

Paul Intercedes for a Friend
March 26, 2017



Scripture Lesson is Philemon 1:8-21. **This is an excerpt from the message.**

By way of background: Philemon a minister in the church of Colosse, had a servant named Onesimus, who had robbed him of his goods and ran away from him. Onesimus had tried to mingle in Rome among the crowd, where Paul was then a prisoner for the gospel. Onesimus was converted by Paul and ministered to the Apostle in bonds.

Philemon 1:8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, The main business of this epistle, was to plead with Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, that he would receive him and be reconciled to him. Paul puts forth many arguments.

First argument: **Ver. 5** Seeing so much good is reported of thee and found in thee, especially **thy love to all saints,** now let me see it on a fresh and further occasion. Now be not weary of well-doing, go on as you are able, as new objects and occasions occur, to do the same still.

Second argument: **Ver. 8** Is from the authority of him that was now making this request to him; **I might be very bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient.** The apostles had under Christ great power in the church over the ordinary ministers, as well as the members of it, for edification; they might require of them what was fit, and were to obey, which Philemon should consider.

Ministers, whatever their power be in the church, are to use prudence in the exercise of it. In all they must use godly wisdom and discretion.

Third argument: **Ver. 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.** Paul waived his authority which he had to command, he rather choose condescend and to entreat/plead it of him. He argues from love rather than authority.

Fourth argument: He additionally states the circumstance of his pleading to give added force to his petition. **Being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.** Years bespeak respect; and should be received with regard. The request of an aged apostle, and now suffering for Christ and his gospel, should be tenderly considered. Paraphrased, "If you will do anything for a poor aged prisoner, to comfort me in my bonds, and make my chain lighter, grant me this request. Whereby you honor Christ."

Paul's love and concern for a friend gives us an example of Jesus' love for us.