

BROTHERS

A STORY OF FAMILY LIFE BASED ON THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

by
David S. Lampel



Blank page inside Title Page

Page 3 reserved for TOC

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY

**If printing this script double-sided, the next page in the stack
should become the first side of the second sheet**

Contents

Characters 4

The Letter 5

The Reply 8

The Interview 15

Postscript 21

Use & Copyright Notice 24

Characters

ATTICUS is an older man—older than his master, Philemon. He has been a servant of the household for many years. Over that time he has played an instrumental part in the education of the children, but mostly has been Philemon’s right-hand man in business. More than just a secretary (or *amanuensis*), he has become what we today would call an *executive assistant*. Technically a slave, his position—and behavior—is more like that of a trusted employee.

As such, he has been known to take liberties with his subservient position under the master—on occasion receiving rebuke, on occasion getting away with an intemperate remark, but more often having his counsel accepted as something worthy of consideration. Atticus is a self-important man with fastidious habits and manners. He is intelligent and, on occasion, arrogant. He is, nonetheless, devoted to Philemon and his household—one in which, if Philemon were the king, Atticus would be the *vizier*.

Atticus is so far an unbeliever. Because the church meets in Philemon’s house, he has been privy to all that has been said, but he remains a friendly skeptic.

PHILEMON (technically, fih-lay’-mone, but the commonly accepted pronunciation is fie-lee’-mun) is a middle-aged man, leader of the church that meets in his home, and a successful businessman. He has a tender heart that is still, regrettably, contained in a constitution that is more at home in the cold, unblinking logic of the competitive business world. He is quick-tempered, impatient, easily irritated and, at times, bombastic. He loves his family (including his servants) dearly, but often demonstrates that love in working all the harder to supply all their physical needs.

Philemon was won to the Lord by Paul, and they are close friends. Paul’s imprisonment in Rome has only added to the tension resident in Philemon—the tension between the business world and his deep devotion to Christ. He cannot understand why the Lord would permit the apostle to languish in prison when there is so much work to be done in His name.

APPHIA (ahp-fee’-ah) is Philemon’s wife—a woman dedicated to gently softening her husband’s rougher edges. She is the calming influence in a household often overtaken by storms of commerce and general turmoil.

While Philemon has authority over the entirety of their business and estate, he has given Apphia immediate authority over the more personal household—and the slaves that serve within it.

ONESIMUS (oe-neh’-sih-mose, or oe-neh’-sih-mus) is a rather ordinary-looking man, somewhere around twenty-five or thirty years of age—although no one really knows how old he is. He was purchased by Philemon five years earlier from a passing caravan that included a group of prisoners from Crete. Philemon selected him for his strong back, but soon Onesimus’ unique brand of earthy intelligence won him a position of trust within the household.

Onesimus is a seeker. He is an attentive, obedient servant who displays no animus toward his master. But he has always believed—even before becoming a slave—that there is something better waiting for him out there. He is a thinker and a dreamer, a strong man with an almost feminine sensitivity toward others.

The Letter

50 *Lights up.*

The setting is an opulently appointed inner courtyard of a wealthy family. The courtyard is surrounded by the lattice-windowed, inner walls of the house. A narrow walkway borders these walls, sheltered by a tiled roof all around. An open doorway leads from the courtyard to the home's interior rooms.

55 *The courtyard is mostly paved, but with areas set aside for bushes, trees, even a small flower garden. There is a fountain in the center. Near the fountain are one or two benches, large enough for two to sit together while being cooled by the bubbling water during the hotter parts of the day. Near one of the benches is a smaller, lower stool—or a small stone large enough for one person. Here and there—both in the*
60 *courtyard and around its perimeter walkway—are water or wine amphorae (tall clay jugs) and wooden storage boxes, in which are kept cushions for the benches.*

The setting is one of restrained wealth—comfort without ostentation.

65 *Atticus, dressed in a simple Grecian tunic, enters. He is a servant of the household—but, more important, he is Philemon's scribe—his amanuensis, who pens all the master's business correspondence and keeps his ledgers.*

Atticus pauses to inhale the fragrance from a nearby bush and fill his lungs with the morning air. Then he removes a seat cushion from one of the storage boxes. He moves to one of the benches and carefully—even with an air of ceremony—positions
70 *the cushion on the hard bench, brushes it off, flicks away a speck of dust. Once it is situated just so, he steps to the center fountain and refreshes himself in the cooling water. It is then he turns to notice the audience.*

Atticus looks around to ensure that he is alone, then moves slightly downstage to acknowledge the audience.

75

Atticus

(with an air of amused intrigue; to the audience)

Philemon has just received a letter from Rome—from his friend, Paul.

80 *From an inside fold of his tunic Atticus removes a small scroll (the same one Philemon will have in hand in the next scene).*

He is imprisoned there, you see. It's unfair, no doubt about it. But these followers of The Way seem to take it all in stride—even to glory in the prospect to suffer a bit for their cause.

85 *(dismissively)*

I admit it: it all escapes me. What a bother. But then, it's not for me to say.

(with feigned subservience)

I am but a humble servant of this household—an aged retainer, serving the master faithfully, lo all these years.

90 *(more like himself; confidentially)*

Would you like to hear what it says?

(glancing around)

It's really quite juicy. Paul has this way of making his point by coming in the side window, rather than the front door. It's rather good.

95 *(opening the scroll and reading [from the NIV translation] with elaborate expression and nuance)*

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

100 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me
105 great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

(‘here it comes’)

Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old
110 man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

(with facial expressions and attitude getting the audience to understand how Paul is attempting to manipulate Philemon)

115 I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you

120 might have him back for good—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave,
as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a
man and as a brother in the Lord.

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If
he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul,
125 am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that
you owe me your very self. I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit
from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience,
I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be
130 restored to you in answer to your prayers.

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do
Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

(closing the scroll and tucking it back inside his tunic)

135 As you can see, this is going to cause quite a stir.

(glancing up into the morning sky)

Well, the master should be up by now.

(with a wicked twinkle in his eye)

Time for him to read the morning mail.

140 *Atticus exits, back into the house.*

Lights down quickly.

The Reply

145 *Lights up.*

Philemon enters at a brisk clip, followed close behind by Atticus—who is behaving more like a servant, now that he is in the presence of his master. Philemon carries in his hand a small scroll—the just-received letter from Paul.

150 *Atticus immediately takes his place upon the cushion he previously set in place. He removes from a long, slender writing kit an inkwell, long stylus, and a fresh scroll—which he lays across a board (either carried in, or already in place by his bench). While he waits for Atticus to ready himself to receive dictation, Philemon re-reads portions of the letter in his hand—which leaves him even more agitated than before.*

155

Philemon

(gruffly)

Come now, Atticus. Come along. I want to put this down while fresh.

Atticus

160 *(betraying his irritation; mostly under his breath)*

Yes... yes...

(remembering his place)

Certainly, master. Do you have any specific instruction regarding the missive?

Philemon

165 A firm hand. I want this in a firm hand.

(after pausing just a moment to order his thoughts; dictating)

Philemon, a follower of our Lord Jesus. To my brother and friend, Paul; and, yes, to Timothy, his son in the Spirit and fellow worker:

The members of this household—as well as those who worship in it—greet
170 you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The blessings of God upon you both, as you, Paul, suffer imprisonment for His name and glory.

It is with a heart filled with an uncomfortable blend of gratitude and righteous anger that I answer your recent letter. Let this reply, in your hands, indicate that yours arrived safely, with dispatch,

175 *(grimacing)*

by way of the assigned courier.

I will confess to you, Paul, that it was not a pleasurable emotion that coursed through me when I first laid eyes on my returning slave.

(becoming more agitated)

180 When, from a distance, I spied the absent Onesimus traipsing down the road—as if pursuing nothing more than a pleasurable romp in the afternoon sun—the rage so long nurtured in me rose like last evening’s beans. How dare he come back to me with such a carefree air about him!

(noticing that his amanuensis, with a quizzical look on his face, is no longer writing)

185 Put it down! Put it down!

(regaining a relative calm)

I will confess to you, however, that it was with a certain measure of shame that I suddenly remembered the story told by the Lord when He had occasion to speak to a number of tax-gatherers. Quite unexpectedly, I saw
190 myself in the role of the father whose son had abandoned his responsibilities, only to finally regret his life of dissipation and debauchery, and to return with his tail between his legs. Because my ‘son’ was returning—

(becoming once again agitated)

not in shame, but with great glee and bounding spirit—I was filled with
195 unquenchable anger, rather than the compassion expressed by the father in Jesus’ story.

As you know well, Paul, I am a businessman—one who subscribes to the twin philosophies of promises kept and debts repaid. I believe in fairness, but also corresponding responsibility, and my initial reaction to my slave’s return
200 was one of fierce retribution over his promises broken and his debts left unpaid.

(calming himself)

My good friend Paul: Though I love you as both brother in Christ and my Spiritual ‘father,’ I must, with regret, address you with what might be
205 perceived as brutal candor.

When the slave Onesimus handed me your letter, and I read your words, my anger was kindled anew when I realized that you had been the one harboring this fugitive. The knowledge that you, my brother, were the one in

possession of my lost resource filled me with a powerful resentment that has
 210 not yet subsided.

(more calm)

As to your offer to cover the slave's debt, Onesimus did not leave this house
 empty-handed. While it is true that he did not abscond with as much as he
 might, he did help himself to some of our stores and a small purse.

215 *(firmly)*

Regardless his status from here on out, these must be repaid.

*With his attention still on his thoughts and the letter being penned to his friend,
 Philemon does not even look up when his wife, Apphia, bursts into the courtyard.*

220

Apphia

I just heard he was back!

Philemon

(studying the letter in his hand)

225 What's that, dear?

Apphia

(excitedly)

Is it true? Onesimus has returned? Who brought him?

Philemon

230 *(finally pulling himself away from his private thoughts)*

No one. He returned on his own.

*Apphia is stunned into silence. She finds it astonishing that a runaway slave would
 actually return by his own choice! Onesimus is not ignorant; he knows that the
 punishment for running away can be harsh. Apphia finds this all very inconvenient. As
 235 the woman of the house, and the one in charge of the inner household slaves, she will
 need to play a part in the situation.*

Apphia

What did he have to say for himself?

240 **Philemon**

Not much. Oh, he went through all the motions, said all the right words. He
 was suitably repentant, threw himself at my feet and all. But it seemed to be

almost an act: even as he clutched at my ankles, he could barely keep himself from grinning up at me! Can you believe it?

245

Apphia

(with a sigh)

And now we're going to have to do something about it. It was almost easier when he was still a runaway.

Philemon

250

But there's something else. The situation has been compounded by this.

Philemon hands the rolled letter from Paul to his wife.

Apphia

What's this?

255

Philemon

Our runaway has been in the company of Paul.

Apphia lifts her gaze off the papyrus scroll to stare at her husband in disbelief.

Apphia

260

Paul? But he's in prison.

Philemon

Apparently Onesimus found his way to him. He must have heard our discussions regarding Paul's welfare. The church has been praying for him. Onesimus must have overheard, and gone to him.

265

Apphia

Whatever for?

Philemon

I wouldn't know why he went to him in the first place. But, according to Paul's letter, Onesimus has been of some value to him. As a matter of fact, they've become quite close.

270

Apphia

(incredulously)

So instead of returning him to us, Paul kept Onesimus as his own servant.

Philemon

275

(frowning as he gestures for Apphia to read on)

Not quite.

While Apphia reads more of Paul's letter, Philemon moves to a nearby bench, where he wearily sits. The olive wood bench is an old familiar friend.

280 From early on in their life together, Philemon and his wife have met here in this garden to talk over the events of the day just past—while they looked forward to the new day approaching. Here they have talked—quietly, simply—and patiently listened to no one else but the other.

285 The olive wood bench is nestled between two myrtle bushes, and the whole area is scented by their evergreen fragrance. The bench is hard, but its seat, nonetheless, has two distinct impressions from where the couple have ended many years of days.

Meanwhile, Atticus collects his things and—realizing his master and mistress will want some privacy—silently excuses himself, exiting into the house.

290

Apphia

(looking up from reading the letter)

What are you going to do?

Philemon

I don't know yet.

295

Apphia

Paul will be expecting your answer.

Philemon

I know that.

Apphia

300 He wants you to send Onesimus back to him, doesn't he?

Philemon

He stops short of saying it, but it's quite clear.

Apphia

So why don't you do it?

305

Philemon

(stiffening)

Send him to Paul? What will that say to the other servants? It gives tacit permission for all the servants to leave whenever they like and make another life for themselves. What will that do to my authority? And where in that does

310 Onesimus meet his responsibilities to us?

(sagging down into himself)

No. It wouldn't be right.

Apphia

(nodding her head in agreement)

315 I hate to think of Paul going through this—but after all, he’s not alone. His letter says that Timothy and Mark, Demas, Aristarchus and Luke are there with him. Why would he need Onesimus?

Philemon

(motioning toward the scroll)

320 We only have what he wrote. What was it? ‘I would have liked to keep him.’ And he wrote that Onesimus has ‘become useful’ to him.

Apphia

Perhaps you should send a letter back to Paul, asking for more details. Then it would be easier to make the decision.

325

Philemon

(with a sigh)

I suppose. Possibly.

Apphia

(after a pause)

330 Have you spoken with him yet?

Philemon

Who?

Apphia

Onesimus. He’s been in his quarters since he returned.

335

Philemon

I sent him there. I needed time to let my anger subside before dealing with him.

Apphia

And has it?

340

Philemon

Has what?

Apphia

(irritated that she hasn’t her husband’s full attention)

Are you still angry with Onesimus?

345

Philemon

Oh, I rather think I'm more angry with Paul, than the slave. If I were in Onesimus' position, I suppose I'd have done the same thing. What I can't abide is that Paul didn't send him back to me immediately. That would have been the right thing for him to do.

350

Apphia

(gazing off into the distance)

It would be different if Onesimus were part of the family, instead of a slave. Then it would just be a family matter.

355

Her statement stabs into Philemon like a hot knife. But of course, it is a family decision. How had Paul put it? 'I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you.' And later in his letter he had written that Philemon should think of Onesimus 'no longer as a slave, but . . . as a dear brother.'

360

Philemon

(turning toward his wife, as the truth begins to take hold)

But Apphia, he is. He is a part of the family.

365

Lights down slowly.

The Interview

Lights up.

370 *Philemon is already in the courtyard, near the fountain.*
Onesimus enters the courtyard. His demeanor on this day is that of an obedient servant—but one who knows something. He knows his place in the household, yet is filled with the knowledge of something aching to burst free of his lowly position. He feels himself a king trapped in a slave’s body.

375

Onesimus

(lowering his gaze to the floor, and bowing his head slightly)

You sent for me, master.

Philemon

(with studied officiousness)

380

Come here, Onesimus.

(sitting on the larger bench near the fountain)

Sit down here, next to me.

385 *Onesimus, with head lowered respectfully, crosses the courtyard and perches nervously on the low stool that is positioned near where Philemon is waiting. He keeps his gaze lowered, as if studying the floor, while Philemon chooses his words.*

Philemon

I’ve read Paul’s letter carefully. He speaks most highly of you.

390

Onesimus

Yes, master.

Philemon

Tell me why you ran away. Did we treat you unfairly?

Onesimus

395 Oh, no, master.

Philemon

Then why?

Onesimus

I—I couldn’t.

400

Philemon

Tell me. Tell me the truth.

Onesimus

(after a moment's thought; slowly and methodically)

405

You never invited me into your meetings, but I could hear what was being said. At first your discussions were confusing, and your prayers were foreign to any experience of mine. But little by little, I came to be curious about these things. Then my curiosity became something more—I wanted to understand.

(taking a breath, as if gathering courage to go on; continuing methodically)

410

You and the others spoke often of the man Paul. I do remember the time he was here, but nothing else. You spoke of him as you would a leader—yet he wasn't actually here. You gave his words great weight. They were important to you.

Philemon

(interrupting; surprised)

415

You never said anything to me.

Onesimus

It would not have been proper to share my feelings with you, my master.

Philemon

420

I've always treated you well.

Onesimus

(quickly agreeing)

Oh, yes, you have. But there is a fixed distance between master and slave. I could not share it with you.

425

Philemon

(trying not to pout, but only partially hiding his bruised feelings)

But you could with Paul?

Onesimus

Paul is not my master.

430

An awkward silence hovers over them for a moment.

Philemon

But why did you leave?

435 *Onesimus thinks carefully before answering, and when he does, it is with his face once again to the floor.*

Onesimus

I know it was wrong to leave, and I ask your forgiveness. But I don't know if I can put into words why I did.

440 **Philemon**

Try. Speak freely.

Onesimus

I was not leaving here—but going there.

Philemon

445 Where?

Onesimus

(struggling to put words to his thoughts)

Not a place, but an idea. I was filled with a desire to know more about this Jesus you spoke of—and prayed to.

450 **Philemon**

(betraying once again his hurt feelings; blurting out)

I would have told you.

Onesimus

Forgive me, master, but I did not feel comfortable bringing it to you.

455 **Philemon**

(sadness creeping into his voice)

Go on.

Onesimus

From what I had overheard, I knew the city where Paul could be found—and
460 I still had his face in my memory. It took me many days, but I finally found where he was. For awhile, after that, I did nothing but sit at his feet, listening to his words about Jesus.

Slowly, after many more days, I began to ask my questions. He always answered them—sometimes with words that needed explaining, but Paul

465 always answered them. What surprised me was that he never concerned himself with who I was, or why I was there. Oh, in time he learned that I was of your house, but he never pried into the reasons for my being there with him. He just accepted me.

(a small smile spreading over his face)

470 After awhile, I began doing things for him. Small things—sometimes just sitting with him after everyone else had left. He seemed to take comfort in having me there with him. I don't know why. He spoke often of you and mistress Apphia. He remembered you fondly, telling me about the many things the two of you had done for the other believers—in your church and
475 elsewhere.

(more seriously)

One day—it was late, long after everyone else had left—he turned and looked into me, and said, “Onesimus, I've told you much about Jesus. Now I want you to tell me what He means to you.” It took me a long time to find the
480 words, but I told him that I believed that Jesus was really God—God in flesh; that this God was the only true one, that all other gods were false; and that when Jesus died on the cross, my sins died there with Him. I told him that because of Jesus, my many sins were forgiven.

(with an air of peace, almost forgetting his place as a slave—but soberly, knowing that what he is about to say will impact Philemon)

485 What I said pleased him, but he said, “You still haven't told me what Jesus means to you.” What I told him was that I now felt part of something new and different, that I now had a new master—one who would always care for me and love me. But more than that, I knew that I would never again feel alone,
490 that I would always have brothers and sisters who would support me—just like those who were there supporting Paul. I knew that my past life no longer mattered. What really mattered was my new life, and those who would share it with me.

(with a melancholy joy)

495 The next day, Paul had John Mark take me to a nearby stream, where he baptized me.

500 *Though Philemon stares at Onesimus, his eyes are unfocused, his gaze distant. As images of Paul and his servant together play over and over in his mind, he struggles to suppress the feelings of jealousy—even betrayal—that surge in him, trying to accept the events and changes that have transpired. He fights against the anger he feels from being helpless—from not having any control over what has taken place between his friend Paul and his servant Onesimus. At last, he speaks.*

505 **Philemon**

Why did you come back?

Onesimus

I guess there were several reasons. Because Paul wanted me to. I owe him a great debt, and I felt that by serving him, I am serving my Lord. I also felt the
510 need to ask your forgiveness.

(seriously; with resolve)

I was wrong to leave; I know that. You are my master, and I am to obey you.

(softer; haltingly)

The real reason I returned, well—it's hard to explain. I don't know if I have
515 the words for it. Being there, with Paul, I came to understand that living a life with Christ is more than just believing. At first, when he spoke of having a personal faith, I thought that meant that our faith was to be kept separate from each other—that the only thing that mattered was what was between us and Jesus.

520 But then I learned that the truth is quite the opposite. Before Christ, we were separate; living under him, we are all connected—members of each other.

While I was there, I could see with my own eyes how important it was for others to encourage Paul in his work—and especially in his imprisonment. He would have days when the reality of his situation would press down on
525 him like a heavy weight. He would think that all his work for the Lord had been in vain, despair would creep up on him, and he would begin to lose hope.

But then would come word of victories in Perga, or a great Spiritual revival in Miletus, or he would receive a personal letter from a dear friend that just said

530 how much they loved him. What a difference these would make! After being
there, I know that these words of encouragement literally kept him alive.
Without them—and the brothers and sisters who were there in person—Paul
would have lost all hope.

So—and I'm not sure I can explain this well—I realized that I had to return,
535 to bring his letter to you, to keep that connection alive. I can't read—you
know that—so I don't know what his letter says. But I know that you are dear
to him, and that if he needs you, or he needs me, we should do everything
we can for him.

540 *Philemon looks upon this man who has changed before his very eyes. Or is it he who
has changed? Just moments before, Onesimus had come to him a slave; now he
would be leaving a man—a brother. What miracle had transpired in that Roman cell?
After a long silence Philemon, his voice heavy with emotion, quietly speaks.*

545

Philemon

Thank you for being honest with me. Would you send Atticus back.

Onesimus rises and leaves the courtyard.

(Lights remain up.)

550

Postscript

Atticus enters from inside the house. Assuming correctly that Philemon wishes to finish his dictation, he quickly prepares his writing instruments.

This time, Philemon waits more patiently for his scribe to ready himself.

555

Atticus

(removing from his kit a fresh papyrus and holding it aloft)

Do you wish to start anew, master.

Philemon

560 No. Continue from where we left off.

Nodding, Atticus retrieves the original papyrus. When Atticus is ready, Philemon continues his dictation.

Philemon

565

(his voice heavy with emotion)

My dear brother and friend, abject humility can be an ugly thing in one so proud as I, but at the risk of possibly fatal ugliness, I will attempt to put words to the utter humiliation I am now feeling in my heart.

You may be wondering why I have chosen to append this to an already
570 hopelessly ugly letter. Rather than my starting over, let what has gone before remain as part of my humiliation. Stand on the street corner and shout out its words! to make public the evidence for the shame I now feel.

Dear Paul, I am a well-educated and wealthy man. I am a person of
substance who has just been taught a most profound lesson of life by a
575 common slave.

(quickly)

No—let me amend that.

Atticus raises his head, wondering if Philemon wishes him to strike out the earlier line.

580

Philemon

(noticing Atticus)

No, leave it. Leave it all there.

(continuing)

I am mistaken on both counts. Onesimus is no longer anyone's slave—and
 585 he is anything but common. I have this day released Onesimus from all
 obligations to me and, as he is now in your presence, let the delivery of this
 letter demonstrate that he is now, indeed, a free man.

(pause; thinking)

I confess to you that when Onesimus first arrived bearing your letter, I did not
 590 welcome him as I would you. My treatment of him was both stern and
 petulant. I boxed him away for a period of punishment, all the while serving
 only to punish myself. I tried to be angry with him, but soon realized that
 instead, I was angry with you for keeping him from me.

But God has graciously changed my sight. Onesimus is not a possession, but
 595 a man and brother. He no longer belongs to me; neither does he belong to
 you.

He belongs to Christ.

I see now why Onesimus has become precious to you. This brave and deeply
 spiritual man is indeed a servant—not of man, but of Christ.

600 Though he did steal from me, Onesimus has nothing to repay. For I have
 been repaid in full by the lessons he has taught me with his life of gentle
 humility.

With a glad and grateful heart I return Onesimus to you—not as his master,
 but as his friend and brother.

605 Grace to you, brother Paul. I need not prepare a room for you; you may have
 mine!

Apphia, Archippus, and I send you—

Atticus suddenly looks up from his writing, frowning at Philemon.

610

Philemon

(grinning; with a measure of sarcasm)

Oh yes. Atticus, who has penned these words, sends his fonderest regards as
 well.

(seriously)

615 We send you and your fellow workers our greetings—as well as our constant prayers for your release. The Spirit of our Lord Jesus be a comfort to you in our absence.

Because of the longer pause in the dictation, Atticus glances up at Philemon.

620 **Atticus**

Will that be all, master?

Philemon

(gazing off into the distance, lost in his thoughts)

What? Yes, that will be all. Once you've drafted it, bring it to me to sign.

625 *Atticus quickly gathers his things to leave.*

Philemon

And Atticus, when you bring the final draft, bring Onesimus with you.

Atticus begins to exit, but is again stopped by Philemon.

630

Philemon

Oh, and Atticus—

(Atticus turns, irritated)

—tell Onesimus he may pack his things. All of them.

635 *Atticus nods, understanding, and exits.*

Philemon turns away from the door, and, as the lights slowly dim, the audience can see the broad smile on his face.

Lights down.

640

[about 30 minutes]

HIS COMPANY SCRIPTS

USE & COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Permission is hereby granted for copies to be made of this His Company script so long as the following conditions are met:

- ☛ All copies will include the script title page with copyright notice.
- ☛ The total number of copies per script will not exceed number of characters, plus director, plus any necessary technical personnel.
- ☛ Copies will not be made for, nor distributed to, other churches. Please recommend that they obtain their own free copy at the His Company web site ([HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/](http://DLAMPEL.COM/)).
- ☛ The script, or copies thereof, will not be sold or leased to others.

His Company scripts, while distributed at no charge, are copyrighted. We appreciate your cooperation in following these few guidelines. If you have any questions regarding the use of this script, please contact David S. Lampel at 515-462-1971, or leave a message at our *Support Center* at [HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/](http://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/)

Contributions

Our first priority is to ensure that our resources get into the hands of those who wish to use them—and always for free. We do not charge for any of our resources. Our first and most important payment comes from the Lord—in the privilege we have of serving in His name.

But if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and you would like to contribute to this work, we want you to know that your gift will be very much appreciated, and will be put to work covering our expenses. To express our appreciation, we have prepared some special “thank-you” gifts for those who contribute. Visit our *Contribution Page*, at [HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/CONTRIB.PHP](http://DLAMPEL.COM/CONTRIB.PHP), for details.

Upholding Your Performance

We would like to hear from you when performances of this His Company script have been scheduled, so that we (and others) can be lifting you and your production up to the throne in prayer. Post as much information as you can about your production at our *Support Center* ([HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/](http://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/))—and may the Lord use this resource for His glory.

