A Compelling Appendix

Philemon 20-25

Introduction:

I. A Personal Word – 20-22

A. Provide Me Relief – 20

1. Rejoice Me in the Lord – 20a

“Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord

Literally: “I want to profit from you”

Paul is not saying that he wants to get rich off Philemon. Own a big ranch in TX. Or build a $106  “Church for all nations” in Orlando.

He wants to profit “in the Lord.” The “I” and “you” are emphatic. Why? What is Paul implying?

Until now it has been in the reverse order: Philemon has profited from Paul.

Remember the burden of the letter: that slave and owner get back together on a spiritual level. That would make Paul happy!

Is there any further implication? Maybe, we have no further word on the matter.

2. Refresh Me in the Lord – 20b

“refresh my heart in the Lord.”

We saw the word “refresh” in v7. At that point we noted that Jesus had used it in Matt. 11:28-29 “I will give you rest.” Or “refresh you”

We have seen this word for heart before as well. It is not but σπλάγχνα - the seat of affections and sympathy. It would refresh Paul to know that Philemon was going to do what he asked and that his (Paul’s) 2 sons (Philemon and Onesimus) were going to show love for each other.

B. Prove Me Right – 21

1. Simple Obedience – 21a

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“Having confidence in your obedience…”

I believe that you are going to do as I asked.” They had that kind of relationship!

2. Superlative obedience – 21b

“I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.”

You will go the extra mile [as Jesus taught]

Matthew 5:41

“And whoever ﻿﻿compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”

Before that in v. 39 He had said, “whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”

In other words, do more than is asked. That doesn’t seem fair! I know, but in v. 40 He tells what else you can do. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. In other words: “Take off your coat and let him have it.”

C. Prepare Me a Room – 22

1. Plan on It – 22a

“But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me,”

Philemon had a large home. Most likely, Paul had not been there. But he is inviting himself. But Paul is in prison. He has prospects of getting out soon. As a matter of fact, he did get released within a few months. See Philippians – next.

2. Pray for it – 22b

“for ﻿﻿I trust that ﻿﻿through your prayers I shall be granted to you.”

Pray that I get to come to see you. The prayer is two-pronged.

1. Pray that I get released from prison.

2. Pray that I will be able to come and see you

Paul would certainly feel welcomed if they had been praying for the Lord to send him. But don’t miss the implication here: Don’t punish Onesimus, but accept him as a brother.

Philemon may have been thinking: How will Paul ever know? He is in prison. I can do as I please.

Back to reality: “Prepare a guest room!”

“People don’t always do what you expect; but they will do what you inspect.

II. A Public Word – 23-24

A. Greeting from the Man in Prison with Paul –

“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,”

In Colossians Paul writes, Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, always ﻿﻿laboring fervently for you in prayers, He has a great ﻿﻿zeal for you, (Colossians) and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis (Cities of the Lycos Valley).

He may have been pastor of the church in Colossians. Perhaps he came to Rome to get some advice from Paul concerning the Gnosticism which was creeping into the churches of Asia Minor.

B. Greeting from the Men in Partnership with Paul - 24

1. Marcus – [as do] ﻿﻿Mark, my fellow laborer

We mentioned Mark the last time in Connection with Barnabas. He quit in the middle of Paul’s first missionary journey.

That is not the whole story on Mark. Now you will hear the “rrrrrest of the story.”

Before his defection: In Mark’s gospel there is an incident which we might gloss over.

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“Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body.* And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.”

I believe that the young man was John Mark. Here is my (and other’s) scenario:

1. Mark was the son of the owner of the house with the upper room where they celebrated the Passover and initiated the Lord’s Supper.

2. He learned about Judas’ plan to betray Jesus.

3. Judas left the dinner ahead of everyone else and thought that Jesus was still there.

4. But Jesus and His disciples went to the Mt. of Olives after Judas left (and Mark knew their destination.)

5. After they left, Mark undressed and went to bed.

6. Judas told the Jewish leaders that they could find Jesus at that house.

7. The leaders (with their soldiers) went to that house, woke up Mark and ask where Jesus was. Mark told them.

8. Then, he threw a sheet around himself and went out to warn Jesus, but got there too late.

9. A soldier saw him and caught him by the sheet. Mark wiggled out of the sheet and ran home.

How would anyone else know about this except Mark. Mark was the only one who knew about this incident. He recorded it in his Gospel.

Why do I bring this up here? I do it to show John Mark before his failure. He was a courageous and dedicated young man. Then, after the failure we find that same apostle Paul saying good things about John Mark.

Colossians 4.10

﻿“Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),”

In 2 Timothy 4:11

“Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.”

Here in Philemon Paul calls him “my fellow laborer.” This may be the best yet. He is a laborer right along with the Apostle Paul.

All of this proves that failure is not fatal.

2. Aristarchus – Aristarchus my fellow laborer

Colossians 4:10

“Aristarchus my fellow prisoner”

In Acts 19:29 Aristarchus was with Paul during the riots in Ephesus. Paul got away but they caught Aristarchus. He literally took the fall for Paul. Later in Acts we see that he traveled with Paul to Rome, perhaps as a prisoner as well.

Acts 27:2

“So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. ﻿﻿Aristarchus… was with us.”

 Aristarchus was with Paul when they were shipwrecked. So, “fellow prisoner” may have been literal as well as figurative.

3. Demas –﻿Demas, my fellow laborer

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In Colossians we read the same thing about him – “Demas, my fellow laborer”

After Paul had written Philippians, the last of the Prison Epistles, he was released from prison. Two years later, he was returned to prison and wrote 2 Timothy. Paul was near the time of his death as a Martyr in Rome when he wrote this epistle. In chapter 4, he penned these fateful words.

2 Timothy 4:10

“Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

If we put ourselves in that picture, we could be brought to tears for Paul.

4. Lukas – ﻿Luke, my fellow laborer.

We know about Luke, Paul’s faithful physician. In 2 Timothy we read, “Only Luke is with me” Faithful to the end.

III. A Parting Word - 25

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.”

This is a short Greeting, but it could not be any more important if it were a whole book.

The most important blessing God has given us is His Grace. Without Grace we could not exist for even a few seconds. We know that God gives us salvation by Grace, through faith. But salvation is only the beginning.

Two Other “Graces” come to mind:

1. Sharing Grace – 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ﻿that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and ﻿﻿their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ﻿imploring us with much urgency ﻿﻿that we would receive the gift and ﻿﻿the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first ﻿﻿gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the ﻿﻿will of God. So ﻿﻿we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as ﻿﻿you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* ﻿﻿that you abound in this grace also.”

2. Serving Grace – Hebrews 12:28

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us “hold fast to” grace, by which we ﻿﻿may ﻿﻿serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.