

Series: Ordinary People – Extraordinary God

Sermon: Philemon

Scripture: Philemon 1:4-22

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.^[a] ⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. ⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus,^[b] whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant^[c] but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want 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 say. ²² At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

Reflection Questions:

- How as the gospel transformed my heart? Can I name ways Christ's love has changed the way I relate to others?
- Where am I still living according to worldly instincts instead of allowing my reactions to be changed by Jesus?
- What barriers do I allow to remain between me and others?
- Is there anyone with whom I need to reconcile? Who might God be calling me to reach out to in grace and love?

Guided Prayer: *Praise God for His grace and reconciling love for you. Consider specific things God has forgiven you. Ask God to show you people or situations that need reconciling in your life. Ask God to help you to have your heart and instincts transformed by grace. Commit to reaching out to others in love and grace. Thank Jesus for his reconciling work on the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen.*