APOSTOLIC PENTECOSTAL PREACHERS' PULPIT COMMENTARY ON PAUL'S EPISTLE TO

PHILEMON

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An Apostolic Pentecostal Preachers Pulpit Commentary, verse-by-verse Exposition of Paul's Epistle to Philemon with short Greek word studies (in English) tied to Apostolic Pentecostal doctrine, plus a historical summary of who Philemon was and a focused "Apostolic Pentecostal apologetics" section showing how this little letter supports core Apostolic Pentecostal convictions (repentance, new birth of water and spirit, baptism in Jesus' name in water for remission of sins, The baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire with the evidence of speaking in tongues for Bible Salvation and empowerment for Service, holiness with in and without, restoration and apostolic pentecostal authority).

Short Historical Background — Who was Philemon?

• Philemon (Greek: Φιλήμων) — a wealthy Apostolic Pentecostal Believer -Christian of Colossae who hosted a house church (the letter addresses "the church in your house," v.1). Name meaning: "affectionate" or "beloved."
• Likely converted through Paul's ministry or by Epaphras (Colossians 1:7; 4:12–13). He was a respected leader/ host (householder) and had a slave named Onesimus who ran away.
• Apphia (his wife?), Archippus (possibly a minister in the house church) are named (v.1) — a family and house-church leadership team.
• Onesimus (Ὀνήσιμος = "useful") became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ while with Paul (probably in prison, likely Rome). He was formerly "unprofitable/ useless" to Philemon but is now "useful" to both Paul and Philemon

(vv.11–12).
• Tradition (not certain historically) later regards Philemon, Apphia and Archippus as honored Apostolic Pentecostal Church figures; some traditions consider them martyrs or saints, but the letter itself gives the reliable facts: house church leader, host, brother in The Lord Jesus Christ, and recipient of Paul's pastoral appeal.

Apostolic Pentecostal Apologetics from Philemon — Short List of How the Letter Supports Apostolic Pentecostal Distinctives

• Conversion According to Acts 2:38 produces transformed identity: social categories (slave/free) are superseded by "brother"/"sister" in the Lord (v.16). This supports the Apostolic Pentecostal teaching that the new birth of water and spirit creates a new identity in The Lord Jesus Christ which must be practically lived out.
• Repentance and reconciliation are essential fruit of the gospel: Onesimus's conversion compels restoration, not punishment (vv.10–17). Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize repentance and restitution as marks of genuine conversion.
• "Useful" Onesimus: conversion turns the once-unprofitable into ministry usefulness (name meaning supports sanctification and usefulness; v.11). This is consistent with the Apostolic Pentecostal emphasis on God making converts Spirit-filled workers.
• Apostolic Pentecostal Authority and mediation matter: Paul's letter acts with apostolic weight, instructing the

local leader toward reconciliation (vv.8–9, 21). Apostolic Pentecostals lean on apostolic pentecostal teaching and authority to guide The Apostolic Pentecostal Church practice.

• Fellowship (koinōnia) and service: the letter stresses partnership in ministry (koinōnia τῆς πίστεως, v.6) — the movement's emphasis on shared witness, missions and practical charity is supported.

• Practical holiness, mercy and love: Paul appeals to love and faith (v.5) rather than merely to social norms, echoing the Apostolic Pentecostal emphasis on holiness empowered by his spirit.

• Implicitly supports baptism/ in his spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues brings new life: while Philemon does not narrate baptism in Jesus' name or speaking in tongues, Apostolic Pentecostals read its Apostles Doctrine of conversion, changed identity and usefulness as congruent with a pattern where conversion is accompanied by baptism (in Jesus' name) and The Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire with the evidence of speaking in tongues for Salvation and Service empowerment-and fire with the evidence of speaking in tongues for Salvation and empowerment for Service .

Verse-by-verse exposition, Greek word studies, and Apostolic Pentecostal "Gold Nuggets"

(Note: Greek lexical forms are given with short English glosses and an application or insight for Apostolic Pentecostal doctrine.)

Verse 1

• Summary: Paul, a prisoner of Christ, and Timothy write to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church in Philemon's house.
• Greek notes: Paul (Παῦλος); "prisoner" δεσμώτης (desmōtēs) — Paul's apostolic pentecostal authority is exercised even from chains; "church" ἐκκλησία (assembly) and "house" οἶκος (oikos).
• Gold nugget: Apostolic Pentecostal Authority is not merely positional — Paul's apministry-pent ministry continues under persecution. Apostolic Pentecostal House-church structures exemplify local accountability; Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize small, accountable fellowships where holiness and discipleship happen.

Verse 2

• Summary: Salutation to Philemon, "our beloved and fellow-worker."
• Greek: φίλος (beloved), συνεργός (synergos — fellow worker/partner in ministry).
• Gold nugget: Partnership (synergia) in gospel ministry is primary. Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize mutual labor in the Lord Jesus Christ (missions, evangelism, discipleship) — converts become co-workers.

Verse 3

• Summary: Grace and peace to you from God the Father is the Lord Jesus Christ.

• Greek: χάρις (charis, grace), εἰρήνη (eirēnē, peace).
• Gold nugget: Grace and peace are the foundation of reconciliation and sanctification; Apostolic Pentecostals stress grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to holiness and the peace that guards hearts after new birth of water and spirit - John 3.3-8 -Acts 2.38 .

Verse 4

• Summary: Paul thanks God for Philemon, remembering him in prayers.
• Gold nugget: Apostolic Pentecostal piety emphasizes thankfulness and prayer as context for ministry and reconciliation.

Verse 5–6

• Summary: Paul praises Philemon's faith and love which have refreshed believers, and prays that the fellowship of your faith may be effective.
• Greek: πίστις (pistis — faith), ἀγάπη (agapē — love), κοινωνία (koinōnia — fellowship/partnership), ἐνεργήσῃ (energēsē — be made effective/energized).
• Gold nugget: "Koinōnia of faith" being energized points to his spirit's work empowering fellowship and ministry. Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize that faith is not private — it's activated by his spirit in community and mission.

Verse 7

• Summary: Philemon's love has given Paul great joy and

comfort because of how he refreshed the hearts of the saints.
• Gold nugget: Spiritual refreshment and mutual encouragement are evidence of Spirit-led ministry. Apostolic Pentecostals value ministries that restore and strengthen the church.

Verse 8–9

• Summary: Paul could command by apostolic authority, but he appeals out of love; he identifies as “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus.”
• Greek: παρακαλῶ (parakalō — I appeal), πρεσβύτερος/πρεσβύτης (presbyter/aged — possibly humble reference).
• Gold nugget: Apostolic Penteministry exercises both authoritative instruction and loving appeal. Apostolic Pentecostals uphold Apostolic Pentecostal teaching but practice restoration with humility and love.

Verse 10

• Summary: Paul appeals for Onesimus, “my child in my chains.”
• Greek: τέκνον (teknon — son/child), ἐν δεσμοῖς (in chains).
• Gold nugget: Spiritual fatherhood matters — leaders invest in converts. Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize discipleship as parent/child pastoral care, with the result being conversion and life change.

Verse 11

• Summary: Onesimus was once unprofitable (to Philemon) but now profitable to both Philemon and Paul.
• Greek: ἄχρηστος (achrēstos — useless, unprofitable).
• Gold nugget: Genuine conversion radically redefines a person's usefulness. This affirms Apostolic Pentecostal emphasis that the baptized in water in Jesus Name for the remission of sin The Baptism in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues -Apostolic Pentecostal believer-becomes-with the evidence of speaking in tongues becomes a useful vessel for God.

Verse 12

• Summary: Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon but with him's own heart.
• Gold nugget: True repentance restores relationships. Apostolic Pentecostals teach that repentance, water baptism in Jesus Name for remission of sins , the baptism in the Holy Ghost restore sinners to usefulness and fellowship.

Verse 13–14

• Summary: Paul would have liked to keep Onesimus with him but did not want to act without Philemon's consent, so Philemon's obedience would be voluntary.
• Gold nugget: Respecting conscience and church order is important. Apostolic Pentecostals stress voluntary, Spirit-led obedience, not coercion — authentic

reconciliation must be freely given.

Verse 15

• Summary: Perhaps Onesimus was separated for a little while so that Philemon might have him back forever.
• Greek: μήπω (maybe), εἰς τὸ … (into/for the purpose of).
• Gold nugget: God's providence can turn what appears as misfortune into an opportunity for eternal gain. Apostolic Pentecostals preach God's sovereign hand in conversion and restoration.

Verse 16

• Summary: Paul asks that Onesimus no longer be received as a slave but above a slave — a beloved brother, especially in the Lord.
• Greek: δοῦλος (doulos — slave/servant), ἀδελφός (adelphos — brother), ὑπὲρ (hyper — beyond, above), ἐν κυρίῳ (en kyriō — in the Lord).
• Gold nugget: This verse is central: social status is redefined by being "in the Lord." For Apostolic Pentecostals this supports the New Birth's power to break (practical) social chains: baptism in Jesus' name and Spirit regeneration produce a new family identity that supersedes earthly ranks.

Verse 17

• Summary: Paul appeals that if Philemon considers Paul a partner, he should receive Onesimus as Paul himself.

• Greek: κοινωνός (koinōnos — partner, sharer), δέξαι ὡς ἐμέ (receive as me).
• Gold nugget: Discipleship incarnates itself in acceptance and practical restoration. Apostolic Pentecostals encourage welcoming repentant believers fully into fellowship and ministry.

Verse 18

• Summary: If Onesimus owes Philemon anything, Paul asks Philemon to charge it to Paul.
• Greek: ἀντέθηκεν/ὀφείλει (to owe), χρέος (debt).
• Gold nugget: Repentance may require restitution; the gospel includes practical responsibility. Apostolic Pentecostals teach both holiness of life and practical restitution when sin has harmed others.

Verse 19

• Summary: Paul says he himself will repay and adds, “I wrote it with my own hand — I will repay — though I do not say to you how you owe me even yourself.”
• Greek: ἔγραψα (I wrote), ἀποδοῶ (I will repay).
• Gold nugget: Personal signature highlights apostolic personal investment. Paul’s claim that Philemon “owes” him his own self (spiritual indebtedness for salvation) underscores the relational nature of conversion — Apostolic Pentecostals point to conversion as total life change with lifelong debt of service to Christ.

Verse 20

• Summary: Paul is confident Philemon will do even more than he asks.
• Greek: πεπιστευκα (I am confident/hope).
• Gold nugget: Expectant faith in a repentant believer's obedience is an apostolic posture. Apostolic Pentecostals preach in expectancy that the Spirit will produce fruit beyond human requests.

Verse 21

• Summary: Paul writes with confidence in Philemon's obedience and asks to refresh Paul's heart in Christ.
• Greek: ὑπακοῆς (obedience), ἀνάπαυσόν (refresh).
• Gold nugget: Obedience refreshes ministry. Apostolic Pentecostals stress obedience to the apostolic message (gospel, baptism, holiness), which refreshes leaders and builds up the church.

Verse 22

• Summary: Paul asks Philemon to prepare a guest room for him, implying hope of release and a visit.
• Greek: παρεῖναι (to be with), ἕτοιμον (ready).
• Gold nugget: Expectation of ongoing fellowship and accountability; Apostolic Pentecostals value hospitality and the itinerant apostolic-pastoral relationships that strengthen local assemblies.

Verse 23–24

• Summary: Greetings from Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus,

Demas, Luke — fellow workers.
• Greek: συνεργοί (fellow workers).
• Gold nugget: Fellowship of co-workers demonstrates the connectedness of apostolic ministry. Apostolic Pentecostals live out this networked evangelism and pastoral care.

Verse 25

• Summary: Final benediction — "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."
• Greek: χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ σὺν πνεύματί σου.
• Gold nugget: The benediction ties grace directly to the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer's spirit — in Apostolic Pentecostal theology this resonates with the experiential grace that gives new life and the promise of Spirit-empowerment to live holy and fruitful lives.

Additional Greek Word Studies that Apostolic Pentecostals Often Highlight in Philemon

• Onesimus (Ὀνήσιμος) — "useful" or "profitable." The name illustrates conversion's change of vocation: from uselessness to usefulness in ministry.
• Philemon (Φιλήμων) — "beloved, dear," underscoring Christian affection and reconciliation.
• Doulos (δοῦλος) — "slave" or "bondservant." Paul's request that a slave be treated as "brother" shows the gospel's social revolution. Apostolic Pentecostals emphasize that spiritual rebirth makes us all servants of

Christ, but brothers and sisters to each other.
• Koinōnia (κοινωνία) — “fellowship/partnership.” Central for Pentecostal ecclesiology: joint service, mutual support, and sharing in gospel work.
• Parakalō (παρακαλῶ) — “I appeal/encourage.” The apostle uses pastoral appeal rather than coercive force — an example for pastoral strategies that combine apostolic authority with pastoral love.

Practical Apostolic Pentecostal Homiletic and Application “gold nuggets”

• Preach conversion as both inward repentance and outward restoration: Onesimus embodies the convert who repents and is restored.
• Emphasize baptism in the name of Jesus and Holy Ghost empowerment as the normative Apostolic Pentecostal pattern for believers who are then fit for ministry (while recognizing Philemon does not narrate baptism, the letter’s theme of new identity and usefulness aligns with the movement’s conversion pattern).
• Teach that being “in the Lord” reorders relationships — the assembly is a family where social status is subordinate to new birth (a powerful pastoral teaching for church unity, anti-racism, anti-classism).
• Model apostolic pastoral care: Paul’s letter is personal, authoritative yet loving. Pastors should both instruct and seek restoration.
• Require practical restitution and reconciliation when sin affects others. Conversion must show fruits: apologies, restitution where applicable, and restored fellowship.

• Expect converts to be made useful in ministry; allow restored believers supervised reentry into service.

Concluding Pastoral Summary

Philemon is a short but powerful letter about conversion, reconciliation, Christian identity, pastoral care. For Apostolic Pentecostals it confirms key convictions: the newcreates-water and creates a new family identity ("in the Lord Jesus Christ "); conversion results in usefulness for the kingdom; Apostolic Pentecostal teaching and pastoral appeal are vital for church order; repentance should lead to restoration and practical ministry; and fellowship empowered by grace and the Spirit is the context for conversion to become a lasting transformation.

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