



Mennonite
Church
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

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Philemon **A Monologue**

(Paul, from a jail cell, dials the telephone, and speaks with Philemon, a Christian slave owner in Colosse.)

Philemon? Hi. It's Paul. *(Pause.)*

Yeah! How are you doing? And how's Apphia? *(Pause.)* Good, that's wonderful! *(Pause.)*

Things are okay here. *(Pause.)* Yes. *(Pause.)*

No, I'm not in Philippi anymore ... You'll like this, I'm in jail. *(Pause.)*

Yeah, again. Said a bit too much this time. Not diplomatic enough. You know me. *(Pause.)* Well, you either live life on the edge, right, or ... *(Pause.)*

No, it's not ideal, that's for sure. *(Pause.)* Okay, I admit it's discouraging. I'm losing touch with the churches. I'm harassed here. It's lonely. Sometimes I'm surprised I'm still sane! But God's here, Philemon. I know that. And I haven't compromised my faith. And I still have my pen and my letterhead.

It's so good to hear your voice. I keep you in my prayers regularly. Think of you often. *(Pause.)* Thank you. I've always appreciated your support. You're a great friend as well. The picture you gave me, it's in the corner of the cell, right by my mattress. Can't believe how much your children have grown. *(Pause.)*

No, I don't know when I'll be able to see you again. They keep me in ropes and chains here. *(Pause.)*

Yeah, it's been a long time. A very long time. *(Pause.)* It would be good to talk at length again. Like we used to. I would love ... heck, prepare a room for me. Who knows? Maybe I'll be released soon and we can again see each other face to face. *(Pause.)* Oh yeah, we should do that again. I had so much fun. Yeah, it's been too long.

Too long. Oh say, Philemon, one reason for calling is that someone here wants to return to you. He's also been away too long. *(Pause.)* Ah hah, yeah, but you see, he's really scared. I've encouraged him to go, though. *(Pause.)*

Oh yeah, you know him. His name is Onesimus. *(Pause.)* Yes, Onesimus. I knew you'd remember him. *(Pause.)*

Well, he's been here a while, has traveled with me a bit, before the authorities limited my ... *(Pause.)*

You sound shocked. I know he's stolen from you. *(Pause.)* A family heirloom? He's willing to return it. *(Pause.)* No, I don't know if he's spent the money. He's willing to make that up to you. Philemon, he's been like a pastor to me when I've been in prison. He's like a son, Philemon, a real blessing. *(Pause.)* Yeah, he's been with me, right here. His enthusiasm for the church is incredible. *(Pause.)*

Yes, this is Onesimus, your slave. I'm not mistaken. Oh, you wouldn't believe how he's changed. *(Pause.)* Well, he was afraid to tell you he was here ... *(Pause.)* Oh, about six months. I'm sure you've been concerned. I can appreciate that. But he's been fine here. Trust me. *(Pause.)* Ah hah. But he wants to go back. *(Pause.)*

Well, it's time, it's really time for him to return home. Colosse is still his home, right Philemon? Would you welcome him back? *(Pause.)*

No, no. Welcome him as you would welcome me. Heck, give him my room. The one you're preparing for me. *(Pause.)* Yes, treat him well. He'll be more to you than a slave. Welcome him as a brother, Philemon. A brother in Christ. *(Pause.)*

Sure, think about it. He's anxious, though. Can you get back to me soon? *(Pause.)* Yes, of course, I know it's a tough decision. *(Pause.)* A risk, you're right. Yeah, it has implications for your whole household. *(Pause.)* And your other slaves. *(Pause.)*

I know. The gospel isn't always easy, is it? For any of us. *(Pause.)* I remind you I'm in prison. *(Pause.)*

I will keep you in my prayers as you deliberate. It's been good to talk with you again. Give my greetings to Apphia. My love to you brother. Good bye. *(Paul hangs up the phone.)*