

10-11-26 Message

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Pastor Dow Boyer

Dearly Heavenly Father, I can't help but think about a couple of songs that we sang. Lord, if I could only thank you for one thing, Lord, it would be the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross for my sins, and Him raising from the dead the third day victoriously. Lord, and what belief in that alone has given me and everybody in here who has believed with you for all eternity. And Lord, we thank you for that. It was a gift we received. It we could not earn it. Lord, you made the payment. You presented it to us. And so, Lord, we thank you, Lord, that faith alone in that will have us a right standing with you and give us all eternity with you. And Lord, I love that. The last song we put it on my account. All of our sins were put to Jesus's account. And of course, as we're talking through Philemon, we understand what Paul was saying, even as he was kind of stepping in the way for Onesimus to Philemon, saying similar words, Lord, I pray that you would just be with us now, edify the body, Lord, as we open up your Word and go deeper in it today and study more through the Book of Philemon, and I pray that it would bring about change in our lives in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, it's good to see Don here today. Donna had a couple things done this week, removing some some blood clots, and she made it through both those things. So just keep praying for her. This it's pretty much at the point now where that she's going to need to go to a different place. St. Francis cannot do anything more for her, so trying to get through to the next stages, where maybe Saint Vincent can provide some things, but it was pretty big that she got through both of those procedures this week. So continue to pray for her. So great to have Don here today, though. So we are praying for you. We love you guys. All right. So we have been talking about the book of Philemon, and last week we were looking at this from Philemon's perspective, the goal through these three weeks were to look at the book of Philemon through Philemon's perspective, through Onesimus's perspective, and through the Apostle Paul's perspective to kind of give you kind of a rich overview, even though it is one book of the Bible and one chapter, if you will, so it's one that if everybody goes home and reads the book of Philemon, they will have read a whole book of the Bible. So if you do that every day, I mean, you could really start impressing your friends. Yes, but this is such an impactful letter. So many people would be like, "Well, what is it in here for? It seems misplaced, and it is so important, especially dealing with this idea of forgiveness. So, as we talked about last week, that Philemon did nothing wrong. In fact, Philemon here is trying to move on with his life, and he's leading his son, who is helping raise up the church, and his wife is very involved in the church's meeting in his house, and he's called a fellow laborer. He is called one who has love for the saints. And then one day, standing in front of him is a reminder of past hurt, someone who had wronged him previously, and all the temptation for each and every person in this room is all those feelings come back, and so we talked about last week what it really means to forgive, and it means to pardon, to remit, to overlook an offense, and treat the offender as

not guilty. So even though today, in this dispensation of grace, that the threat isn't if we do not forgive, God will not forgive us. We're not under a conditional forgiveness. But why we forgive today? We talked about this last week. It's for Christ's sake. When we consider what we have been forgiven, it's not about whether or not the other person deserves it; it's for Christ's sake. And we asked some questions last week: Can love cover it? Is it something that love could cover? Since love covers a multitude of sins, by not forgiving, are we giving place to the devil? By not forgiving, we are creating a root of bitterness. By not forgiving, we're not pursuing peace. We're probably having harmful thoughts towards other people. It's affecting how we deal with people. And then the last thing was we leave vengeance with God in Romans chapter 12, right? And so, yeah, maybe it has nothing to do with whether God will forgive us or not, whether we forgive others, but those are a lot of reasons why it makes sense to forgive other people and why it's good for the body of Christ, specifically the body of Christ. Because the thing with Onesimus is, he now is a child of God. He now is a saint, and the Bible definitely details. How we should do good, especially to those of the household of faith, in Galatians 6:10. So, Philemon was wronged by a man named Onesimus. So this week we're going to talk about him, and we'll start out by seeing what can we glean from Onesimus. What is said about Onesimus in these few verses that we have. So here's some observations in chapter one. Well, there's only one chapter. So in verse 16, it says, "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me. But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So the first thing we can see here is that his previous position was as a servant to Philemon. This is why he's saying, "Hey, receive him back, not just as a servant, but above a servant. And there'll be more on that next week. But this is an observation about who Philemon or who Onesimus was to Philemon, and so essentially he was a slave. Now, verse 18 it says, "If he hath wronged thee or oweth thee not, put that on mine account. Per the song that we just heard, right? So clearly, he had done some wrong to Philemon, and most likely had stolen something from Philemon or taken some money, or else it really doesn't make a whole lot of sense what Paul is saying here. Remember, Paul has been with Onesimus for an amount of time now, right? And so I'm sure he's even writing this letter, and we got this common person that that we both know, and he's writing this letter, and he says these words here: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee. So here's what we know: is that Onesimus apparently, as a slave, fled from Philemon and had stolen something. Probably took money with him. And now Paul here is encountering him while Paul is in prison, essentially house arrest, right? So somehow he makes his way to Paul. All right, here's something else that we see. For perhaps he therefore departed. So he was a servant. Get that. He clearly left, and he clearly did something wrong. So he says he departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him forever. So he clearly left Philemon. But probably the most damning thing about the testimony of Onesimus is in verse 11, and it says, "Which in time past was to thee unprofitable. The rest of that verse is going to be shared more here in a few minutes. But let's focus just on this: in time past was to thee unprofitable. Now, I was talking to somebody after service last week, and I'm like, you know, I see these three people, these three main actors in this little epistle. There's actually a fourth name that we'll even bring up at the end, but there's three main people in this epistle, and the one I identify with the most isn't Philemon. It's this guy. I feel like in my life, 50 years now, halfway there, right? The list of people that I have wronged, the hurts that I have done, far exceed what has been done to me. I don't think I'm alone. You all can judge me all you want with those eyes, but I'm telling you, I don't think I'm alone. I think there's a lot of us in here that have felt that way. If you're honest, right? Some of us are not very self-aware, and you may think you're an angel. The reality is, you have gossiped, you have lied against, you have stolen from, right? You have hated other people, and I think we identify a little bit more with Onesimus. We like being more in Philemon's position, right? Because there's a sense of power when somebody's groveling at your feet, and you know you've done no wrong. It's easier. It's way harder to be the guy going and falling at the feet of the one that you've wronged, and begging for forgiveness—that is much harder. I would say Onesimus is my kind of people. I have a lot of experience in messing up. I feel like it is in my DNA. But there was a change in Onesimus, and I look at where I'm at today, and I'm like, clearly, there was a change in me, and each and every one of us who has been saved by

the precious blood of Jesus Christ is a different creature than when you started, and I think we don't want to miss that today. But I think Paul's doing something really interesting here in chapter and verse 11, and it is really ingenious because he mentions the word profitable, and here's the thing: names have meaning, especially in the Bible. You go back and you say, "What did this name mean? In fact, our names-you guys have heard me talk about the name Dow, but even the name Byron, which is my first name-you guys get to know me a little bit more each week, it has a meaning. In fact, that meaning means place at the cow shed or dweller at the cattle barn. That is literally what Byron means. You know what a cattle barn is full of? Cows. Yeah, it's like you want. Sometimes when there's a meaning behind your name, you want to live up to the meaning of the name, right? You're like, okay, my name means this. And a lot of times, when you're in baby books and and you're trying to choose a name, you're like, oh, this name means this. It means follower of Christ, or it means light. And you give them this name, and and that's your hope. This is the identifying thing, right? Well, the name Onesimus literally means useful or profitable. Think about what he says here. He says, "In time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me. Of all the words to use, is the Holy Spirit's inspiring Paul. This is something that Philemon, as he's receiving this letter, he would have known what Onesimus's name meant, and he probably would consider the name if anybody would have even brought it up as useless or unprofitable. Paul is saying something changed in Onesimus. Now, let's look at what this change in verse 10, listen what Paul says: "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus. He's not talking biological. The rest of the verse says this: "Whom I have begotten in my bonds. Now, here's what this means: that somehow in this house arrest position, he encounters Onesimus, and Onesimus with this story, with this fleeting failure track record. Right, he is before Paul. Paul shares with them, "Hey, whatever you've done, it does not define you. From this point forward, the only thing that's going to matter is who you are in Christ. This is how everything changes for you. Let me tell you what Jesus did to pay for your sins, including this one here that you're running from. That probably is the big, is a is probably the monster in the corners of the rooms every time you walk into a room, but Jesus paid the price for that. Let me tell you this: God has paid for your sins so that you can have a right relationship with God. And at some point, Onesimus places his faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and what Paul is saying in this letter, he says he is my son, and this is pretty common for for Paul. When when he had led somebody to the Lord, he would say that this is now my son, as he kind of talks about Timothy, or he calls somebody his brother, right? He'd have these family relationships being described because now they were family because they're part of the body of Christ, right? So here he says that Onesimus was saved specifically while Paul was in prison. That's really what was being said here in verse 11. So he says, which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me. So that's meant that there was a period of time where he didn't just he didn't just get saved, but he was profitable to the apostle Paul while he was in prison. You're like, well, what? How can you be if you're like chained to, as Will was talking about today? If you're like chained to a soldier, how profitable could he be? Well, he could have been running errands for him. He could have been grabbing his parchments for him. He could have been out sharing the gospel. Whatever it was, he is making it very clear now that he isn't just saved. He's out there living it. He is now profitable, when Philemon would only know him as unprofitable. Verse 13. In fact, he's so profitable. Paul says, "Whom I would have retained with me. It's like sometimes when you're when you're building a team, right? And and there's somebody on a team, that when you're building, you're like, okay, this one's a keeper, or you fancy football people right now in your keeper leagues, right? There's some people that you're like, okay, I'm going to keep this. I'm going to need this person moving forward. Not that the other people aren't valuable, but some people you're like, I've got to do whatever it takes to keep this person, right? Paul is literally saying, "Hey, if I would have had my way, I would have kept him here. He is so profitable. He is my brother. I would have retained him with me. And he says that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. So there was this transition. It had everything to do with Onesimus getting saved and then walking in that new life. But now Paul's asking him to do something very difficult, and the question might be, "We're not under the law. We're not under, we're not under

the dispensation of the law. So why doesn't Paul just retain? Why is Paul making Onesimus go back to Philemon? Why not just keep him? If he's so valuable, if he's so profitable, and he's being retained here, and now he's a new creation, right? And he's moving forward in the faith, and he would be a blessing in the ministry, even in prison. Why not just keep him there? Why send him back? Because by sending him back, there is a risk. There is a risk, depending if Philemon has been harboring bitterness. There is a risk because Onesimus could be put to death as a runaway slave, and it would have been lawful under the Roman law. But there was a risk, and so you're thinking, why would Paul have done this? Well, we know Paul says he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees; he understood the law. There's a lot of things that we see with different motivations that that Paul will exemplify in his letters that you can find under the law. And I think maybe this one here, Matthew 523 and 24. It says, "Therefore, now this is the Beatitudes, right? This I mean, this is coming around the Sermon of the Mount after the Beatitudes, with with Jesus talking to the 12, and he's saying, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First, be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. You know that's an interesting couple of verses there because one of the heights of worship in Judaism is coming to the altar and leaving your gift. He's saying it was so important for reconciliation with a brother, with a fellow Jew, as he's talking about here, it was so important that if you knew that there was something between you and the Jew, go get that right before even coming and performing this act of worship. Paul maybe would have known that, but I think it's a little bit deeper than this, because Paul was given a mystery that was kept secret before the world began. A large part of this mystery is the body of Christ. No other author in Scripture talks about the body of Christ. It is this entity today. It is the church. It's neither Jew nor Gentile. And this entity today, Christ is the head, and Lot has talked about what happens inside the body of Christ. The moment that Onesimus got saved, he's a member of the body of Christ. That changes everything, right? We see this pattern from Paul over and over again. It's a pattern of within the body of Christ, unity, restoration, and love for the household of faith. Right. So let's look at Philippians chapter four. There's an issue between two women and the church. Huh? Okay. Peanut gallery's going crazy over here. All right. So in Philippians chapter four. Now a little back. Here, Acts chapter 16. Remember, this is the thing about Philippi. When Paul went to Philippi, couldn't find a synagogue. What he did find were women out by the river. In fact, there was no synagogue because there wasn't enough Jewish men to start one. It required 10. They couldn't find enough men to create a synagogue. But here were the women. The women were very influential, especially Lydia, right? So even years later, as he's writing this, these two ladies could have been real staples of those early women that helped build the church, right? So as we're looking through this in chapter four, verses one and two, actually two and three probably is what it should have been, but it says, "I beseech Eudes and Synteki that they be of the same mind in the Lord, and I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers whose names are in the book of life. He's saying, "Help these two people come together and be of the same mind, because the division was harming the church at Philippi, and you see it's even in chapter two when he's saying, 'Be ye of one accord. Right? He's saying, 'Let each of you consider others more significant than yourselves. He says, "Do nothing through like rivalry or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, consider others more significant than yourself. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. This is all. This division was happening because of these two. And he's saying, "Ah, we're in this dispensation of grace. Doesn't really matter. You go your way. You go your way. He's saying, "No, bring them together, get them on the same page of the same mind. There might have to be some forgiveness. Oh, I'm sorry that I that I gossiped against you, or I'm sorry I did this against you. But he says, "Bring these ladies together because when we are united as the body of Christ, it's a pretty powerful entity. But when there's fractures and dissension and division all throughout it. It is not real powerful, and it doesn't look any different than what people see out in every other organization that exists outside these walls. And so, what he's telling these two to do here is to come together, humble each other, get along, prefer the other one over themselves, or what about the man in Second

Corinthians, chapter two? And I've shared here before. I fully believe that this is the man from First Corinthians chapter five, who was caught in the sexual sin. But even if it wasn't, clearly somebody had done wrong, but now is coming back, right? So listen to what Paul says: If any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part, that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment. We come back to that phrase here in a second, which was inflicted of many, so that contrariwise you ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. Later it would say in verse 11, lest Satan get an advantage. It's pretty interesting though. Clearly somebody had done something wrong, and now we've got a place maybe of repentance or getting things right and trying to come back. And Paul says, "Sufficient is the punishment, which was afflicted by so many. He said, "Instead, you should forgive. You should you should comfort. Bring them back in at this point, so you can kind of see the same heart here with Onesimus. Because even though it would have been valuable for Onesimus to stay with Paul, the real value, especially for the church at Colossae, would have been to see Onesimus go back, get things right with Philemon, and those two hand in hand go forward and lead the church. What would that do to the people? When people see forgiveness, it motivates them to forgive. When people see that people can put things back together, it gives them hope for the relationships in their life, for the fractures in their life that can be put back together. So Paul was telling this man in in the Corinthians, go back, and then he's telling the Corinthians similar advice. Here's what you need to do: confirm your love toward him, forgive him, comfort him. Now let's talk about the body of Christ. Talks about First Corinthians chapter 12, verses 22 through 26. It says, "Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary." Think about this. This gives the idea, as he's talking to the Corinthians, that the church isn't a country club for all the people that have it all together. It's not a collection of the righteous, but there are parts of the body of Christ that have a different story, and he says they are necessary. We shoot them; churches shoot their wounded, and here he's saying that there are parts of the body of Christ that are necessary. And he goes on and says this: He says those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need, but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. For or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Onesimus is now part of the body of Christ, and he says, "Yes, he may come with a disturbing past, but lest we get it wrong, our God is not just a God of redemption; He is a God of restoration. It always has amazed me how the church will say, "We'll accept anybody come through the doors or come through the office with with the most craziest past ever as a lost person, and then when they get saved, they have to be perfect. But we we we say good luck, right? We look out here, and that's kind of what the church does. Well, now you're saved. You should be all cleaned up. You should be perfect. Should you be striving to be holy and blameless? Absolutely. Should you be saved unto good works? Absolutely. But years of debris takes time to get right. Yes, there are times you've heard about people coming forward at an altar and says, "Oh, the minute I got saved, everything changed in my life. Let me tell you, the vast majority of the people- that's not true. And there's a lot of people that then run away from the cross because that didn't happen to them-the cravings, the desires. There was still a battle going on, and the church doesn't really know how to handle it, because we try to treat everybody like, "Hey, we'll go out, we'll we'll we'll cover all the difficult areas in the world as long as they're lost. But the moment you get saved, hey, brother, sign this paper. Here's your behavior contract, and if you don't look like this by next Sunday. You're out. I joke, but we kind of do that. Here, Onesimus is going to come, and he is going to serve. Galatians 6:10 we talked about earlier. As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith. Rachel and I have this conversation a lot, so you have to forgive us because we're not talking about anybody in here. But anyway, I'm just kidding. I mean, I'm serious. I'm not talking about anybody here. But we'll say

sometimes things happen in organizations we've been a part of, and things, and it's it's Christians sometimes who are the very worst to other Christians. We've talked about how we we've been a part of different programs and stuff where they're all unbelievers. I worked in the secular workspace for a long time, and even at Konica Minolta, I was like, I I had really no drama. It was not a Christian organization, you know. But with church comes all the spiritual warfare. It comes like the pettiness sometimes of people, and then sometimes the brokenness of people, the brokenness of us, and it all gets put into one kind of blender together. And so sometimes Christians are the very worst to each other, you know, and that that saddens us, right? When we think about this, but when we think about the body of Christ, when I read Galatians chapter six, and actually Galatians five leads up into it, but when I read Galatians chapter six, I'm reminded that we do play a role in doing something with the wounded, and it is not shooting them. In Galatians six one and two, it says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual." Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. That's heavy because we're usually so focused on ourselves, like we can barely bear our own burdens, but then here we're called to bear another's burdens. But we know from chapter five, the spiritual-that's the person who is walking in the spirit and not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. There is some seasoning, right? There is there is some there's some real leadership that's already taking place in these type of people, there's some strength. They've already kind of walked down the path a while. There's some consistency, right? So if you're on the other side, rather than thumbing your nose down at people who fall, you should be looking at the fallen and try to pick them up. And the word restore literally means to put back as it once was, like when a bone breaks. Like I was playing basketball summer for my junior year, I got my legs cut out from underneath me, and I'm going down to the concrete. And as as I go down, this arm just did not brace, and it was and it was kind of gross looking, but did not make it through the skin. And I remember just writhing in pain, holding my forearm, I didn't want to look at it. You never want to look at it, right? And I remember my mom had to come down and pick me up. The game was kind of over. I had to go to the hospital, and the surgeon had already left for the day. And I'm sitting here, I'm holding this thing, and so he said, "We're just going to have to set this. I'm like, what's that mean? Three or four people come in the room, hold me down. They pump me up. They numb this thing, and this doctor starts. I could not feel any pain because I was numbed up, but I felt the pressure. And man, and next thing I know, it's kind of still kind of swollen stuff like that, but it's going the right way. There's a cast on it, and six weeks later, they're looking at it like, "Hey, it's going the right direction. What happened there was, he restored my arm. Previously, it looked like this. Six weeks later, it looked like that again. So the goal in restoration should be able to put people back together, and sometimes that's a process. Some things take way longer than other things, but it should be a desire for us. Now, here's the thing: How much more impactful is the body of Christ if all the wounded people on the sidelines get put back together and get in the fight, and then what about the testimonies that start ringing through this thing as people start saying, "Man, the grace of God can fix this marriage. The grace of God can change this addict. But it's less risky to shoot them, because you always say, "What if they do it again? What if any of us sin again? Do just none of us do ministry because there's been failure in the past? Onesimus. Step one was getting saved. Step two was being mentored by the Apostle Paul. But now step three was a tall task. It's going to be to stand before the man that you've wronged and say, "I'm sorry. I have wronged you. I'm coming back to you. Whatsoever you desire of me, I'm yours. We're even told in Ephesians 4:28, let him that stole steal no more. Right? I mean, so there obviously is a precedent here. Paul doesn't send him back thinking, Ah, well, he's a risk to rob Philemon blind. What Paul had seen was the faithfulness of a changed man. I don't know how long this process was that Paul worked with Onesimus, but it was long enough to know that he's now going to be profitable to Philemon. And I think it's important that we realize that we stay in the fight. We help bear one another's burdens. We want to put people back together so that they can be used for the cause of Christ. Now, as we come down the home stretch here, Paul himself imagined the conversations he had with Onesimus. There's probably days where Onesimus was having a really rough day. He's like, "I don't know if I could do

this, Paul. I've done so much wrong in my life. Yes, I'm so glad I'm saved now, but but man, the enemy is working on my mind, and I'm remembering all those things that I've done. You imagine the pep talks that Paul must have given." Remember, Paul says in First Corinthians 15:10, for by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain. I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Or in Romans 5:20, I can imagine him sharing this with Onesimus, he says. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. You've done it. You've done the time. You have already been forgiven, Onesimus. Quit beating yourself up with this. There is work to be done, and the other thing I'm thinking of is Onesimus. He's one of the three runners in this passage, as I call it, because he ran away from Philemon. Paul was running to persecute the early church. Remember in Acts 9:1-3, Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord went unto the high priest, desired of him letters to Damascus of the synagogues, that if any found in the way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound into Jerusalem. He might journey about near Damascus, and suddenly there shined around about him a light from heaven. So he was on his way, running to persecute others. But then this is where the story gets really good, because in Philemon verse 24, it seems so out of place, unless you read the other Paul letters, but Paul just writes a few names that are with him. But listen to this name. Listen to the very first name that's with Paul. It's Marcus, and then it's Aristarchus. Then it's Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers. What do you think Mark knows about running? Imagine these conversations. Hey, brother, I know what it's like to run Onesimus. He's got Paul over here saying I was running to the wrong thing, and now now he's got Mark saying, Hey, I know what it's like to run away from doing the work. Remember in Acts 13:13, Paul and his company loosed from Paphos. They came to Perga and Pamphylia, and John Mark departing from them returned to Jerusalem, fled the work. Later Acts 15:36 second missionary journey Barnabas is like let's get the team together again. Verse 36 some days after Paul said unto Barnabas Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark, the runner. Paul thought not a good idea to take them who departed from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to do the work. And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from another. Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus. Paul would take Silas. Paul is now with Mark in this place. But in Second Timothy 4:11, similar time period, only Luke is with me. Take Mark, bring him with thee, for he is profitable to the ministry. I can imagine these conversations. Onesimus is going to have the same legacy that Mark has, and that's one who was previously unprofitable, but is now profitable. That is why it is important that we who have received grace and who have been restored, we reach out to those who haven't. Because imagine the hope that that gives an Onesimus that there's somebody who had walked in his shoes. But there's another name mentioned, another runner. His name was Demas. Colossians 4:14 says, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. Here, Demas is a worker. He's mentioned here in Philemon. He's also part of these conversations, but in Second Timothy 4:10, listen to what Demas ran to. Demas, even knowing Paul's story, even seeing what was going on with Onesimus, even seeing what was going on with Mark, Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed. He ran. He was a runner. He departed unto Thessalonica, crossed to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. So I look at this, and I think I see at the end of this a series of runners. I'm thankful that just because Onesimus ran away, his story didn't end there. In fact, we know that restoration is a process. We know he was no longer unprofitable, but according to early Christian tradition, it's not scripture, but you can read Ignatius, and he would say that Onesimus was later freed or emancipated and went on to serve in pastoral ministry. If that part is true, there's also traditions that state that he succeeded the apostle Timothy as the bishop or pastor of Ephesus. Again, take it as you will, because it is not in Scripture. But it is interesting these historical accounts that have nothing to do with salvation, but but showing that there was a man named Onesimus in these places who went on to serve in ministry. At the very least, we already know that Paul says, "I would have retained him in ministry, and I'm sending him back to you to do ministry. So we know that part's

true. So I guess the question is, as we wrap up, is who do you identify with, or are you an Onesimus sitting in here today? You've done the wrong, and you've maybe been running from this wrong for a while. Maybe it's whatever it is that you might have done, whether it was an affair, whether you embezzled money at a business, whatever it might be, whether you've lied about things, whether you've stolen, cheated, whatever. But but you've been running for a long time, and the guilt sometimes that even walking through these doors is so unbearable because not everybody knows your secret, but you know it, and you know you've wronged others, and you know it's the thing that keeps you from growing in your faith. You're miserable most days. I wonder, do you identify with that part of Onesimus? And maybe today is a chance to turn that, to go and get things right with those that you've wronged, to start that restoration process, even if that involves getting help from somebody who is spiritual. I wonder if you might think today, like I desire to be profitable more than to live in my failure anymore. I wonder if you can identify with that part of Onesimus. I wonder if you identify with Demas. You're here. You go through the motions and everything, but man, the shiny things out there are so much more attractive than what we do in here. Maybe you've got such a negative spirit. You wish the music was different. You wish the pastor had hair so it didn't blind you. Whatever it is, like you, you care about the things of the world, and really, this is just a check a box. But really, your heart is already running to the pleasures of this world. Maybe it's a call for you to stop in your tracks, and don't do what Demas did, and not to keep running in that direction. But next week we're going to look at what if you are Paul, and you're in the middle of two believers, what do you do? So I have everybody stand this time. If you've been coming for a while, and you have questions about getting involved, whether that be a small group or whether you've been saved since you've been coming here. You've placed your faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But now you're like, "But what now? Is there somebody that can help me? Can take me by the hand and show me what I should be doing now, what I should be reading, how I can study the Word of God? This is all new to me. We would love to help you, and to walk alongside you. So we invite you. If you're wanting to be a part of the church, just in general, feel free. We like to use this time. I'm gonna when I pray, it's to bow our heads. So if you want to get out ahead of the the rush, I got a couple guys up here that we'd love to talk to you. But if that's been something you're wanting to do, we'd like to invite you today. We're going to pray, and then we'll sing a song, and then we will dismiss you. Let's pray, Heavenly Father. Thank you for this day, Lord. Thank you for Onesimus and this story in the Bible. Not even story makes it sound like it was made up, but this account in the Bible, Lord, I am thankful that you can take the most vilest of sinners and either a save them or b put them back together. Lord, I pray that the body of Christ grows stronger as a result of this epistle. That we're looking for those if we're if we're one of those who are considered spiritual, that we're looking for those who have messed up. We're looking for those who need to be restored. And instead of running away from them like they have the plague or a scarlet letter, Lord, we are running to them, helping them bear their burdens, lifting them up to get them back into the fight of Him. Lord, I'm thankful, Lord, that one can go from an unprofitable state to a profitable state, and that is by your grace, Lord, and the willingness of the people to be able to live in accordance with with what you have for us instead of what we want for ourselves. Lord, we pray that if there's anyone here today who who this one of these names was their name, and and they're struggling even right now in their seat. I pray that your grace would be sufficient, Lord. You'd let them know they don't have to continue down that path anymore. Lord, you you've given them a church, Lord. You've given them the body of Christ. You've given them the Word of God. You've given them the Holy Spirit, they can break free, and if they need help, there are those who are spiritual to restore them. Or Lord, maybe they have broke free, but they still beat themselves up over the past. It's been years, but they still are afraid to get in the race because of something so dark, something so past, something that they just can't seem to get over. I pray they would see encouragement in the story of Onesimus today, and for those who may be on the verge of saying, "I'm giving up on the church, the world, and and the freedom of sin has so much more to offer. I pray, Lord, that the story of Demas would stop them in their tracks. Lord, if there's anyone here today who has not been saved? I pray today would be the day. That's where it

starts, Lord. We thank you for sending Jesus, who shed His precious blood to wash away our sins, and three days later rose again from the grave. And Lord, you have presented this as a gift for us that we just need to receive to have eternal life. I pray today would be the day for anyone who has not done that. We love you. We hope you received a blessing from today's service. We would love to have you visit with us in person. For more information, please visit our website at gpindi.net or contact us by phone at 317-535-3512. For more options to watch, just click on demand on the website. Until next broadcast, may God bless you. Is our prayer.