

Your story is too valuable to lose. Your story is too important to keep silent. Your story is too surprising to sit on.

**Philemon 12-16 (NIV)** - 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 would not seem forced but would be voluntary. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever — 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 fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

Onesimus stole money from his boss and fled to Rome. (Philemon 18)

Onesimus travels 1.000 miles and mixes into the slave population of Rome. (Philemon 15)

Because this story is about a slave and slave owner, the background of Christianity in the New Testament is important.

- 25% of the population in the Roman empire were slaves.
- The economic machine of Rome depended on slave labor.
- · Slaves were acquired through war or bought to pay a debt.
- Slaves had no rights and were considered property.
- Slaves often served in professional roles in Roman society.

"I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great Savior." (John Newton, Amazing Grace)

- 1. God is not indifferent to the suffering of every human. (Psalm 121:3-4)
- 2. God is designing and deploying a sovereign plan to intervene in human affairs. (Philemon 16)
- 3. God's purpose for your life is to use your story to point people to faith in Christ. (Philemon 15-16)

"Truly He taught us to love one another. His law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother. And in His name all oppression shall cease." ("O Holy Night")




COMING UP Scan for July Events

## **WAYS TO GIVE**

Online at www.blcwichita.com | Drop in Black Boxes. **Text** "Give" to 316.712.5857