**FROM USELESS TO USEFUL**  
Philemon 1-11

**MAIN THOUGHT**  The Christian is USEFUL, not USELESS, to God’s Kingdom.

**INTRODUCTION.**

- Philemon was a resident of COLOSSAE (Col. 4:9) who was converted during Paul’s three year ministry in EPHESUS.
- Under Mt. Honaz (8000 ft.) lies a large valley with the Lycus River and Loadicea and Heiropolis (Col. 4:13).
- This is an intimate personal letter that gives insight to Paul’s close relationships with his PARTNERS (17).

**GREETINGS (1-3).**

- It is one of four prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians) from Rome (Acts 28:30-31) where Paul was a prisoner (9; Eph. 3:1; 4:1). These letters were hand carried by TYCHICHUS from Rome (Col. 4:7-9).
- He wrote it with his own “manacled right hand” (AT ROBERTSON, Word Pictures).
- Philemon was a DEAR FRIEND (GK=agape – love) and FELLOW WORKER (GK=sun – with; ergos – energy).
- Apphia was a SISTER in the Christian sense and probably wife of Philemon.
- Archippus was FELLOW SOLDIER (compaigner, en-camped – Phil. 2:25).
- GRACE (GK=charis – gift) acknowledged the Gentiles (pagan nations) while PEACE (GK=irene) acknowledged the Jews. This was Paul’s common greeting.

**RAPPORT (4-7).**

- Before Paul gives his request to Philemon, he affirms him.
- Paul wanted him to know he PRAYED for him always (Col. 1:3, 10).
- Paul had heard a good report of Philemon’s:
  - FAITH in the Lord Jesus.
  - LOVE for all the saints.
  - SHARING of his faith (Col. 4:5-6).
  - FULL UNDERSTANDING of our assets in Christ (every spiritual blessing – Eph. 1:3).

- This report had a wonderful result:
  - GREAT JOY.
  - ENCOURAGEMENT (GK=para – along side of; kaleo – to call).
  - REFRESHMENT of the saints (Matt. 11:28; temporary – Mk. 6:31; eternal – Rev. 14:13).

**REQUEST (8-11).**

- The basis for his appeal was not authority, but LOVE (GK=agape) for Paul was an old man (GK=presbutes – prebyterian, elder) and prisoner.
- His request was for ONESIMUS, his runaway slave, who in God’s providence met Paul in Rome and had become a Christian and Paul’s son (12).
- He had been USELESS to Philemon as a runaway but USEFUL (profitable) to Paul just like Timothy (2 Tim. 2:21; 4:11).
- Now Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and restore Onesimus (12; Gal. 6:1).