

# ***Surety for a Stranger***

***Riverwood Bible Church***

***November 19, 2017***

---

Paul's letter to Philemon was written around the year 60 A.D from Rome. His recipients were Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church in their house.

## **Background of Onesimus rebellious actions**

- Onesimus, a bondservant, had likely \_\_\_\_\_ Philemon in some way (vs. 18)
  - Verse 1's interesting connection between Paul and Onesimus. → Paul the \_\_\_\_\_

## **Slavery as a background issue**

- Ancient slavery was different from American slavery in at least three ways.
  - Not associated with \_\_\_\_\_
  - Rarely \_\_\_\_\_
  - For some, associated with paying off \_\_\_\_\_
- Slavery was an accepted and basic element of 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Empire. The Bible sought to regulate those relationships just as it regulates family, work, and spiritual/church relationships.
  - Exodus 21:6 and I Timothy 1:8-10 both condemn kidnapping and selling another human being
  - The Bible's \_\_\_\_\_ strategy to the existence of sin in this world.
    - I Corinthians 7:21-24 – Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) ***For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.*** You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

## **Overall theme of Philemon**

- \_\_\_\_\_ is the theme.
  - The basis for Paul's appeal to Philemon is \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 5 and 7) just as the basis for God's appeal, through Jesus, to Onesimus is love (John 3:16, Romans 5:8, I John 4:7-10)
  - The gospel changes people and societies. All can have unity and belong because they share a common identity in Christ
    - Colossians 3:3 – For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
    - Galatians 3:28 – There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## **Changed relationships → “brothers” (10-19)**

- **Paul and Onesimus**

➤ **Onesimus and Philemon**

➤ **Paul and Philemon**

**Justice requires a payment → “surety” (18-19)**

- **Verse 18** addresses the \_\_\_\_\_ for Onesimus as Paul acknowledges that there may be a debt owed to Philemon. Rather than asking Onesimus to pay it and justify himself before his former master, Paul becomes his surety, stating that the debt should be charged to his account.
- Proverbs 11:15, Proverbs 22:26-27
  - Paul guaranteed the debt of Onesimus who he knew, where Christ guaranteed the debt of the sin of the world belonging to those whom Scripture calls us:
    - Strangers (Eph. 2:19, Heb. 11:13)
    - Foreigners (Eph. 2:19, Heb. 11:13)
    - Enemies (Rom. 5:10, Col. 1:21)
    - Alienated from God (Gal. 5:4, Col. 1:21)
- 2. Corinthians 8:9 – For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
- I Peter 3:18 – For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,
- Jesus wavered not in his pledge to be our surety
- Hebrews 12:2 – looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Questions to Consider...**

1. Are there relationships with believers in your world where you need to heed the call of Philemon 1:17?
2. How can you be the messenger of the gospel to someone in your life who has yet to experience the transformative message of the gospel that he may call Jesus his Savior and even his Brother?
3. Christ alone can be your surety. He alone can settle every claim against you. Have you trusted the stranger’s surety today?