

“All To Him I Owe”
Philemon 18-20

Introduction:

1. Have You Ever Wondered:
 - What Happened To The:
 - “National Do Not Call Registry”?
 - It Still Exists, Believe It Or Not! It Was **Supposed** To Be A Way For You:
 - To Stop Unwanted Sales & Telemarketing Calls To Your Registered Phone Number!
 - Well - If You Ever Signed Up For It:
 - With **Your** Number:
 - How’s It Been Working Out For You?
 - If You Are Anything Like Me:
 - I’ve Been Getting **More** Spam Calls Since I Registered, Not **Less!**
2. And A Lot Of Those Calls:
 - At Least When I **Used** To Answer:
 - Numbers I Didn’t Recognize:
 - A Lot Of Those Calls:
 - Were About Refinancing Debt!
 - Mortgage Debt!
 - Car Debt!
 - Credit Card Debt!
 - And They Promised Me That They Could Help Me With The Burden Of My Debt!
 - They Could Reduce My Interest Rate:
 - Or - They Could Reduce My Payment:
 - Or - They Could Even Reduce The Term Of My Loan!
 - And - All I Had To Do Was:
 - Give Them My Social Security Number:
 - To Get Started!
 - What A Deal, Huh!
 - What A Scam!
 - 3. Well - What If Someone Called You Instead:
 - To Offer You - **Not** A Way To *Refinance* Your Debt:
 - Where You Still Had To Pay Back Your Debt!
 - But - Instead - They Offered You:
 - A **Debt Assumption** - Where:
 - They Would Take Over *All* Of Your Debt & *All* Of Your Payments:
 - And You Would Owe **Nothing!**
 - You’d Probably Run Away Faster:
 - From This Deal:
 - Than You Would From The Other!
 - Because - Who In Their Right Mind Would Take Over & Pay For A Debt That They Did Not Incur?
 - You’d Be Sure It Was A Scam!
 - 4. But - What If The Person On The Phone:
 - Was Your Best Friend:
 - Who Genuinely Loved You:
 - And Understood The Burden You Were Under:
 - With All Your Debt - And:
 - All They Wanted To Do Was Help!
 - That Puts Things In A Different Light:
 - Doesn’t It!
 - 5. Well - As We Turn Back In Our Bibles This Morning:
 - To Paul’s Letter To Philemon:
 - We Find In 1:18-20 - The Apostle Paul:
 - Offering To Do The Same Thing:
 - For His New Christian Brother:
 - Onesimus - A Runaway Slave Who Paul Was Sending Back To His Master!

- Because - It Seems Clear:
 - That Onesimus Ran Away:
 - On Bad Terms!
 - And He Incurred A Heavy Burden Of Debt - Because Of What He Took / Stole:
 - From His Master:
 - To Make His Escape!
- And So - Paul Makes An Offer:
 - To Completely Assume The Debt Of Onesimus!
 - “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; / 19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. / 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord!”

6. In These Verses - With Grace & Tact:

- The Apostle Paul Points Out:
 - **Two** Debts!
 - Not Just - The **Old Debt**:
 - Of Onesimus - Which He Offers:
 - To Assume! But Also:
 - The **New Debt**:
 - Of Philemon - Himself!
 - And It Is On Account Of These Two Debts:
 - That Paul Continues To Make His Appeal To Philemon:
 - To Receive Back His Runaway Slave:
 - Not Just Into His Household:
 - But Into His Home:
 - And Into His Heart!
 - As He Said In 1:16:
 - “Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved!”

* And So - The First Debt Paul Deals With Is:

1. **The Old Debt:**

- The Old Debt - Of Onesimus To His Master!
 - In 1:18-19a - “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; / I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it!”
 - Here - Paul First Describes:
 - The Requirement:
 - Of This Old Debt!
 - In 1:18 - Even Though Paul Uses The Word “If”:
 - He Is Doing So From A Heart Of Grace!
 - Because - Onesimus Had Been An “Unprofitable” Slave & Servant To His Master! (1:11)
 - Now - Today We Often Think That It Was Only Slave-Holders That Were Abusive And In The Wrong! However - Some Slave-Owners May Have Taken Their Responsibility As Masters Seriously - And Might Have Even Been *Good Masters* To Their Servants - By Valuing Them & Providing For Them!
 - But Here - It Is Clear That Slaves Themselves Could Be In The Wrong And Even Be Abusive Toward Their Masters!
 - This Is Why In Colossians - Paul Talks About The Duties Of Christian Slaves Toward Their Masters - While The Institution Of Slavery Still Existed!
 - And Even Though We Don’t Know Any Of The Details:
 - It Was *Onesimus* Who **Did** “Wrong” To His Master:
 - And Owed Him The Debt:
 - Of His Past Offenses!
 - Because - In Some Way & At Some Time:
 - He Had Offended Philemon:
 - And Deserved To Be Punished!
 - And Now - Onesimus Returned:
 - With A Debt To Be Payed!

- And Again - Even Though We Don't Know The Details:
 - He Probably *Did* "Owe" His Master:
 - And Owed Him The Debt:
 - Of His Present Obligations!
 - He Had Run Away With Resources:
 - That Did Not Belong To Him!
 - He Was A Thief!
 - And Now - Onesimus Returned:
 - With A Debt To Be Repaid!
- But - Onesimus Was A Slave!
 - And He Had Absolutely Nothing To Pay!
 - He Was At His Master's Mercy!
 - But - This Is Where The Apostle Paul Steps In Once Again!
 - And Offers:
- The Removal:
 - Of This Old Debt!
 - The Complete Transfer & Assumption:
 - Of Any & All Debt:
 - That Onesimus Owed His Master!
 - **"Put That On Mine Account"** - Paul Says! (2x)
 - Paul Insists That Philemon Take:
 - All The Damages:
 - He Suffered!
 - All The Debt:
 - He Is Owed! And Even:
 - All The Displeasure:
 - He Felt!
 - And Charge It / Impute It **All**:
 - To Paul Himself!
 - *Whatever* The Debt Was! And:
 - *However* Much It May Have Been!
 - **IE**: In A Sense - Paul Is Giving Philemon A Blank Check - For Him To Write In Whatever Amount He Feels He Is Due!
 - "He Does Not Limit His Liability; Whatsoever Be The Scale Of The Indebtedness, Let Philemon Name It: It Shall Be Repaid!" (F. F. Bruce)
 - Name The Price!
 - You See - Paul Didn't Want There To Be:
 - Any Obstacle / Any Encumbrance:
 - In The Path Of Forgiveness:
 - Between His Brothers In Christ!
 - And To Further Prove His Sincerity:
 - Paul Pledges:
- The Repayment:
 - Of This Old Debt!
 - The Complete Repayment - Of A Debt:
 - That Was Now His Own!
 - So - In 1:19a - Paul "Puts His Money Where His Mouth Is":
 - And Makes This Guarantee:
 - "I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it!"
 - It Was Unusual For Paul To Write Something In His Own Hand!
 - Normally, He Used A Scribe / Amanuensis To Write Down His Inspired Words!
 - But Here - Philemon Would Have Seen Paul's Own Signature - With All Of It's Distinctive Features!
 - Perhaps It Was A Bit Blocky:
 - Because Of His Limited Vision!
 - Perhaps It Was A Bit Sloppy:
 - Because Of The Limited Light In His Prison Cell!
 - Perhaps It Was A Bit Shaky:

- Because Of The Toll His Suffering Had Taken On His Nerves And Muscles - Making It Even Harder To Take Up A Pen!
- But - With That Signature - *His* Signature - This Letter:
 - Became A Formal & Binding Promissory Note!
- The Debt Of Onesimus Was Now The Debt Of Paul!
 - And He Would Be A Man Of His Word!
 - But - How Would **He** Pay?
 - Wasn't Paul In Prison?
 - Perhaps He Anticipated Being Released Soon - And Then:
 - He'd Get Back To Work - As A Tent-Maker & Leather-Worker:
 - And Pay That Debt, Which Was Now *His* Debt!
- Whatever Way Paul Would Pay:
 - It Is Clear What His Treasure Was!
 - It Was God's People!
 - Not His Possessions!
- What A Gracious & Generous Man Paul Was!
 - But - Wasn't Paul Just Following In The Foot-Steps:
 - Of His Savior - The Lord Jesus Christ?
 - Because - The Old Debt Onesimus Owed Philemon:
 - Is Like Your Own Old Debt:
 - That You Owed To God!
 - The Requirement:
 - Of Your Own Debt - The Debt Of Your Sin:
 - Was Great!
 - Too Great For You To *Ever* Be Able To Repay!
 - But - What Did Jesus Come To Do?
 - He Came - To Completely **Remove**:
 - The Debt Of Your Sin:
 - From **Your** Account & Put It On **His Own!**
 - Isaiah 53:6 - "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all!"
 - And So - What Paul Offered To Do For Onesimus - The Lord Had Already Done For Paul! But:
 - Jesus Also Came - To Completely **Repay**:
 - The Debt Of Your Sin:
 - Through The Price Of His Own Precious Blood!
 - As Paul Made His Pledge With His Own Hand, Jesus Christ Stretched Out Both Of His Hands:
 - To Not Only *Pay* Your Debt, But To Beckon You Into His Arms As Well!
 - 1 Peter 1:18-19 - "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; / But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot!"
 - You See - There Was No Price Too Great:
 - For Christ To Pay:
 - In Order To Redeem You:
 - From The Requirements Of The Sin Debt You Owed To God!
 - And The Only Condition:
 - For You To Have Your Debt:
 - Not Merely Refinanced, But Completely Assumed And Satisfied By Christ:
 - Is To Believe!
 - John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!"
 - What Has Happened:
 - To **Your** Old Debt? To Your Sin Debt?
 - Can You Sing The Words Of That Old Hymn:
 - "Jesus Paid It All!"
 - If So - Then You Have Another Debt! Which Paul Describes In 1:19b-20! It Is:

2. ***The New Debt!***

- The New Debt - Of Philemon To Paul!
 - 1:19b-20 - “Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. / Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord!”
 - At The End Of 1:19 - Paul Wants Philemon:
 - To Think About The Debt Of His Slave In Relation To The Debt Of His Salvation!
 - He’s Not Writing These Words To Convince Philemon To Write-Off The Debt!
 - Because, Paul Already Pledged To Pay It All!
 - Instead - Paul Wants Philemon:
 - To Remember His ***Spiritual*** Debt To Paul, As The One Who Led Him To Christ:
 - So That He Would - 1:17 - “Receive Him As Myself!”
 - This Is All Paul Wanted!
 - It Wasn’t About Finances At All!
 - It Was About Forgiveness & Fellowship Within The Body Of Christ!
 - And The Truth Is:
 - Philemon Owed To Paul:
 - ***Much More:***
 - Than Onesimus Owed To Philemon!
 - But - With Such A New:
 - And Different Kind Of Debt:
 - Came New & Different Terms:
 - Of Repayment!
 - A Repayment From The Heart!
 - ***IE:*** If This Was The Kind Of Repayment Plan A Bank Offered - How Long Would That Bank Stay In Business! Pay What You Want! Pay When You Want!
 - But - This Is The Kind Of Terms Paul Gives To Philemon!
 - A Payment Plan Based On:
- A Relationship!
 - Not A Requirement!
 - Because - In 1:20 - Paul Reminds Philemon:
 - Of Their Relationship - When He Writes:
 - “Yea, Brother!”
 - Yes - In The Church, Paul Was A Spiritual Father To Him - But Within The Family Of God - They Were Brothers In Christ!
 - The Repayment Plan Of This New Debt:
 - Is All Done - Within The Family!
 - And From The Heart!
 - ***IE:*** If You’ve Ever Taken Out A Mortgage On Your Home - You Can Appreciate This! How Many Pages Did You Have To Sign Or Initial? It’s Because There’s Little Trust In That Agreement! Compare That To The Old-Fashioned Handshake! Where There’s A Relationship And Trust!
 - Philemon’s New Debt Was Based On A Different Kind Of Relationship!
 - One Of Love & Trust!
 - It Was Also Based On:
- A Return!
 - ***IE:*** The Only Reason A Bank Offers Credit - Is So That They Can Receive A Return On Their Money - In The Form Of Interest!
 - Paul Wanted The Same Thing For His Investment Into The Life & Soul Of Philemon!
 - He Wanted There To Be Some “Interest” Or Some “Fruit” For His Labor!
 - That’s Why In:
 - 1:20a - Paul Wrote - “Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord!”
 - The Word Translated “Joy” Here - Is A Word That Is Related To:
 - The Name Of Philemon’s Slave - Onesimus! And Both Words Have The Same Meaning - “Useful” & “Profitable!”
 - Paul Believes That The Greatest Return:
 - On His Spiritual Investment:
 - Is The Extension Of God’s Grace:

- To Others!
- Isn't This What Jesus Taught As Well?
 - In John 15:15-17 - Jesus Said - "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. / Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. / These things I command you, that ye love one another!"
 - Jesus Himself Is Seeking A Return On His Investment Into Your Soul!
 - A Return Of Grace & Love!
- Because - The Truth Is:
 - You Owe To The Lord:
 - **Much More:**
 - Than Anyone Might Owe To You!
 - So - Do Not Let **Anything:**
 - Get In The Way Of Your Relationships:
 - Within The Body Of Christ!
- Philemon's New Debt Was Based On:
 - A Different Kind Of Relationship & Return!
 - It Was Also Based On:
- A Refreshment!
 - As Paul Says In The Rest Of 1:20:
 - "Refresh my bowels in the Lord!"
 - Paul Knew That What He Was Asking Philemon To Do Was A Difficult Thing!
 - It Was Counter-Cultural To The Way Things Worked:
 - In The Roman World!
 - So - Paul Reminds Philemon:
 - Of The **New** Culture Of Christianity!
 - And Asks Him To Continue To Be The Blessing:
 - He Was Known To Be!
 - Because - Back In 1:7 - Paul Said This To Philemon:
 - "The Bowels Of The Saint Are Refreshed By Thee, Brother!"
 - And Now - Paul Asks Him To Do The Same For Him!
 - "Refresh My Bowels In The Lord!"
 - How? By Forgiving & Receiving:
 - His New Brother In Christ:
 - As If There Had **Never** Been **Anything** Between Them!
 - Isn't This One Of The Most Refreshing Things That Can Happen Within The Church?
 - Psalm 133:1 - "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"
- And This Is Why Paul Wanted Philemon & Us To Remember:
 - That - Since - "Jesus Paid It All!"
 - That Is - All Of Your Old Debt!
 - Now - "All To Him I Owe!"
 - This Is Your New Debt!
 - But - It's A Different Kind Of Debt With Different Terms Altogether!
 - And Now - You Too Can Follow:
 - The Example Of Christ Himself:
 - By Applying The Grace Of The Gospel:
 - To Some Of The Most Difficult Decisions & Circumstances You Might Face In Your Own Life!
 - Even Things That May Be Counter-Cultural To Our Modern Way Of Life!

Conclusion:

1. So - What About You Today?
 - Think About What **You** Owe To The Lord!
 - Do You Still Owe:
 - That Old Debt:

- The Debt Of Your Sin:
 - To God?
 - If So - Know That There Is **No** Way:
 - For You To **Ever** Repay Or Even To:
 - Refinance Your Debt!
 - Except Through Your Own Eternal Death & Separation From God!
 - Romans 6:23 - “For The Wages Of Sin Is Death!”
 - **But** - As The Rest Of Romans 6:23 Tells Us:
 - “**But** The Gift Of God Is Eternal Life Through Jesus Christ Our Lord!”
 - Jesus Christ Came:
 - To **Take** Your Debt:
 - And To **Pay** Your Debt:
 - **In Full!**
 - So - Why Would You Still Live:
 - Under The Burden:
 - Of Your Debt?
 - If “Jesus Paid It All” - Then Believe In Him & Be Free!
2. And - When You Do - You Receive:
- A New Debt!
 - Since - “Jesus Paid It All!”
 - “All To Him I Owe!”
 - But - It Is A Different Kind Of Debt!
 - A Spiritual Debt That Is Based On:
 - A Spiritual Relationship!
 - A Spiritual Return! And:
 - A Spiritual Refreshment!
 - And You Can Pay What You Owe:
 - With Your Heart!
 - Does The Lord Have Your Heart Today?
3. Remember:
- Since - “Jesus Paid It All – All To Him I Owe!”

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