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### AI Summary

The sermon was about the importance of forgiveness. The pastor spoke at length about how we all have sinned and offended God, but He has forgiven us through Jesus Christ. We should extend that same forgiveness to others, no matter what they have done to offend us. The pastor gave many examples from the Bible and his personal experiences about the freedom and joy that come from forgiving others. He explained that holding on to unforgiveness is selfishness and keeps us from fully experiencing God's love. The sermon focused on Philemon 1:12-16 and how the apostle Paul pleaded with Philemon to forgive his runaway slave Onesimus and accept him as a beloved brother in Christ. The pastor emphasized that forgiveness is not about forgetting but choosing not to hold the offense against the person anymore. He challenged the congregation to forgive anyone they were holding unforgiveness towards, just as God has fully forgiven them through Christ.

### Chapter

#### **We All Have Sinned and Offended God**

The pastor explained that we have all sinned and offended God, but He has forgiven us through Jesus Christ. We didn't deserve His forgiveness but He gave it freely out of love and mercy.

#### **Forgiveness Brings Freedom and Joy**

The pastor gave many examples of how forgiveness brings freedom and joy, while unforgiveness leads to bitterness and keeps us in bondage.

#### **Withholding Forgiveness is Selfishness**

The pastor emphasized that not forgiving others is selfishness on our part, since God has forgiven all our sins against Him.

#### **Paul's Appeal to Philemon to Forgive Onesimus**

The sermon focused on Paul's letter to Philemon, pleading with him to forgive his runaway slave Onesimus and accept him as a beloved brother in Christ.

### Action Items

I will forgive anyone I have been holding unforgiveness towards, since God has fully forgiven me through Christ.

I will pray and ask God to give me the grace to forgive those who have hurt or offended me.

I will stop dwelling on how others have hurt me and focus instead on God's love and forgiveness towards me.

This week, I will reach out to someone I need to forgive and start the process of reconciliation.

I will meditate on passages about God's mercy and forgiveness like Matthew 6:14-15 and Ephesians 4:32.

Philemon verse 12 through verse 16. I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel.

But I prefer to do nothing. Without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own accord. For this is perhaps why he was parted from you for a while that you might have him back forever.

No longer as a bond-servant, but more than a bond-servant, as a beloved brother, especially to me, about how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. Thank you, you may be seated. I was going to hand these out earlier.

I want you to listen to the words of a commentary when this was brought to my attention earlier this week. I would like to start off with this message, part three of forgiveness from the heart, with this quote:

It is said that the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. He had suffered much through the unkindness of these friends. They had criticized his conduct without feeling or mercy, and he had just cause to be irritated against them.

And that he had such a feeling towards them, several parts of his discourses sufficiently prove. By the way, with friends like that, who needs enemies, right? God was now about to show Job his mercy, but mercy can be shown only to the merciful.

Job must forgive his unfeeling friends. If he would be forgiven by the Lord, he directs them, therefore, to pray for them in Job chapter 42 verse 8. He who can pray for another cannot entertain enmity against him.

Job did so and when he prayed for his friends, God turned the captivity of Job. It's hard to imagine a more poignant letter than what we have in the book of Philemon. As we considered some of this over the last few weeks, we left a runaway slave, a formerly useless runaway slave,

standing in front of his master having returned to face whatever punishment that Philemon chooses to mete out, which would have been Philemon's right to do so. And as Onesimus is standing there and listening with wonder to the letter being read he hears himself referred to as useful by Paul.

Now the accountable Onesimus is not the only one that comes to mind as I'm preparing for the message because there was another young man who we find in the New Testament, was also once a useless individual.

Two of the lowest points of his life in fact were not even told a lot about this young person, but two of the points of his life included leaving a crime scene with no clothes on. And the second was when he decided not to continue in an assigned task because the work was too hard.

Of course we're speaking about John Mark. You see John Mark was the reason that Paul and Barnabas separated and it would be years before Paul could write of the changes that he saw in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 11.

He says get John Mark and bring him with you for he is, same word here very useful to me for ministry. What a change. To know where John Mark had come from, this is the same John Mark and the only person who gives us this account in the Gospels is actually Mark himself, who wrote the Gospel of Mark and he speaks of the young man who leaves his clothes and flees naked from the crime of the scene which was the capture, the illegal capture of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Tradition states that it was in the home of John Mark that the Last Supper actually took place. And then later on we find that Paul and Barnabas who are working together and they go together on their first mission trip, we find that Paul and Barnabas separate because Barnabas would rather keep John Mark and Paul says no John Mark is a Liability he is not an asset. Could a sweeter testimony be found than to have such a life change that your usefulness is now told to the entire believing world? Now the reality is this morning is that only you know your heart. Only you and God know the deepest darkest secrets of your life. I Don't know what those are. Our spouses probably don't know what those are. Our spouses probably don't even know a lot about us as far as like when we were little or when we were younger growing up as a teenager. But can you imagine whatever it is that has gone on in your life?

To have somebody right of you that they are useful for the purposes of ministry. What a testimony that would be. We learn from these accounts that when we stumble in our life, we can be profitable again in the work of the Lord.

I can't tell you how many times people have said to me, well, I wish God would have saved me when I was younger. Or I wish I would have done X, Y, or Z when I was younger, but now I'm older. I'm in my 30s or 40s or 50s or 60s or 70s.

God can still use you. If you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, not only can God use you, but if you are not a believer here this morning, God can save you no matter what your age.

Just because you and I have not necessarily lived all of our lives in such a way that it exhibits victory over sin, the flesh, and the world. And that's one of the struggles that I have within evangelical Christianity especially is too often the bad things that take place in a person's life or what keep getting brought up over and over and over again, whether it's a nasty divorce or whether it's whatever you struggled with in your life.

You see, the problem is though that it doesn't give us a reminder as we will look at it in a few minutes of 1 Corinthians chapter six. But before we get to 1 Corinthians six, I want you to take heart this morning if you are a believer and I want you to realize the joy and the wonder that comes from being forgiven of your sins. Whatever it may be that you have in your life or whatever has gone on in your life, whatever you have been through in your past.

The years that the locusts have eaten can be restored and God can and will be glorified in the service that you offer to him. We can't dwell on the past if this is the story of your life, no matter what it is that you have struggled with, no matter what you have gone through.

You see, there is a call that comes in Philippians chapter three, verse 14. There is a call that comes to press on and press forward for the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Do you want to be remembered for who you once were? Or do you want to be remembered for who you are now in Jesus Christ? The fear though that some people have, maybe even believers and sometimes maybe even this morning, there's a fear that you have in your life that you have fallen into some kind of sinful trap or some kind of a trial in your life or some kind of a temptation and you can no longer be used by the Lord or maybe even be used within a body of believers.

I think the reason that we come to this point is because like the church at Corinth, the church at Corinth had a bad theology, that was driving them. Paul wrote to this church in Corinth and in the first epistle, anything that could go wrong in that church did go wrong.

I mean, if you ponder and actually take time to read all the things that were going on, they were saying, there was a group of them and they were getting together on a Sunday and some were saying, well, I'm of Appolos and the other ones were saying, well, I'm of Paul.

And it had come to the point where the church was divided between these two groups of people and Paul writes to them and

he says, wait a minute, I didn't save you. Jesus Christ saved you. It shouldn't matter who you're following as long as you're following Jesus Christ.

What about the man who was living in such a way that he was living in a way that was not even acceptable by Roman standards? He was actually living in open sin and adultery and fornication with his own stepmother.

What about in 1 Corinthians chapter 11? And we find those who were gathered together for the purposes of the Lord's table and instead of simply gathering for the purpose of remembering the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, you had a church that was divided between the haves and the have nots.

And the haves were getting together with their steak and their potatoes and all of the trimmings that have a nice meal and the have nots on the other side were coming with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

And Peter says, wait a minute, you don't understand. This is not the reason why we're gathering. We are not gathering so one person can stuff their face and another goes away hungry from the table of the Lord.

The reason we are gathered is to remember this until he comes. And then we get to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and chapter 14 and we find there that there's groups of people who were in the church and one person was bragging about the fact that they could speak in tongues and another was bragging that they could prophesy and another was bragging that they had the gift of knowledge or the gift of discernment.

And right in the middle of these two chapters, chapter 12 and chapter 14, Paul speaks and he says, if you have all of these things but have not love, it is nothing more than a clanging symbol. But in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, we find something that was an amazing testimony by the apostle Paul.

You see some of these some of these believers as we find out through first Corinthians, all of first Corinthians, Paul is getting on to them over and over and over and over again and yet he then writes a second book and in the second book they had swung the pendulum to the other side and they were refusing to forgive those who had sought to make things right within the church.

I want you to turn with me, hold your place in Philemon. And I want you to look at first Corinthians chapter 6 and I want to show you what kind of people made up the church of Corinth. You see sometimes we get this idea sometimes sometimes those who are in the world or maybe those who haven't gone to church for a long time, sometimes even pastors, we can we can get this idea that well church is just full of hypocrites.

Well as I heard John MacArthur say just this week there's room for one more. So invite the hypocrites and invite those who maybe you're not living in such a way that they should be pleasing to the Lord or that they're not pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ.

But here's what I want you to remember. First Corinthians chapter 6 gives us a list of the kind of people who made up the church in Corinth. Do you not know, (verse 9) know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Well that pretty much takes care of everybody.

I mean we've all inherited the sin from Adam right? We all have that sin nature. And those who are unrighteous what does it mean to be unrighteous? In other words Paul is saying here those who do any kind of sin that separates them from God.

White lie doesn't matter what it is. Cheat on your taxes. Any of those things, all of those things I've shared with some of you before in Liberia. they being an African nation there, they don't tell little white lies, they tell little black lies.

And they would tell me quite often, it's only a black lie, it's only a little black lie. And I would take them to this verse as well as in Romans chapter one and Revelation and show them that the Bible says that even liars will find their place in hell.

Listen to what he continues and he says, do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, that's anything that you set up above God, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Wow, what an awful list. I sure am glad I'm not one of those kind of people. I'm glad I wasn't one of those kind of people. Wherever you find yourself this morning, look what Paul says in verse 10: Such what?

Read it aloud such or verse 11. Sorry such were some of you. But he doesn't stop there. You were washed... Washed out by  
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the blood of the lamb. You were sanctified this means that you were set apart, this is a progressive act that continues Until the moment of glorification you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God. Paul in writing to the church in Corinth, this is what he's talking about, he says the things that you were these were demeaning to your own testimonies. Do you want to be remembered and you walk in and somebody say oh, it's good to see you brother so -and -so I remember you were a fill in the blank. No. Such were some of you. You see when you and I become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ We are seen by the Father.

We are seen robed in the garments of Jesus Christ. We have no business, we have no rights seeing one another as anything other than God sees us and that is sinners saved by grace. That should bring rejoicing to your heart and to mine this morning. Only Philemon could have known the extent of the forgiveness as he's reading this letter. Only Philemon knew the extent of the forgiveness that was granted to him by God. And while Paul brings a few things to his remembrance this slave owner learns just how special and useful Onesimus has truly become in what is probably the best referral letter that was ever written. Today's verses are an amazing testimony of how Paul was used to address a touchy situation without bringing Roman law down on the heads of Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

You see, they didn't need much of an excuse to persecute Christians. Just simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and they would persecute you. Had Paul chosen to do so though, he could have issued an outright condemnation against Philemon for even owning a slave, but he doesn't do this.

That's not the purpose of this letter. Paul issues an emotional appeal that enables Philemon to do what is right and in a way that Philemon will not lose respect in front of his other slaves, or his family, or the church.

He can endear their friendship. And you can further reveal to his house as well as the gathered believers how Christ brings restoration to one who has fallen. As for Onesimus, he has a front-row seat. What he's being offered, full forgiveness from a source that he certainly didn't deserve, by the way, forgiveness is never deserved It is granted by love and mercy.

And before we continue and pick up where we left off last week, Here's the question that I want to ask you, is there something or someone that has offended you in some way down through the years of your life? You know it never ceases to amaze me that as I go through the years of counseling in 30 years of ministry that I have been in now that more times than not the reason for problems in a marriage, the reason for problems between two friends, the reason for problems within a church as we alluded to last week is the fact that people do not know how to biblically forgive one another. I don't deserve forgiveness apart from Jesus Christ, you don't deserve forgiveness apart from Jesus Christ.

Have you offended your spouse? Have you offended your kids? Have you offended? You know one of the biggest problems that you have within most houses today is that nobody knows how to ask for forgiveness. Nobody knows how to seek forgiveness or to ask or extend an apology anymore. Because we want what we want to have in order to make life work for us and the Bible says that if we were going to as we heard from Steve Lawson this morning. In the Sunday school lesson, if God gave us what was fair and what was right, we would all be in hell.

The response that I normally hear is, he or she doesn't deserve forgiveness. You didn't deserve forgiveness. And you see, when you think that this person doesn't deserve forgiveness, you want to claim the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as being a true believer in him, as having your sins forgiven.

What you're saying is that God can forgive me, but he can't forgive them. You see, the problem often times is that when we want to forgive or when we need to forgive somebody and somebody has offended us in some way, you know, the real issue normally that is at stake is this.

That we want to harbor grudges and the other person who's actually done the offending, more times than not they're not even thinking about us, And the one that needs to be released from that and to turn it over to God. And I believe we see this in first Peter chapter 5 verse 7: Casting all your care upon him because he cares for you. This is part of the rejoicing that comes from being a true believer. Knowing that I can look at you, knowing that you can look at me, And if there are things that we hate do to offend one another instead of getting up, picking up our toys and running home, We can say brother, sister,

I forgive you in the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason why more times than not though that we don't do it in the churches is because we don't do it at home There are many times that that we can be offended and we do things to offend the Lord and we don't even ask his forgiveness for him from him. You Say Mark, why are you so passionate about this?

I'm so passionate about this because I know what Christ has forgiven me of. I know that I don't have the right to stand in a pulpit. I know that I don't have a right to teach. I don't even have the right to be a believer and a child of God apart from the fact that Jesus Christ set his love upon me from eternity past. Because if he had chosen based on who I was, he would never have chosen me or chosen you. We began by looking at the plea that Paul uses and we saw in verse 8 last week, we saw that he chose not to throw his weight around. He's saying I'm bold enough in Christ I could do these things, but I choose not to do so.

I'm asking you, there are times growing up as a child my parents were here they could nod their heads up and down. There are times we did this with our own kids as well. Maybe you've done this in your home and your kids do something one against another and this kid over here they say something, this kid says something, but he started it, but she started it.

And what's the response then? Well, well, well just say you're sorry. No. And so eventually, I'm sorry. Do they really mean, is that really biblical forgiveness? Absolutely not. Biblical forgiveness is recognizing the fact whether it's Johnny and Susie or whether it's husband and wife or whether it's one friend to another or whether it's one believer in the church to another.

It's recognizing and saying, no, wait a minute, I recognize that first and foremost, I have offended my God. And now I need to make things right with you. He couches his request with a personal reflection and he says, he says, do you not understand?

He says, I'm an old man. I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I look at my life now and I can go back 30 years and I can remember one of the first messages I ever brought. I never thought 30 years down the road I'd be standing here in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

But he begins with his personal reflection and he says, I am not just an old man but I am a prisoner. And notice he doesn't say, this is the second time he uses this phrase. He doesn't say I am a prisoner of Rome.

He says I'm a prisoner for who? Jesus Christ. In other words, I'm in these chains because I recognize the sovereignty of God and the chains that are holding me here in this prison are chains that hold me to Jesus Christ.

And if this is where he wants me, this is where I will serve. But sometimes we think we've got to have the title. We think we've got to have this or that or whatever it may be in order to be able to make life work for us.

And we don't need any of those things. In fact, if you haven't driven by a cemetery lately, go out to a cemetery and look at all the people who thought they were indispensable. He continues in verse 10 and 11 as we saw and he makes a personal appeal for Onesimus.

And Onesimus, he doesn't address him as being a slave anymore. He doesn't address him as being a runaway slave. He recognizes him just as in the words of 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Such were some of you.

And now Paul sees the power of God. Onesimus as his child in the faith. What a joy that must have been for Onesimus to hear that. Can you imagine you on your worst day in the worst sin that you've ever committed and somebody brings you to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to be able to stand up with you and introduce you to another and say, this is my brother in Christ.

This is my sister in Christ. We don't need a resume of all the bad things that you've done in your life because Romans chapter 8 verse 1, if you're a believer here this morning, that is your resume. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

This is how I see you. This is how you should see me. This is how Paul saw both Onesimus and Philemon. But he also in verse 12 through 14 we began to look at this last week and he says I am sending you back. Or sending him back to you, sending my very heart, and here we find he relinquishes control. It's pretty clear that Onesimus has become quite useful to Paul. I send him back to you with my heart just ripped out. We know that Paul wept much over those that he left behind at times and the struggles in the churches just like the apostle John. I mean the beloved apostle is one who cared and I can't imagine as we think back about the messages that we had in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 where he writes to the seven churches of Asia Minor and realizing the tears that must have come from the beloved apostle John as he looks and realizes these churches aren't what they could be.

He is moved with compassion. For any of those who worked with him in the gospel, you want to know who some of Paul's

friends were, read Romans chapter 16. He gives the whole list of them. One time in 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 and chapter 7 he writes of complete despair, because Titus couldn't be found. This one this young man who is in training who who has been sent at one point, Paul sends a letter to him to Titus to go into the island of Crete at one time and tradition tells us there were a hundred different churches in a hundred different cities on the island of Crete and Paul sends one man to do the job. In the midst of difficulties, Paul needed somebody to help shoulder the burden of ministry and can you imagine what it must have been like for him to wave goodbye to one more helper?

During the time of his life he had people like Timothy, Titus, Apaphroditus, and Onesimus and Philemon and each one of them served in some capacity. I've said this before but the path of ministry is not easy.

It's never easy. The world, the flesh, the evil one will always fight against the truth being revealed and we as believers we must stand together in the faith and realize that doctrine makes a difference.

The Bible prohibits us from standing with those who are in sin and rebellion and openly opposed to the Word of God. And we are to gain encouragement from others that face the same battles. You say well you don't know the battles that I'm facing.

If you're a believer this morning I know the battles you're facing because they're the same ones that I face. You know the problem too often and I share this with you not because of some self self-building up of some kind of ego or some kind of pride I'm just sharing with you because I have been there, my wife and I have been there, my family and I have been there, I know what it's like at times not to be the kind of dad I should have been, or the kind of pastor that I should have been, or the kind of brother in Christ that I should have been. Sound like some of the same problems that you've got in your life every day every week, isn't it?

At the end of the day, Philippians reminds us: Faithful is he who called you who also will do it. At the end of the day, when we stand before God my faithfulness is not going to be judged based on your faithfulness. Now as a pastor as a teacher of the word of God, it's my responsibility to care for those that God has brought into our midst for me to be able to care for them to be able to reach out for them to remind them.

Hey, you are in sin against God. You are struggling with whatever area it is that is in your life, just like I struggle we need to work through this together. The battle is real. But too often we forget and it becomes personal battle, it becomes an issue where one brother wants to take on another brother and instead of pointing to Jesus Christ, all we're doing is lifting up the standard of the world.

Not only does Paul relinquish control in verse 12, but he relishes a companion. I would have been glad to keep him with me. There is no doubt that Onesimus now lives up to his name. Paul wanted the slave to remain, but circumstances don't permit it.

He can't keep what doesn't belong to him. As a runaway slave, Onesimus can't choose to remain. You see, because this is where it's not just a matter of being sorry or seeking forgiveness for what you have done.

There's a matter of restoration here that is involved. And Onesimus as a runaway slave knows that he has to return to Philemon to be able to face whatever outcome may take place. Paul doesn't just address how useful Onesimus has become.

He adds to the emotional appeal by letting Philemon know that Onesimus could serve Paul on the behalf of Philemon. In other words, Philemon, I'm not asking you to leave your wife and your son. I'm not asking you to leave the church at Colossae or the church at Laodicea.

Send Onesimus back to me because he is so useful, that if he's not useful to you, he's useful to me. We already know that Philemon had been some help. We find this in both Philemon as well as the words that are here, as well as in what we find in the letter to Colossae.

What degree we don't know. But it must have been of some great service considering the lengths that Paul goes to reach out to Philemon to write this letter while in prison, to send this scroll with Onesimus, maybe even to fund the trip for Onesimus to make it all the way back to Colossae.

He concludes again and he says, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment again for the gospel. Has nothing to do with Rome. Paul is doing hard time because of the gospel.

We're not talking about getting three squares of meal and a computer and a TV and internet and doing all the things that



they want to do or they get to do while they're in prisons here in America. You see the early New Testament Church, they knew what hardship was.

They knew what it meant to be a true soldier of the cross. Second Timothy Chapter 2. Paul writes to Timothy and he says, You, do you therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? The 21st century church in America doesn't know hardship.

When things don't go our way, we struggle. We go home. We stay home. We do whatever. But what God demands from us. Oh my friend, I want to ask you this question this morning. If we struggle in the good times, what will ever happen to you and I when persecution comes to America?

I don't think we'll be ready. Something like COVID decimated churches. There are churches here in Cheyenne that are still closed, still have never been able to reopen because of COVID. Now, regardless of what side you're on regarding COVID or the shots or any of that, that's not the point here.

The point is that God gives a greater command and that is that we are to fellowship together and so much the more as the day is approaching. What day is he talking about? He's talking about the day of judgment that is coming.

The day when the Lord returns. One of the things that those who have been in persecuted countries, I remember personally hearing and being in the service when one of the men came out of Romania, one of the pastors and he Joseph, well his name hasn't come to me in a very long time, Joseph at any rate he was from the town of Timishwara in Romania when we were in North Carolina by the way.

I remember him coming to the church and somebody asked him, what do you pray for when you are in prison? What did you as Christians, what did you pray for with America? He said that God would send persecution to you so you would know how wonderful Jesus is.

Wow. Paul respects a calling in verse 14. I preferred to do nothing without your consent. Paul recognizes again the way to the law regarding slaves to have done less than send the slave back would undermine the entire law.

With Rome looking for ways to belittle Christians and to show that they were a blight on society, Paul's actions could well have started a slave rebellion. First Corinthians, Paul already wrote and he would have been a hypocrite to do otherwise, but first Corinthians condemned going to court to settle differences and here Paul shows that conflicts of interest can be determined if we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

And I think one of the greatest injustices to biblical marriage is the term incompatibility. I speak the truth from God's word. It's not a matter of being incompatible with a spouse. More times than not, the reason is because we just don't get our own way.

And church sometimes can be the exact same way. The law here says that Onesimus belonged to his master to Philemon, so to his master he must be returned. And Paul turns the appeal towards Philemon and he points out that he has not just love, but he has respect for the slave owner.

Paul didn't have any intention of keeping the slave without permission. He wants Philemon though to know what he considers to be an acceptable option. So he requests a consent. Paul asks Philemon. He says, would you release him?

Let him serve me as I serve the Lord in chains, but it must be willingly. Paul uses the word compulsion here and the word actually means to be imposed by the external condition of things or by the law of duty or regard to one's advantage.

Who has the advantage in this relationship between Philemon and Onesimus? Philemon does. Does he have the law on his side or duty on his side? Absolutely. The external condition of things, whatever it was that Onesimus has taken, it must have been of great value because it would have required a lot more money on the part of Philemon to even try to hunt for Onesimus.

Had Paul chosen to send the letter just to Philemon, maybe Philemon would have felt pressure. Maybe pressure to release his slave. Maybe if Paul would have just addressed him privately, he could have been a little more poignant and said, why don't you just release your slave?

Let him go free. Forget the crime. I mean, after all, isn't that what we think forgiveness is? Forgive and forget. But Paul

reveals how useful Onesimus has become because he sends him back to accept the punishment.

And this gives rise to the response that we should have when Christ convicts our heart. If we are in Christ, what we do for others should not be out of compulsion. It shouldn't be like our kids telling our kids, hey, please ask your sister, ask your brother to forgive you.

I'm sorry. No, that should never be the responsible believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our response should be that we are not only ready and willing to give aid to others, but we are willing to extend forgiveness because of what was extended to you and I by Jesus Christ.

Now, if you don't hear anything else, I want you to hear this this morning. Nothing. Nothing. Say it with me. Nothing. That somebody else can do to you is an unforgivable offense. Nothing. You see contrary to what the world has to say, it's not about forgiving and forgetting.

Jesus doesn't forget our sins. The Old Testament reminds us that He chooses not to remember them. In other words, He doesn't bring it back up, Brother Gabe. He doesn't keep throwing it in your face over and over and over.

Do you remember what you did a year ago, 10 years ago, 20, 30, 40 years ago, whatever it may be. He says you're forgiven. I'm forgiven. You're forgiven. If you have placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has brought you to the point where you have repented and you have confessed your sins, that is a simple acknowledgment that, yes, God, you are right.

The Bible says that you're forgiven. The book of Luke tells us that there is joy even in the presence of the angels over every sinner who repents. You might say well, you don't know what he did to me.

You don't know what she did to me. You don't know what happened in my life. I don't have to know what happened in your life because God does. And I know that if God can forgive me and if God can forgive you, then he can give you the grace to be able to forgive somebody else their trespasses against you.

Let's look quickly at the Brotherhood verse 15 and 16. There's a bond. This is the sovereignty of God in action as we are reminded of Romans 8:28. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God.

This isn't for the entire world. This is for those who love God. If you don't love God, this verse is not for you. You may be striving to understand God. You may be striving to understand His Word. And the question is, do we come to Him and ask Him for mercy?

Because the Bible says, he who comes to me, I will in no wise cast out. This is the joy of salvation. I don't get to make a choice for Brother Ryan whether you get to come to Christ or not. It's not up to me as to whether you're going to be baptized or whether you're going to be saved or whether God is, His Holy Spirit is going to do a work on your heart and convict you of your sin and bring you to repentance.

I wish I could. Paul's term here. just drips with love. There is no doubt that the slave was at fault. The word for parted here comes from a word that means to be banished or exiled out of the country for a crime.

Paul recognizes that Onesimus was wrong. It wasn't just sin. It was an actual crime. He had broken Roman law. And if this is what took place, it might be the closest that we will ever come to knowing about what might have happened.

I don't know about you, but there down through the years I have always made comments like this. Well, when I get to heaven, I'm going to ask them why they did X, Y, or Z. And Adam is the first on my list.

I mean, seriously. That guy was a problem. He's the one where we're in the mess that we're in. No, it's actually in our very nature. We would all rebel against God. And I believe when we get to heaven, we're not going to care.

We're just going to be thankful we're there. It's not luck or coincidence. It's no accident that Onesimus ran away. It's no accident he went to Rome of all cities. It's no accident he ended up in the same prison as Paul.

It's no accident that he heard the gospel. It's no accident that he received Christ. It's no accident that his master was a believer. And it's no accident that he was a church leader in Colossi. You see, there are no coincidences with God.

You are right where God wants you. you today at this time, at this moment. Everything has a purpose and it will ultimately



bring glory to God. What a joy to know that a runaway slave, a thief, would travel so far just to be brought to the end of himself in Rome in a prison, just so that he would look up and be brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Yes, Paul acknowledges Philemon's right to Onesimus, but there's something special that is coming from the pen of Paul. You see the phrase here means to have holier, to receive in full what one has a right to expect or demand.

And this is where he wraps up this section in verse 16. He gives this exceptional appeal. Philemon, this has all happened so that the slave, the thief, the useless one would be received back as a beloved brother, more than a slave, one who is fully loved and forgiven.

Dear brothers and sisters, you can't proclaim the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and say that He has forgiven you of all your sins if you are also not willing to extend that forgiveness to others.

What an incredible phrase, beloved brother, regardless of what he did, regardless of the punishment that is deserved, regardless Philemon, of what you think of him, regardless of what the law says in your favor, I am pleading with you that you treat him as one who is beloved, esteemed, a favorite, one who is worthy of love.

Do you know why we can get along as believers? God considers you as beloved. God considers you as esteemed. God considers you as one of his children. He considers you as a favorite. He considers you as one worthy of love because of Jesus Christ.

Onesimus stands before his master, owing him the greatest debt of his life. And yet what Paul asked for is humanly impossible. Philemon, I want you to do for him what only Christ could do for you. you The freedom to be loved and used by God in a way that reflects selflessness to the world, withholding forgiveness from somebody else is nothing more than selfishness on our part.

Paul seeks to ensure that Philemon sees how much more valuable would be the relationship if he understands that as a brother in Christ, Onesimus is one in Christ. His life has been changed for the better as his service has.

And no matter what happens, it will be for the Lord. And I want this to be so in your life and mine as we go from here today. I want you to live your life well for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.

I want you to know my Jesus. I want you to know my Savior. Because only he can cleanse you, only he can make you whole, only he can make you whiter than snow. Only he can make you a brand new creature and start all over again.

So that not one single sin ever in your life will ever be brought up in condemnation of you in heaven. Not one. Because either Jesus paid for all of your sin or he paid for none of your sin. There's no in-between.

And if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior this morning, all you have to do is plead to him to have mercy on your soul. And the Bible says that he will forgive you. He will make you a brand-new creation.

He will set his love upon you and you will learn that he's already done that from eternity past. Because he has. We then can have forgiveness from the heart. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, if each one of us could write a book about all the reasons why God should not have set his love upon us, we would each have to write an encyclopedia.

Every day, every sin, every action, every thought, every breath that we take is screamed in rebellion against the most high God. And yet from eternity past, you set your love upon us. From eternity past and as we record in the scriptures your words to us whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely.

The goal is not to make more Baptists or more whatever denomination, for each one of us to come to recognize that we are children of the most high God, that our sins are forgiven. I pray Lord that if there is anyone here this morning who is struggling with the matter of forgiveness, whether it's towards a spouse, a friend, a colleague, a parent, child, a grandchild, grandparent, whatever it may be, I ask that you would help them to be reminded over and over and over again of what they have been forgiven of and that they would extend that same forgiveness to others in their lives as well.

realizing the freedom and the joy that comes as we began the message this morning the freedom and joy that comes From forgiving and releasing that. I pray Lord as we continue in this series for the next couple Sundays in Philemon, that our hearts would be stirred to a greater love and that you would change us in the areas that we need to be changed. Thank you father this morning for your love. For there being attentive ears, and I pray that the hearts were matching what was on the



faces of people this morning. We ask this because Jesus Christ alone is worthy of our praise. And all God's people said, Amen.