**Postcard Epistle Series August 14, 2022**

**Restoring Broken Relationships – Philemon 1:8-25**

Onesimus Philemon 8-11

* Was a runaway slave from Philemon
* Somehow met Paul and became **converted to Christ**, even though he was in prison
* “Formerly was useless to you”
  + Before conversion Onesimus was rebellious but now as a Christian, he desired to serve the Lord, Paul, and Philemon

Paul’s Plea for Onesimus

* Paul could have **mandated** Philemon to reconcile with Onesimus
  + Instead, He sent Onesimus back to Philemon so that they could be restored in relationship with one another face to face
* Out of unconditional love, reconciliation can happen and is possible, even in situations that seemed hopeless
  + “formerly was useless”
  + “now is useful to both of us”

Onesimus Sent Back to Philemon Philemon 12-14

* Having come to Christ through Paul’s ministry in prison, Onesimus was sent back to his owner, Philemon
  + Paul could use him **to meet his needs**
  + Yet there was a higher need: forgiveness and reconciliation between the two men

The Brotherhood of Onesimus & Philemon Philemon 15-16

* Once a physical slave to Philemon
* Having run away, he comes to trust in Christ as Savior
* Now he is a fellow Christian and **spiritual brother** to both Paul and Philemon
  + This is an eternal relationship that will last forever!

Reconciliation of Philemon & Onesimus Philemon 17-20

* Reconciliation involves two steps:
  + **Forgiveness for sin(s)**
  + **Restoration of right relationship** with each other
  + Often **restitution** is needed in reconciliation

**What does this mean for us?**

* When there is a broken relationship
  + Always attempt face to face reconciliation
  + While writing, phone calls or even video may work, it’s always best to be in person when working on reconciliation
  + Let every action be done out of and through love
  + Some offenses are brutally difficult to forgive, yet through God’s love, all sins can be forgiven
    - Keep in mind just how much God has forgiven each one of us and how we have sinned against Him foremost

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