

Theme: The Gospel of God's grace restores our relationship with God, and it calls us to act as Christ would to see relationships restored with others as well.

I. Pay It Forward

- A. An ancient concept that has been used many times
- B. Recently in the popular movie "Pay It Forward"
- C. A person who has been helped helps others
- D. In book of Philemon we see this in real life
- E. How does the Gospel prompt Paul to "Pay It Forward"?

II. An Unchained Request

- A. Paul finally gets to his request!
 - 1. There has not been a single imperative until v17!
 - 2. He has been careful - but he now states his request
 - 3. The key moment has arrived
 - 4. He uses four imperatives to state his desire
 - 5. Only four imperatives in the whole letter

- B. Paul's four requests for Philemon

So if you consider me a partner, **welcome** him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, **charge** it to me... ²⁰ I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; **refresh** my heart in Christ...²² And one thing more: **Prepare** a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. Philemon 1:17–18, 20, 22

- 1. Welcome and receive Onesimus

So if you consider me a partner, **welcome** him as you would welcome me. Philemon 1:17

- a. The word 'welcome' only appears once
- b. The word literally means to receive
- c. Receive and welcome him as me
- d. This is the real request - all else supports it
- e. The basis - 'if you consider me a partner'
 - 1. Partner - related to v6 - partnership in the faith
 - 2. We are partners - and so are you and Onesimus!
- f. "I want you to restore our partner Onesimus!"

- 2. Charge Onesimus' debts to me

If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, **charge** it to me. Philemon 1:18

- a. Onesimus owed Philemon lost service by law
- b. Onesimus had probably stolen to pay for his flight
- c. Paul intercedes for Onesimus - charge it to me
- d. "I will pay his debts"
- e. Paul's oath and reminder about debts
If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. Philemon 1:18–19
 - 1. Paul's own hand - a solemn oath and guarantee
 - 2. Speaking of debts - you owe your very self to me!
 - 3. He had led Philemon to Christ - this request is small

- 3. Refresh my heart in Christ - like you do others!

I do wish, brother, that I may have some **benefit** from you in the Lord; **refresh** my heart in Christ. Philemon 1:20

- a. Speaking of debt - I would like some profit from you!
 - b. Related to the name "Onesimus" - play on v11
 - c. Refresh my heart in Christ - as you always do (v7)
Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have **refreshed** the hearts of the Lord's people. Philemon 1:7
 - d. "I know you will do this - and even more!"
Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. Philemon 1:21
 - e. Probably means - "I bet you will set Onesimus free!"
4. Prepare a room - I will be restored to you!
And one thing more: **Prepare** a guest room for me, because I hope to be **restored** to you in answer to your prayers. Philemon 1:22
- a. Prepare a room - presumption by Paul? - NO!!!!
 - b. "Philemon, my relationship with you will continue."
 - c. This relationship will be as it should be as well!
 - d. v22 - restored - χαρίζομαι - graciously given
 - e. Grace is going to restore all of this!!!

III. Unchained Application of the Gospel

A. The Gospel bookends of the letter

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ....²⁵ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philemon 1:3, 25

1. This letter begins and ends with the grace of God
2. The Gospel is the bookends of our lives
3. We live because Christ has restored us to God
 - a. He plead with the Father to receive us as His family
 - b. He paid the debt we owed to God for our sin
 - c. He has prepared a room for us with the Father
 - d. The great exchange - Christ has restored us by taking our debt and putting us in His place
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - e. This is the Gospel of restoration by grace

B. The Gospel

1. In Paul's actions we see the Gospel
2. This final section shows the implications of justification by faith - the Gospel - applied in a concrete situation
3. Paul is applying the implications of the Gospel to restore
What we find in the letter to Philemon as a whole is the extraordinary, and almost shocking, fact that Paul is reconciling master and slave by taking on himself the role of Christ. For Onesimus' sake God makes Paul a debtor to Philemon (even though he owes him nothing), so that in Paul Onesimus may find a welcome into the church and home where he now truly belongs. God is in Paul reconciling Philemon and Onesimus. - N. T. Wright, Colossians and Philemon, 193-194.

4. Our call - restore others as we have been restored
5. But restoring others may cost - like it did Christ!
 - a. Gospel is free for us - but cost Christ everything!
 - b. To restore others is often costly - like in Philemon!
 1. Paul loses service of Onesimus; takes his debts
 2. Onesimus risks his freedom
 3. Philemon loses a slave and may bring trouble to himself
 - c. Restoration is costly - but worth it!
6. We have been blessed and restored - to be a blessing and see others restored!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Have been restored by the Gospel of grace?
 1. God offers to free us and restore us
 2. This is all done because of the work of Christ
 3. Just as Onesimus could not free himself - nor can we
 4. But thanks be to God - Christ has restored us!
 5. Receive that restoration today!
- B. Will you let God use you to restore others?
 1. Those who have been reconciled and restored are called to be ministers of reconciliation
 2. But serving as an agent of restoration may cost!
 - a. It might cost forgiveness - letting go past hurts

- b. It might cost significant amounts of time
 - c. It might cost money to see others restored
 - d. It might cost heartache - not all will be restored
 - e. It might cost our reputation with friends and family
3. Will you serve as an agent of restoration for others?

C. Prayer and application - love offering for Erbil

Unchained Through Restoration

Philemon 1:17-25
 August 24, 2014
 Prayer
 Philemon 1:25

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philemon 1:25

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰ I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. ²² And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

²³ Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. ²⁴ And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. ²⁵ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philemon 1:17–25