

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Rosa
Sunday, June 13, 2021 ~ Scripture Reading
Text: Letter to Philemon (New International Version)

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker— also to
Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and
to the church that meets in your home:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,
because I hear about your love for all his holy people and
your faith in the Lord Jesus. I pray that your partnership
with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your
understanding of every good thing we share for the sake
of Christ. Your love has given me great joy and
encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the
hearts of the Lord's people.

Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order
you to do what you ought to do, yet I prefer to appeal to
you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an
old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— that I
appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son
while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you,
but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I
would have liked to keep him with me so that he could

take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

So, if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.