

## IN TOUCH

### PHILEMON THE FORGIVER

Last Sunday I started the new sermon series: "Little Books, Big Message". I am excited about this for several reasons, one of them is the fact that each of the books we will look at the next few weeks have a very powerful and important message in a few amount of words.

This week, let's talk about Philemon. Only 25 verses long, its' main message is something we can all relate to: forgiving someone when they have wronged us. Paul writes the letter to a friend named Philemon about his runaway slave, Onesimus. Apparently Paul met Onesimus when they were both in prison together. Paul is still in prison when he writes to Philemon. While talking to Onesimus they find out they have a mutual connection, Onesimus is Philemon's runaway slave, Philemon is Paul's friend. Small world even in the first century A.D. world, the penalty for a runaway slave was torturous beating at best, death at worst. It was up to the slave owner what kind of punishment to deal out, and it was up to the slave owner to take back the slave if he wanted (presuming that death wasn't the penalty).

A miracle happened to Onesimus: Paul shared the gospel with Onesimus and Onesimus became a Christian. Paul writes Philemon (thus, the book of Philemon) and asks Philemon to accept Onesimus back not only as a slave, but also as a brother in Christ. Paul's words to Philemon gives us insight to Philemon's character, and thus, his ability to forgive.

Note the first character trait: faith. Philemon is a solid Christian and his faith in Christ allows him to remember, that true Christians behave differently than non-Christians. The non-Christian thing to do is kill Onesimus, the Christian thing to do is forgive him. Second character trait: Love. Paul says Philemon loves both God and all the saints. Love is most deeply displayed in loving others, especially those who do not deserve it (Onesimus). Third character trait: Philemon was a bold witness for Jesus. This means two things: First, Philemon was a leader among Christians, and secondly, Philemon knew what it was like to be forgiven. Paul implies... "Philemon...you know about the love of Jesus, now practice it, forgive Onesimus". Take inventory of your heart, who do you need to show the love of Jesus, who do you need to forgive?

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Mike*

Prayer Requests: Pastor Alan Hicks (cancer), Noah Pittenger(new baby boy), Melvin Burdette (shut-in)

Events:

- Sunday, Pictures for the directory.
- Thursday, July 21<sup>st</sup> 6:00 p.m. Women's Ministry (let Tamie know you are coming for pizza count!)