

MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Senior Pastor Marty Grubbs wraps up the series, Building a Life That Matters, reminding us that the Gospel is for us, but not only us. Part of loving Jesus is sharing his love with others. We gather for worship, we spend time growing in our knowledge and love for him, and we go, we serve so others might come to know what we know, experience what we have experienced. This comes from giving ourselves to others, loving them, serving them. The gospel, the Good News, is too good to keep it to ourselves. We need to look for those we can pray for, meet tangible needs, and welcome into the family of God. We hold the hope of the world in our hearts, and it grows by giving it away, sharing it with the hopeless.

SCRIPTURE

PHILEMON 1:1-21

¹ This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, ² and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house.

³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

⁴ I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, ⁵ because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. ⁶ And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. ⁷ Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

⁸ That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. ⁹ But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus.

¹⁰ I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.

¹¹ Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us. ¹² I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart.

¹³ I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf. ¹⁴ But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced. ¹⁵ It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶ He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT. AND I WON'T MENTION THAT YOU OWE ME YOUR VERY SOUL!

²⁰ Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ.

²¹ I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out from Marty's message? (Consider also the story of Giana and Gene)
2. Read Philemon 1:1-9. What does Paul say about his purpose for this letter?
3. Read Philemon 1:10-21 and answer the following:
 - a. How does Paul describe Onesimus?
 - b. What happened between Paul and Onesimus in prison?
 - c. Describe the favor, and why Paul expects it to be fulfilled.
 - d. For whose sake is this favor?
4. What are ways to show the love of Christ to those like Onesimus in our community and beyond? Who is enslaved by something and desperately wants to be free?
5. Who is the Onesimus in your life and how can you share Jesus' love with that person?
6. How can we pray for you?

PRAYER

Thank God for bringing you into his family, and the awesome opportunity to know him through his word and prayer. Spend time recalling answered prayers and thanking God for his faithfulness. Ask God to bring others to you who need to know him and experience the love of Jesus. Pray for conviction and compassion to move into uncomfortable situations to share the hope of the world.