is paid in full
And charge it all to me!

I, Paul, am writing all these words
To you with my own hand
And Philemon, you owe to me
Your life in God I AM
I guided you to Christ the Lord
And hope you feel a debt
Of thankfulness and gratitude
For sparing you of death!

I pray you take your brother back
And welcome him with grace
For when your slave's returned to you
You'll know his heart has changed
Please do this as a favor, friend
That I may benefit
For you'll refresh my heart in Christ
If you respond to this!

I write to you with confidence
And trust you will obey
That you will do much more than I
Will ask of you today
And one thing more: Prepare a room
For when your friend comes back
Because I hope to be restored
To all of you at last!

To workers like Aristarchus
And brother, Epaphras
Who founded the Colossian Church
And serves the Lord like us
This faithful friend and minister
Extends his greetings too
As Demas, Mark, and Luke send grace
And all God's peace to you!

These men have all accompanied me
And helped my ministry
To share the hope that comes from Christ
To those accepting Thee
So we as one pray all God's grace
And peacefulness is yours
To keep your spirit, heart, and mind
On Jesus Christ, the Lord!