

A Theology of Paul and His Letters: Part 1, *Transformation and Fellowship*

Excerpt from Pliny the Younger's Letter about a freed slave (circa 100 AD)

"... to sum it up, he made me believe that he was genuinely sorry. I think he is a changed character, because he really does feel that he did wrong. Yes, I know you are angry; and I know, too, that you have a right to be angry... You can always be angry again if he deserves it, and you'll have all the more reason if you've been placated now. He's young, he's in tears, and you have a kind heart - make all that count. Don't torture him, and don't torture yourself either; anger is always torture for a soft heart like yours."

Excerpt from Paul's Letter to Philemon about his slave, Onesimus

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... 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."

Analyzing the Letter

(vv. 1-7) The *Greeting* and *Thanksgiving* and parallels throughout Paul's letters

Paul's use of language in the introduction to prepare reader for the "meat" of his message

(vv. 8-11) The *Appeal* to Philemon, based on his love which Paul hears of continually (v. 5)

(vv. 12-22) Paul's *Explanation* and *Embodiment* of his request

***Koinonia* and the Transformation of Jewish Unity and Purity**

Word Study: *koinonia*

1. Monetary Gift (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 9:13)
2. Fellowship and sharing relationship with someone
 - a. With God (1 Cor. 1:9, 10:16*; 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil 2:1, 3:10***)
 - b. Believers and Non-believers (2 Cor. 6:14**)
 - c. Between believers (Gal. 2:9)
 - d. Believers' share in the gospel (Phil 1:5; Philemon. 1:6)

Transformation of Unity (Galatians 2)

Transformation of Purity (1 Corinthians 5)