

A close-up photograph of a person's foot stepping onto a thick, rusty metal chain. The chain is coiled on a light-colored, sandy or dusty ground. The foot is positioned as if about to step on or has just stepped on the chain, symbolizing breaking free from bondage or oppression.

Be Forgiving

Philemon

Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore
BibleStudyDownloads.org



**Corrie ten
Boom**

The Hiding Place



Corrie ten Boom





The Guards



The Jews

German Guards

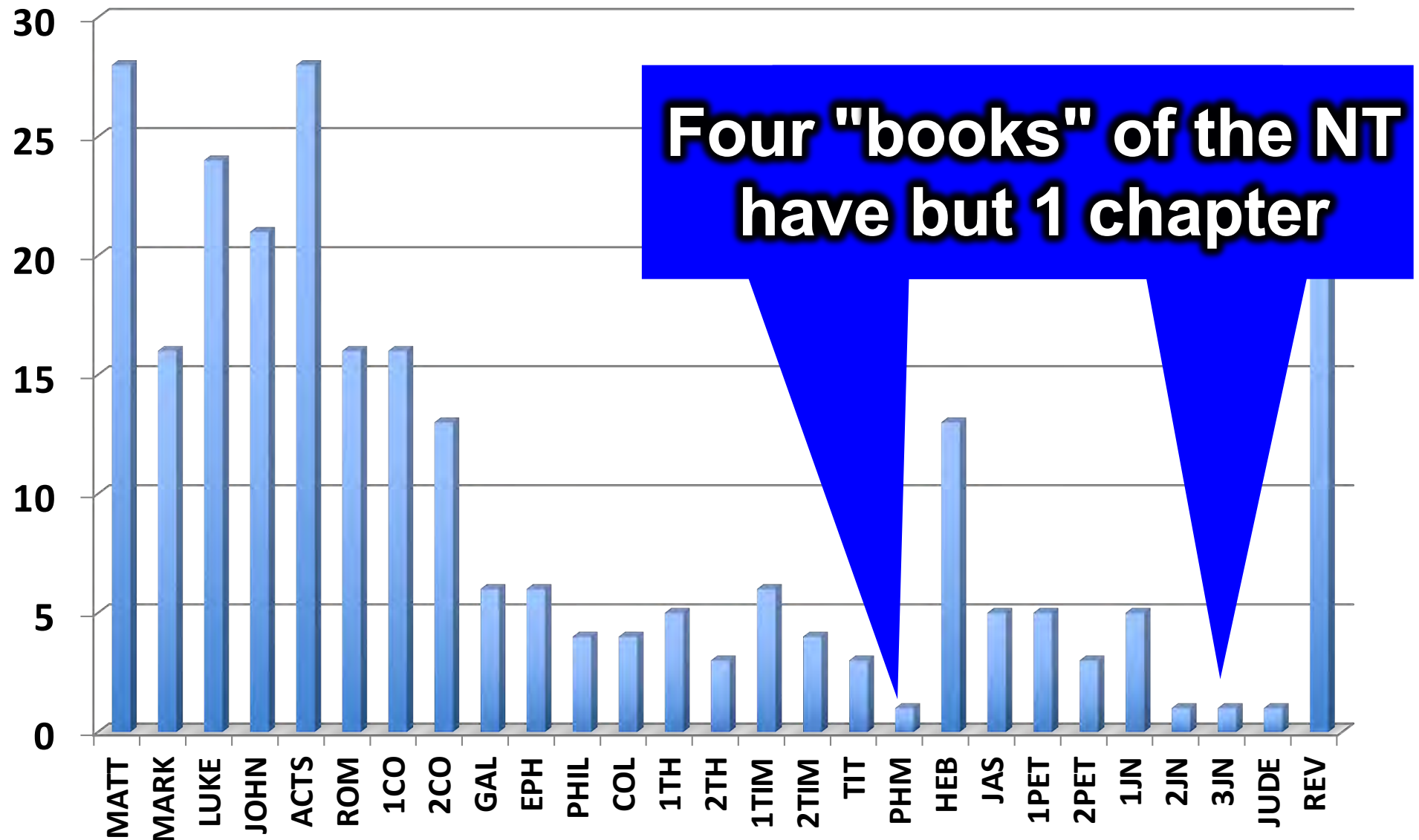




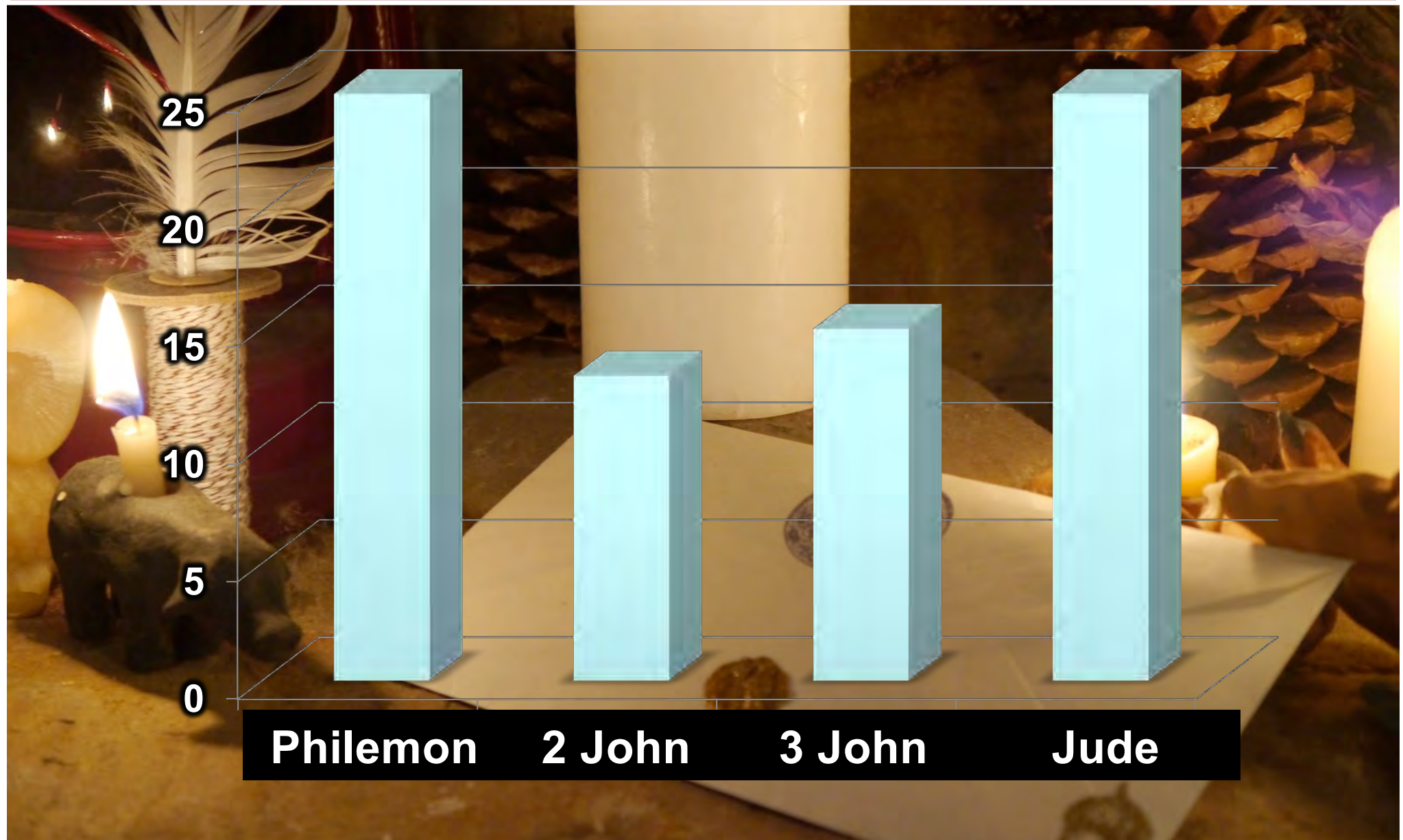


*How to **forgive** those who
offend us...*

Chapters in NT Books



Verses in NT One-Chapter “Books”



New Testament Emails



ROME

Παῦλος δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς
Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν καὶ Ἀπφία τῇ
ἀδελφῇ καὶ Ἀρχίππῳ τῷ
συστρατιωτῇ ἡμῶν καὶ τῇ κατ' οἶκόν σου
ἐκκλησίᾳ
χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς
ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Postcard to
Philemon

. Characteristics .

¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, ²to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

⁴I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. ⁶I 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. ⁷Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

⁸Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—¹⁰I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

¹²I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. ¹³I 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. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. ¹⁵Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good—¹⁶no 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.

¹⁷So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

²²And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. ²⁴And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Shortest letter of Paul's epistles (25 verses)

"This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, ²and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house" (vv. 1-2 NLT).



**"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ give you grace and peace"
(v. 3 NLT).**



"I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, ⁵because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people" (vv. 4-5 NLT).



"And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. ⁷Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people" (vv. 6-7 NLT).

"That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. ⁹But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus"

[illegible]

(vv. 8-9 NLT).

"I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.

¹¹Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us.

¹²I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart" (vv. 10-12 NLT).



"I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf.



¹⁴But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (vv. 13-14 NLT).

"It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord" (vv. 15-16 NLT).



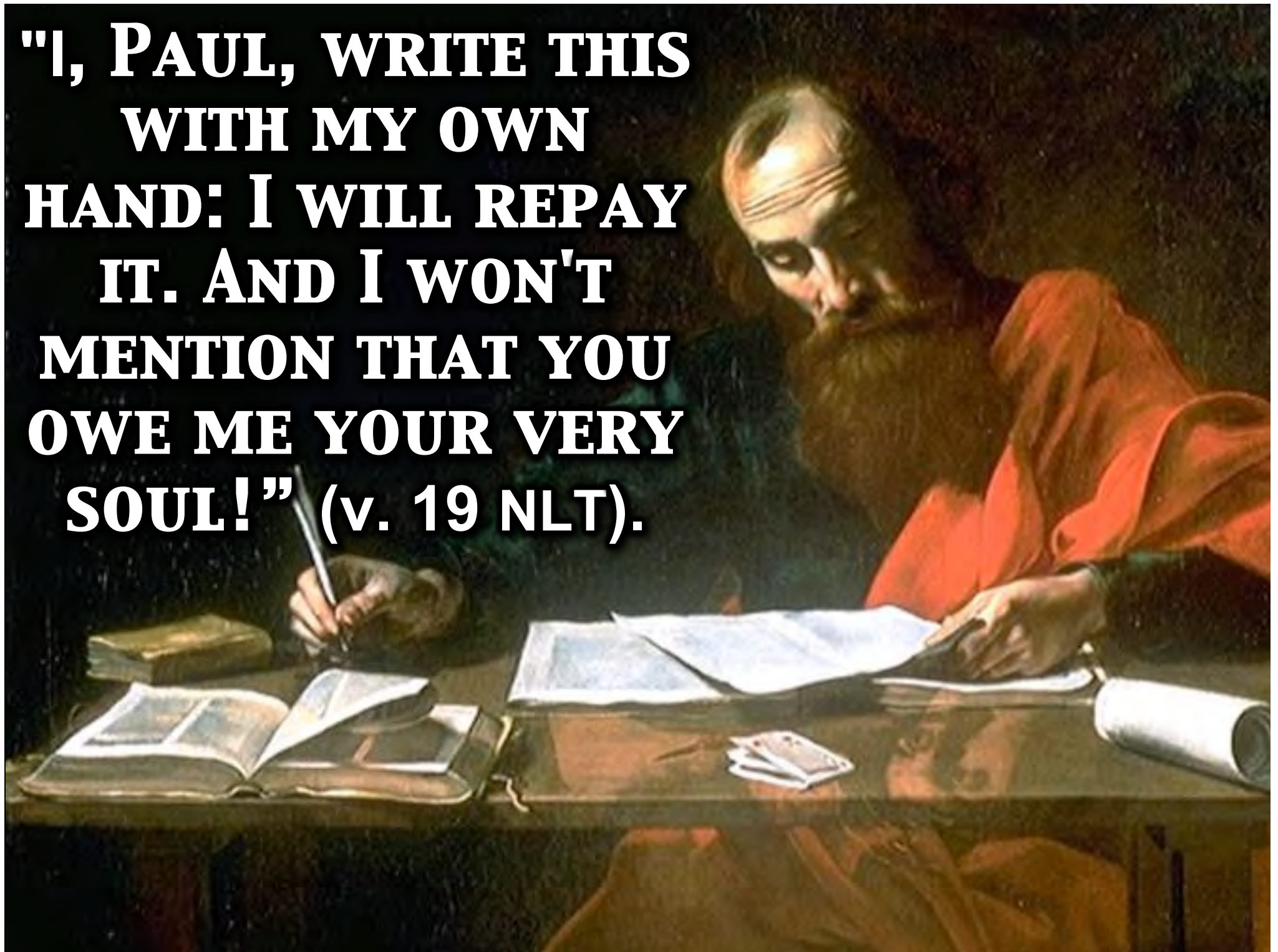
Verse 17

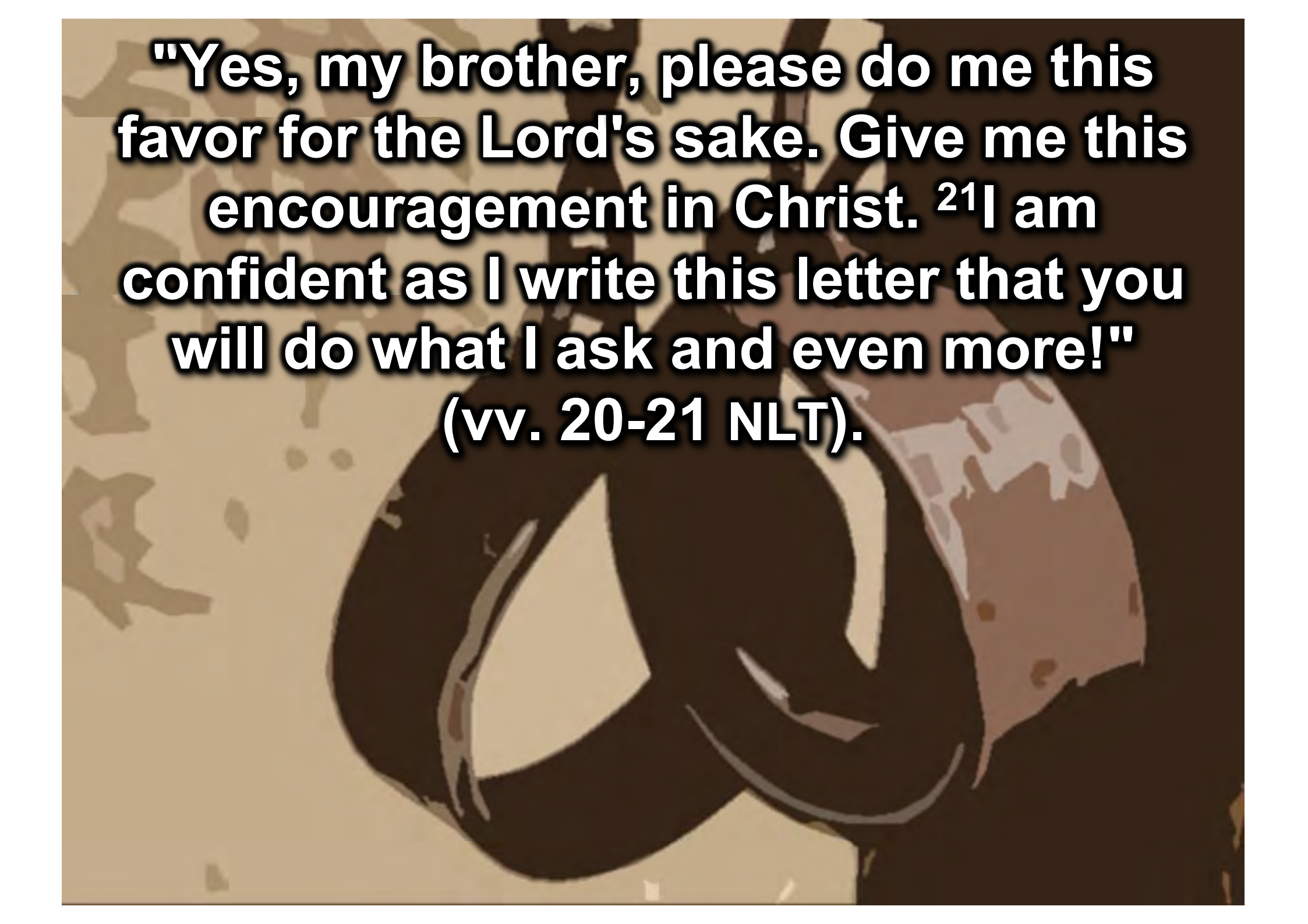
"So if you consider me a **partner**,
welcome him as you would
welcome me."

A man with a beard and a light-colored turban stands in front of a rough, stone wall. He is wearing a dark, textured robe. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, white font with a black outline.

**"If he has wronged you in any way or
owes you anything, charge it to me"
(v. 18 NLT).**

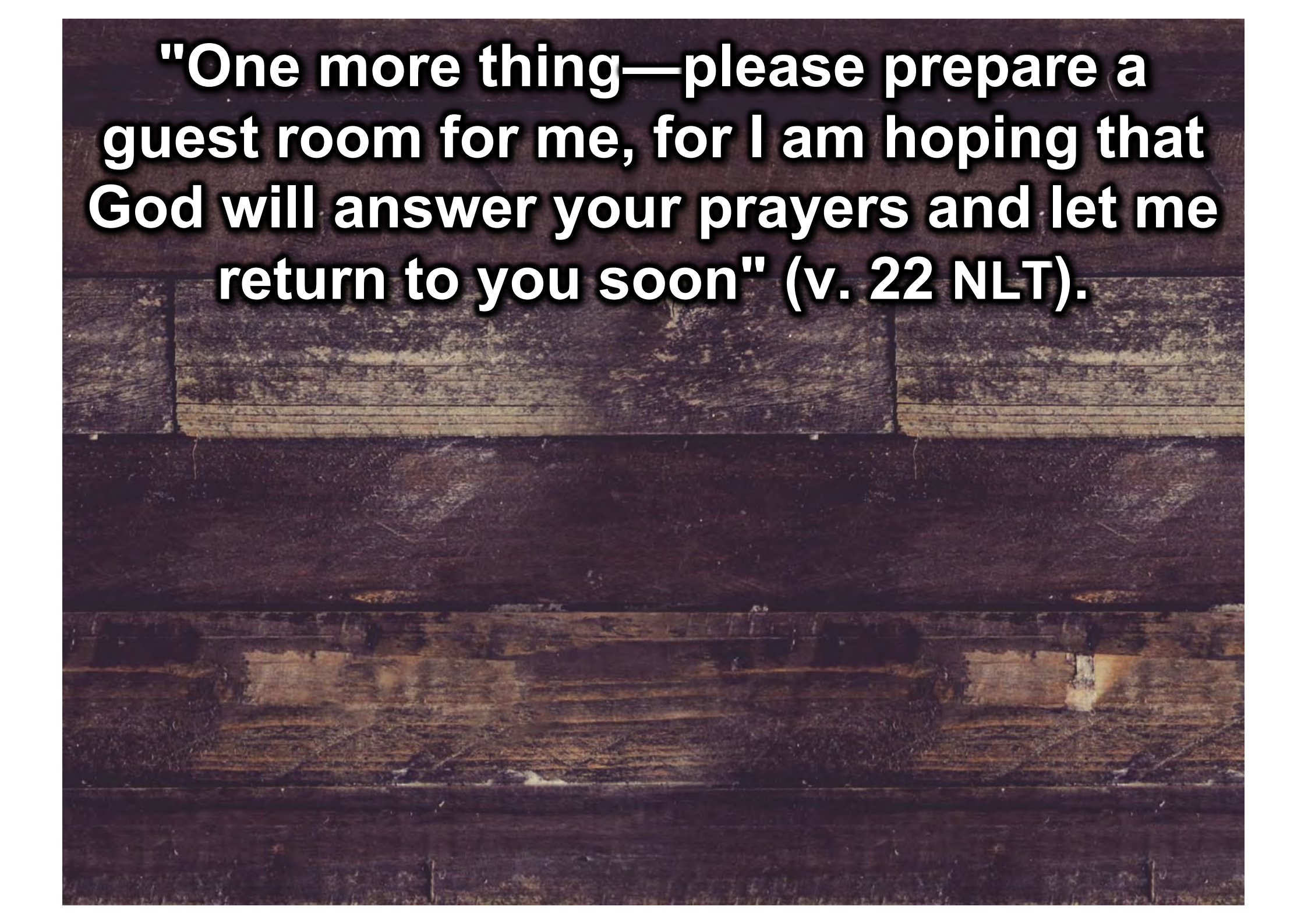
**"I, PAUL, WRITE THIS
WITH MY OWN
HAND: I WILL REPAY
IT. AND I WON'T
MENTION THAT YOU
OWE ME YOUR VERY
SOUL!" (v. 19 NLT).**





**"Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. ²¹I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more!"
(vv. 20-21 NLT).**

"One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon" (v. 22 NLT).



"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. ²⁴So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers" (vv. 23-24 NLT).



**"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit" (v. 25 NLT).**





*How to **forgive** those who
offend us...*

**I. Treat people
in the best
possible
light (1-7).**

Philemon

"This letter is from Paul, a **prisoner** for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our **brother** Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our **beloved co-worker**, ²and to our **sister** Apphia, and to our **fellow soldier** Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house" (vv. 1-2 NLT).



. Authorship .

Paul

Verse 1

Paul

Verse 9

..... Paul

Verse 19

..... Paul.....

. Date .

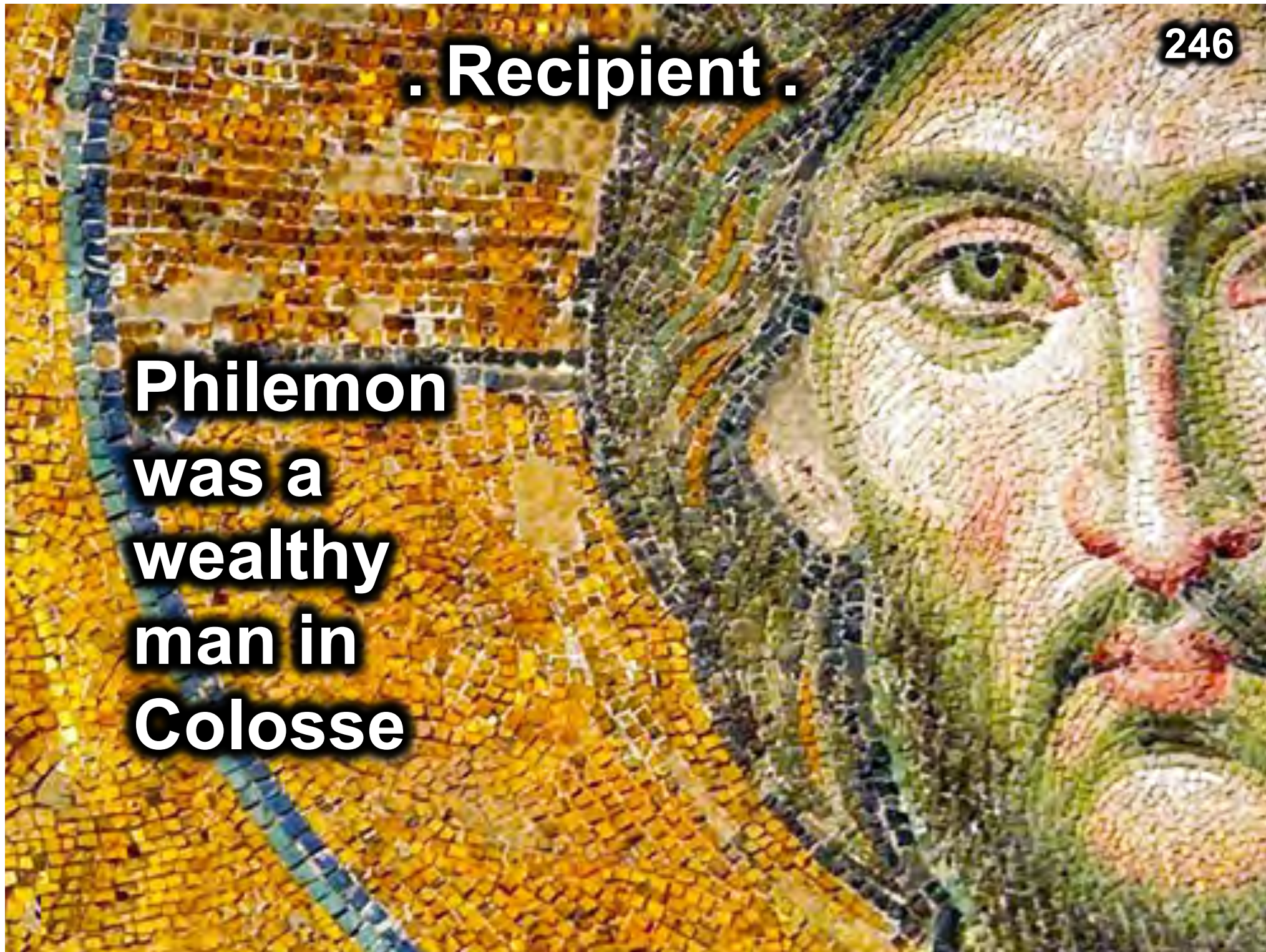
246

- **During Paul's imprisonment in Rome**
- **Fall AD 61**



. Recipient .

**Philemon
was a
wealthy
man in
Colosse**



. Recipients .

Primary addressee: Philemon

A wealthy Christian slave owner in Colosse

Verse 1b – "To Philemon **our dear friend and fellow worker**"

Others: Church members

Verse 2 – "to Apphia **our sister**, to Archippus **our fellow soldier** and to the church that **meets in your home**"



**"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ give you grace and peace"
(v. 3 NLT).**



"I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, ⁵because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people" (vv. 4-5 NLT).



"And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. ⁷Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people" (vv. 6-7 NLT).

. Occasion .

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**Philemon
owned a
slave
named
Onesimus**



II. *Forgive* so
reconciliation
transcends
social
barriers
(8-21).



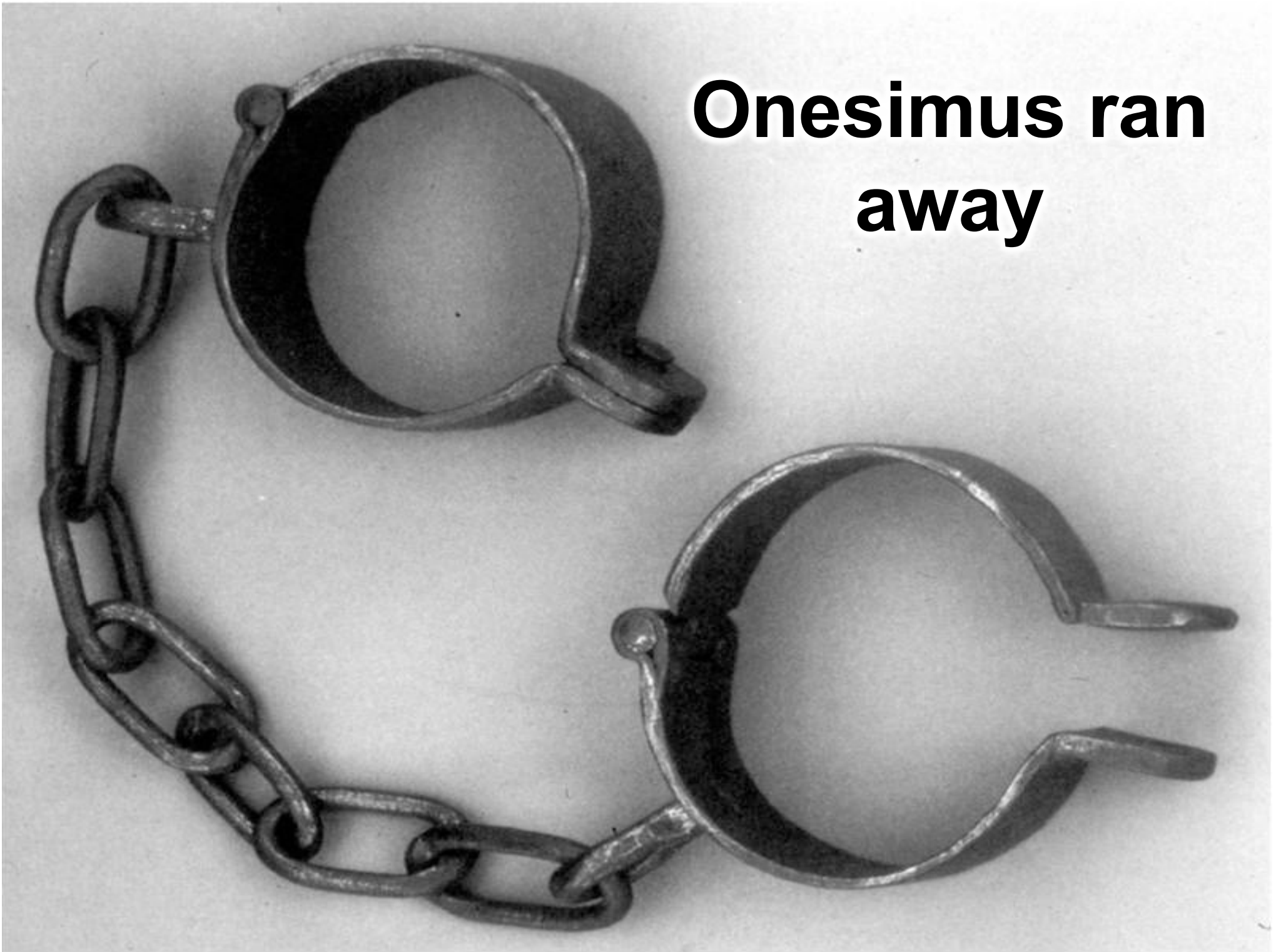
Philemon

"That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. ⁹But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus"

[illegible]

(vv. 8-9 NLT).

**Onesimus ran
away**



**Onesimus had done injustice to and
stolen from Philemon**



Slavery in the Roman Empire



New Slaves Just In

* Prisoners of war — from all corners of the Empire, and beyond! Educated Greek slaves, strong barbarians from Germany and Britain, also slaves from Egypt, Africa, and India.

* New batch of criminals — most have been reserved by the government to work in the mines, sweep the roads, and perform other public duties, but some are available for private buyers.

All of our slaves have their age and condition clearly listed. And we guarantee to warn you of any limps, varicose veins, or other sicknesses.

THE SLAVE MARKET,
TRAJAN'S FORUM, ROME

Social Classes

■ Equestrians (Patricians)



■ Plebians



■ Freedman



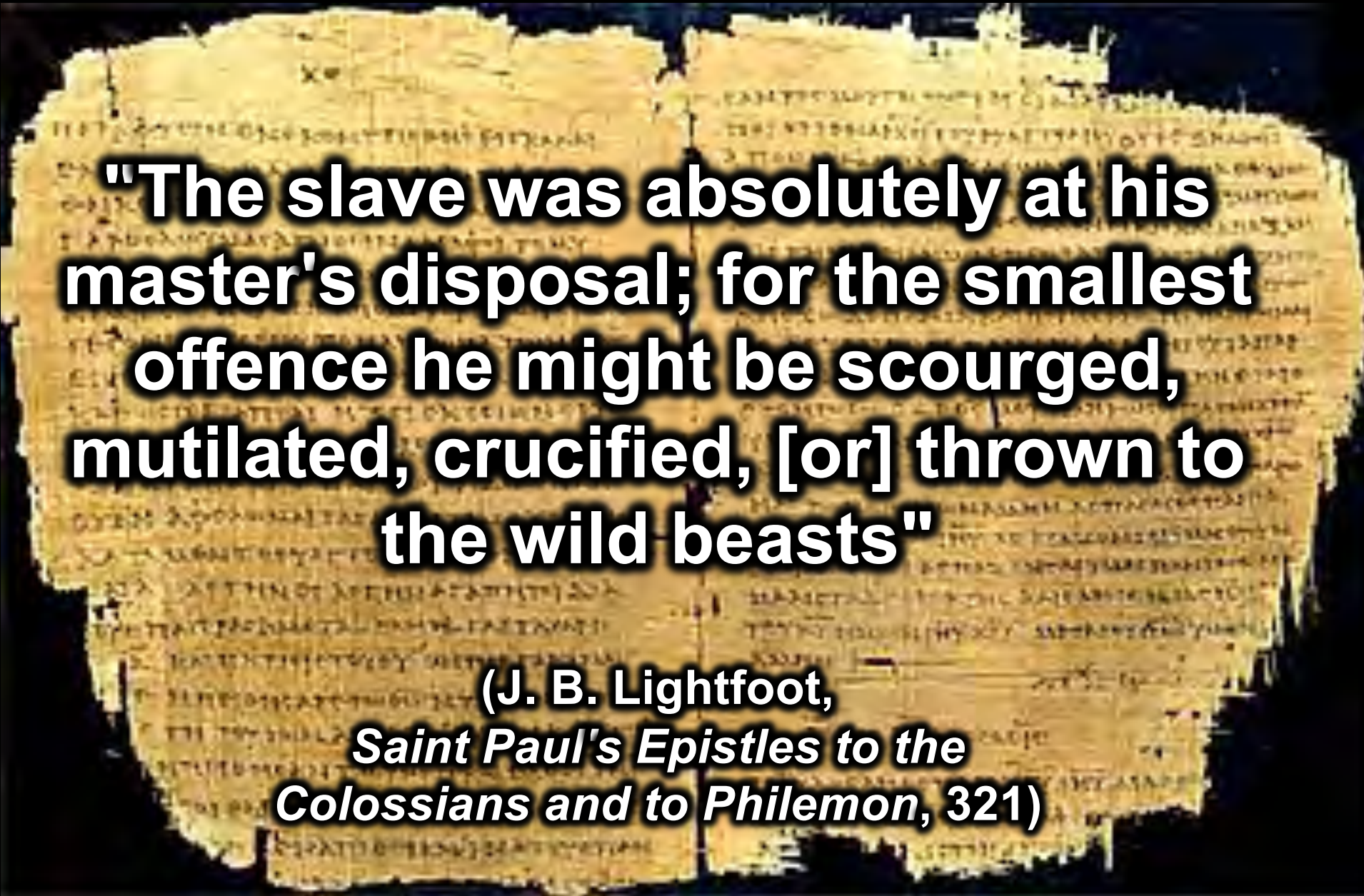
■ Slaves



HARD-WEARING: Strong fit slaves are useful for the hundreds of heavy jobs around the house and yard.

Slavery in the Roman Empire

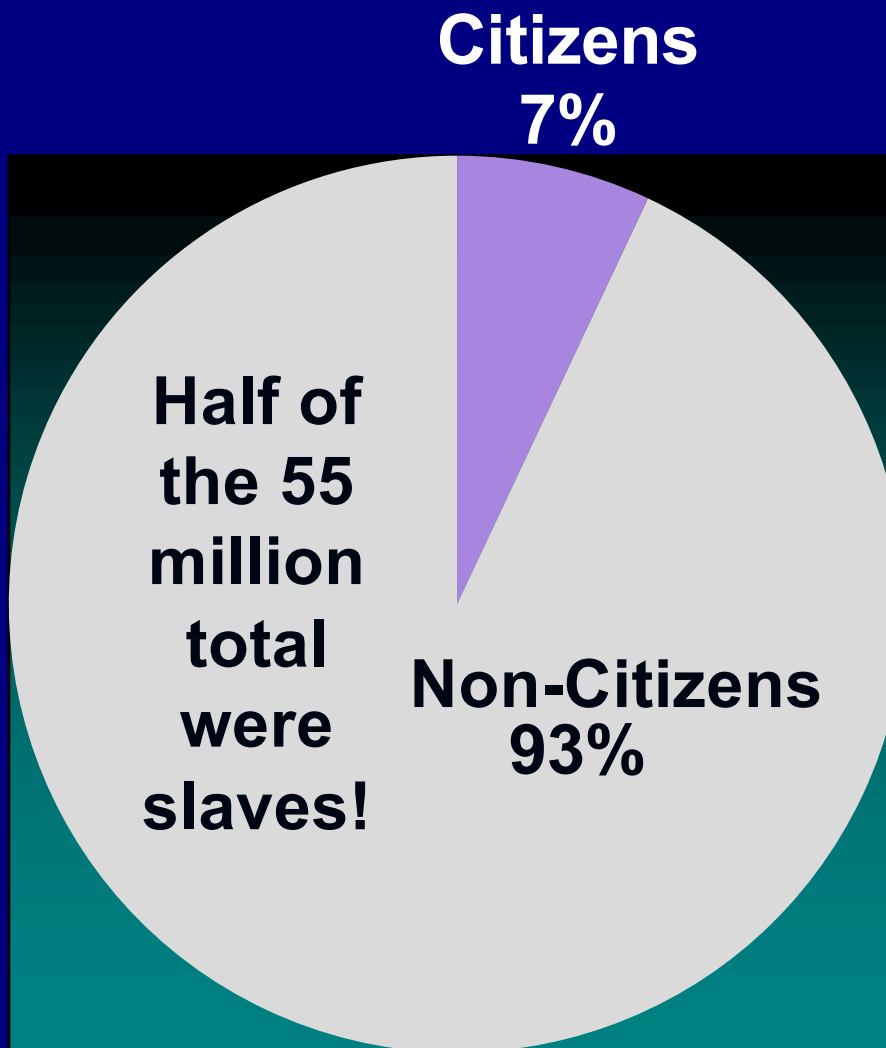
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"The slave was absolutely at his master's disposal; for the smallest offence he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, [or] thrown to the wild beasts"

**(J. B. Lightfoot,
*Saint Paul's Epistles to the
Colossians and to Philemon*, 321)**

Roman Empire Populations



Millions of People

. Rome .

Onesimus made his way to Rome, where Paul led this fugitive slave to Christ

**"my child whom I have begotten
in my imprisonment" (v. 10)**



. Occasion .

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Philemon

Paul convinced Onesimus to return to his master, Philemon, even writing the letter that Onesimus himself would carry.

"I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, **Onesimus**. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.

¹¹Onesimus **hasn't been of much use** to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us.

¹²I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart"
(vv. 10-12 NLT).



"I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf.



¹⁴But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (vv. 13-14 NLT).

. The Reunion .



**One
wonders
what
Philemon
thought
when he saw
Onesimus
once again**

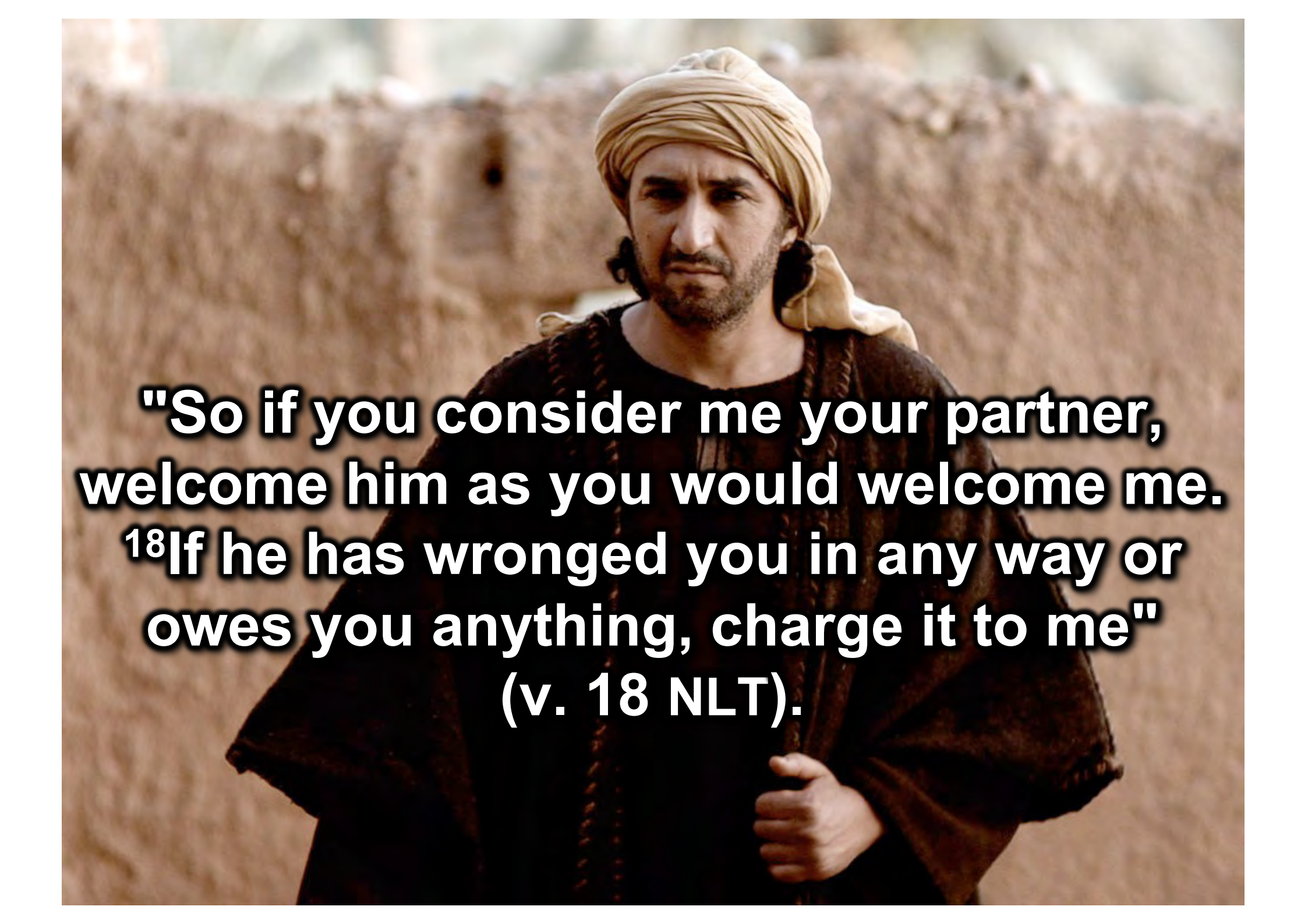
"It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. ¹⁶He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord" (vv. 15-16 NLT).

. Repentance .

Paul sought to convince Philemon to forgive Onesimus

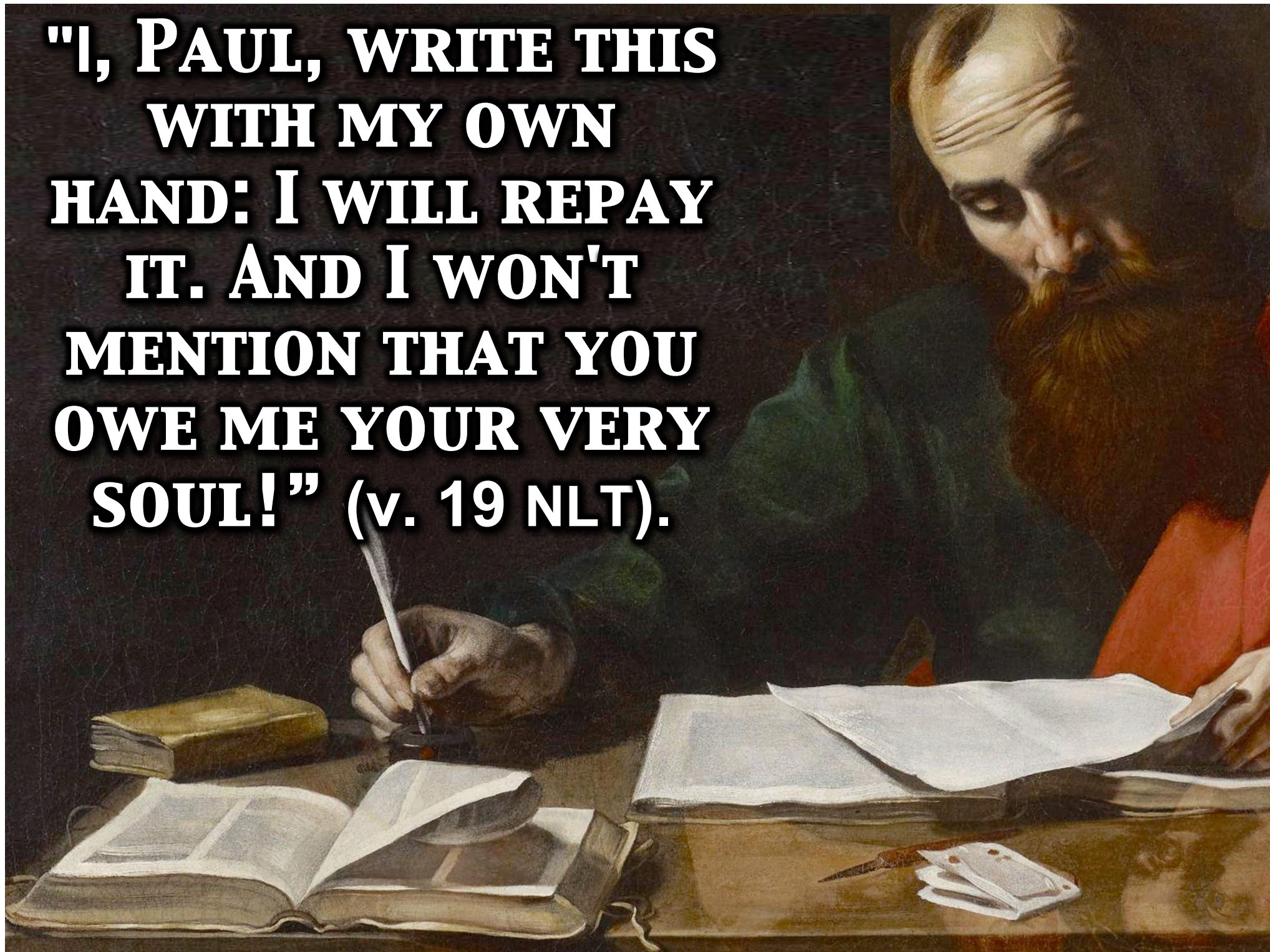
I am sorry,
Master...



A man with a beard and a light-colored turban stands in front of a rough, stone wall. He is wearing a dark, textured robe. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the wall and some distant structures.

**"So if you consider me your partner,
welcome him as you would welcome me.
18If he has wronged you in any way or
owes you anything, charge it to me"
(v. 18 NLT).**

**"I, PAUL, WRITE THIS
WITH MY OWN
HAND: I WILL REPAY
IT. AND I WON'T
MENTION THAT YOU
OWE ME YOUR VERY
SOUL!" (v. 19 NLT).**



III. Philemon teaches four principles on forgiveness.



A. True forgiveness is **granted freely,
not under compulsion (14).**



"But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (v. 14 NLT).



. Forgiveness.

Clearest example of the need to demonstrate forgiveness in New Testament



If you sinned 3 times a day...

= 1000 sins each year

X 40 number of years

= 40,000 sins so far!

B. True forgiveness is the **natural demonstration of our partnership in the gospel (17).**

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Verses 17-18

"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."**

KEY VERSE

"This letter is from
Paul...

I am writing to
Philemon, our beloved
co-worker, ²and to our
sister **Apphia**, and to
our fellow soldier
Archippus, and to the
church that meets in
your house"
(vv. 1-2 NLT).



"One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer **your (plural) prayers and let me return to **you (plural)** soon" (v. 22 NLT).**

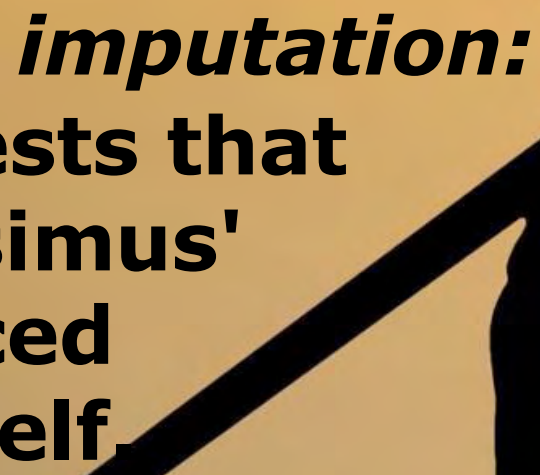
"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with **your (plural)** spirit" (v. 25 NLT).



C. True forgiveness is **unconditional without putting requirements on the other person (18-19).**

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Illustrates imputation:
Paul requests that all of Onesimus' sin be placed upon himself.

A silhouette of a person standing on a cross, set against a warm, orange-hued sunset background. The cross is made of two wooden beams, and the person's arms are outstretched along the horizontal beam. The background shows a dark, silhouetted horizon line.

Verse 18:

"If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me."

Conditional Forgiveness:



a. "I'll forgive you **if**..."

b. "I'll forgive—but I'll never **forget**..."

c. "I forgive you but don't expect me to change my **attitude**."

**"Forgiveness is...
surrendering my right to hurt you
for hurting me"**

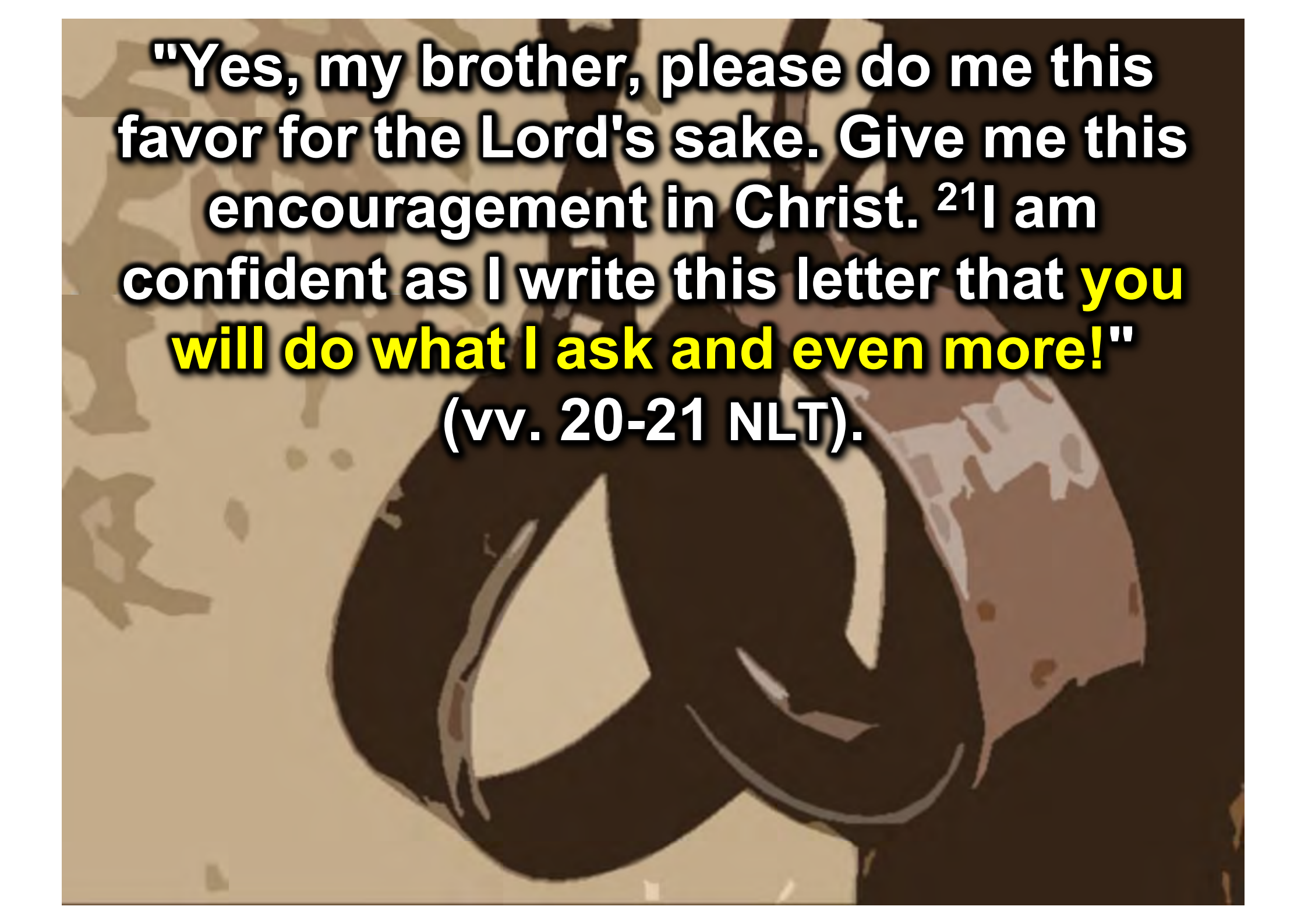
—psychologist Archibald Hunt

Paul's Letter to
Philemon



D. True forgiveness **"goes the second mile"** (21).





"Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. ²¹I am confident as I write this letter that **you will do what I ask and even more!" (vv. 20-21 NLT).**

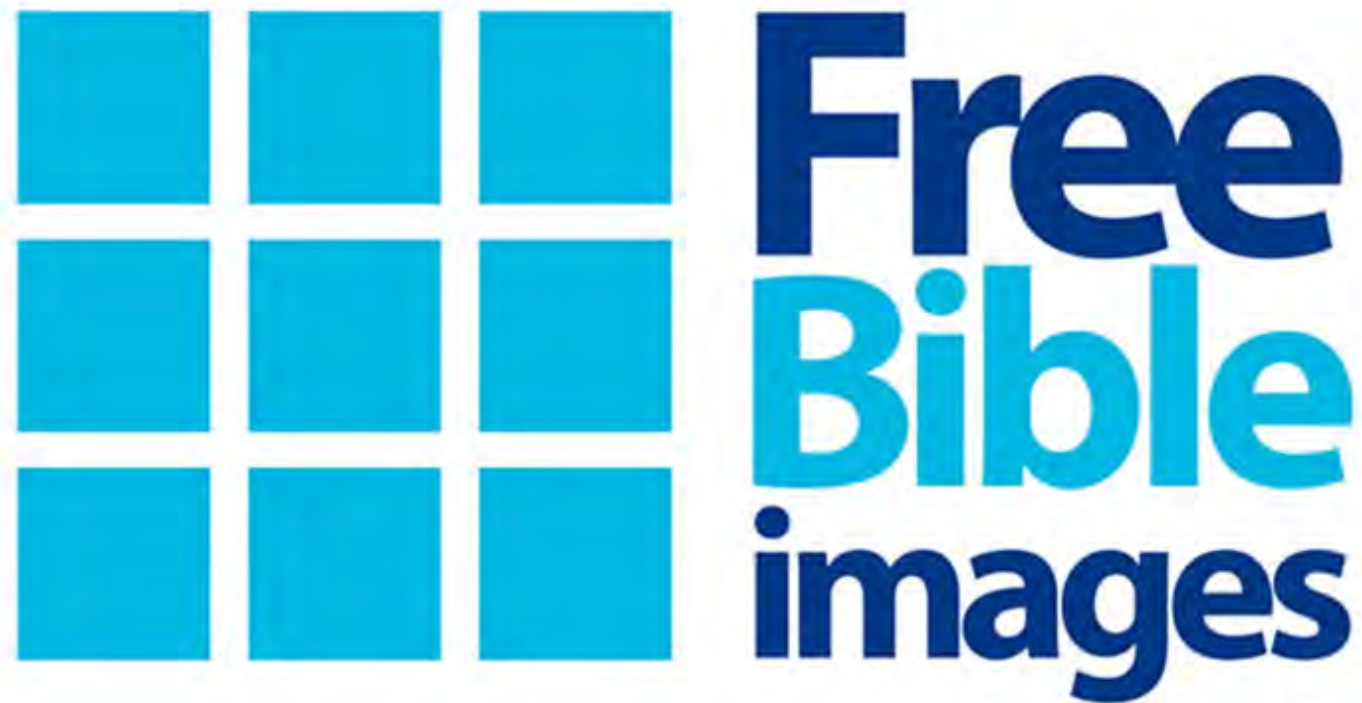













THE WORD IN PICTURES

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***How to forgive those who
offend us...***

Main Idea

A crown of thorns, made of dry, sharp, and tangled branches, is placed around the horizontal beam of a wooden cross. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a backdrop. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the sharp points of the thorns.

**We can forgive
others when we see
how God has
forgiven us.**

What ever happened to Onesimus?

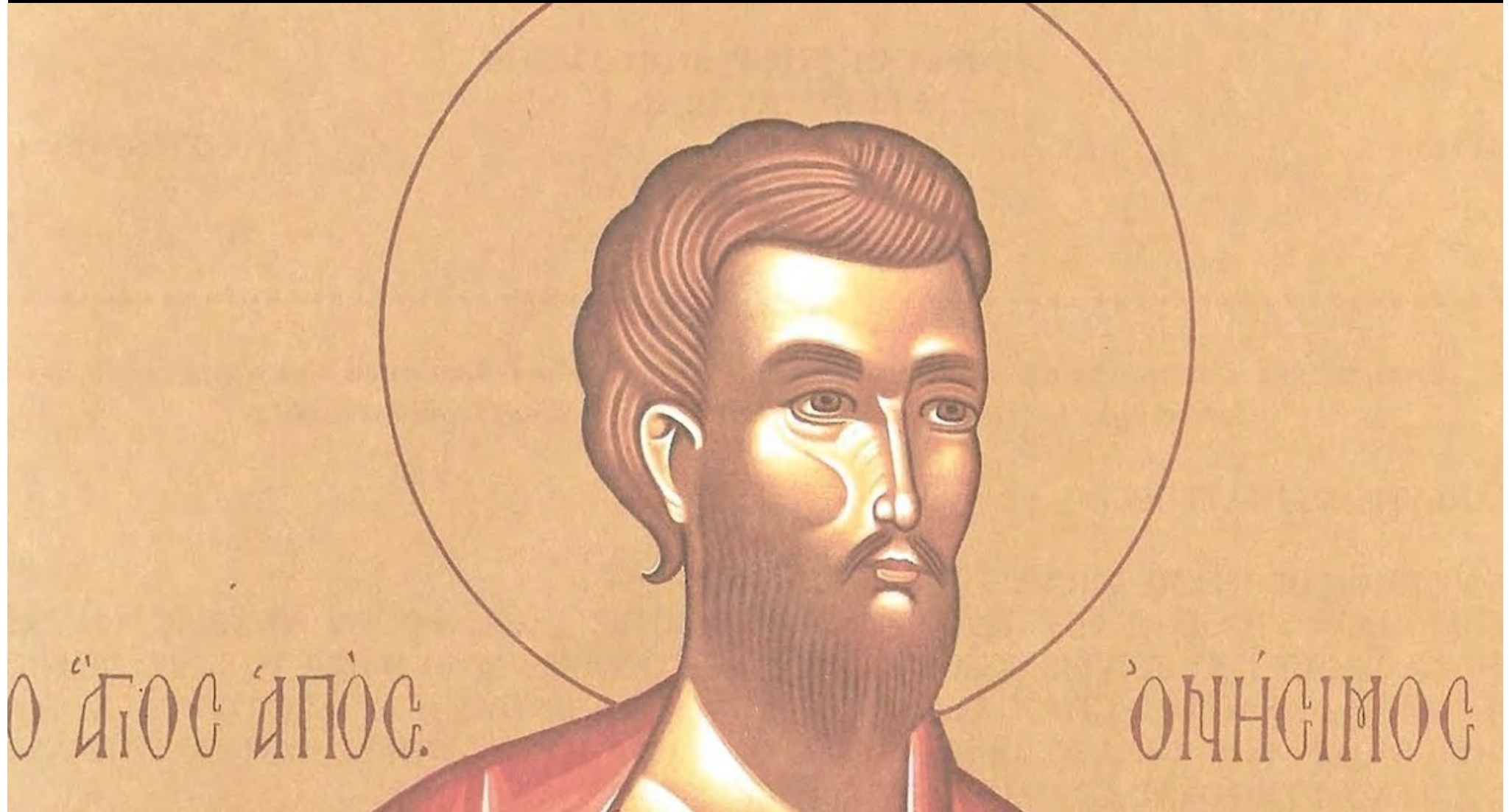
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Did Philemon Forgive Onesimus?

- 1. Philemon preserved this epistle & allowed it to be circulated & copied—this would be highly unlikely if he didn't forgive Onesimus!**
- 2. Paul expressed great confidence that Philemon would do more than even forgive Onesimus (v. 21)—perhaps free him?**
- 3. Ignatius addressed the bishop in the nearby church in Ephesus about AD 115—and his name was Onesimus!**

Bishop Onesimus (AD 115)





Corrie ten Boom

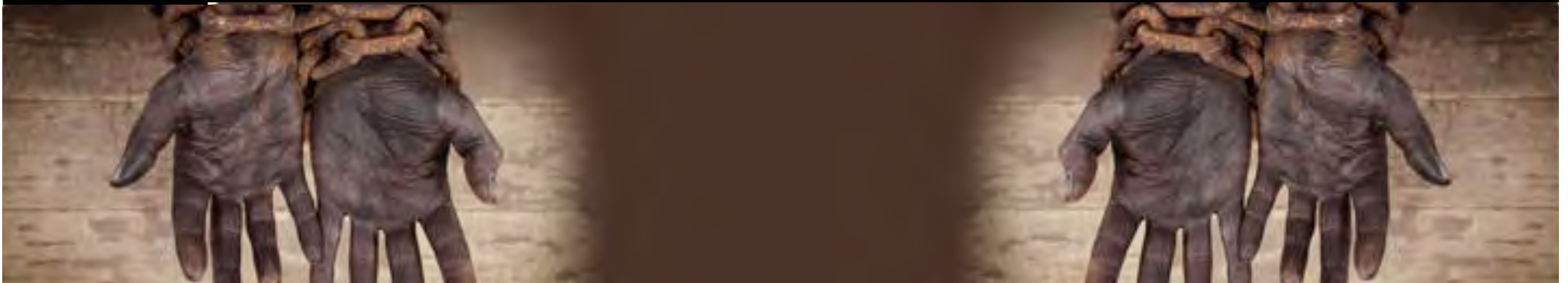
"Forgiveness is setting the prisoner free, only to find out that the prisoner was me."

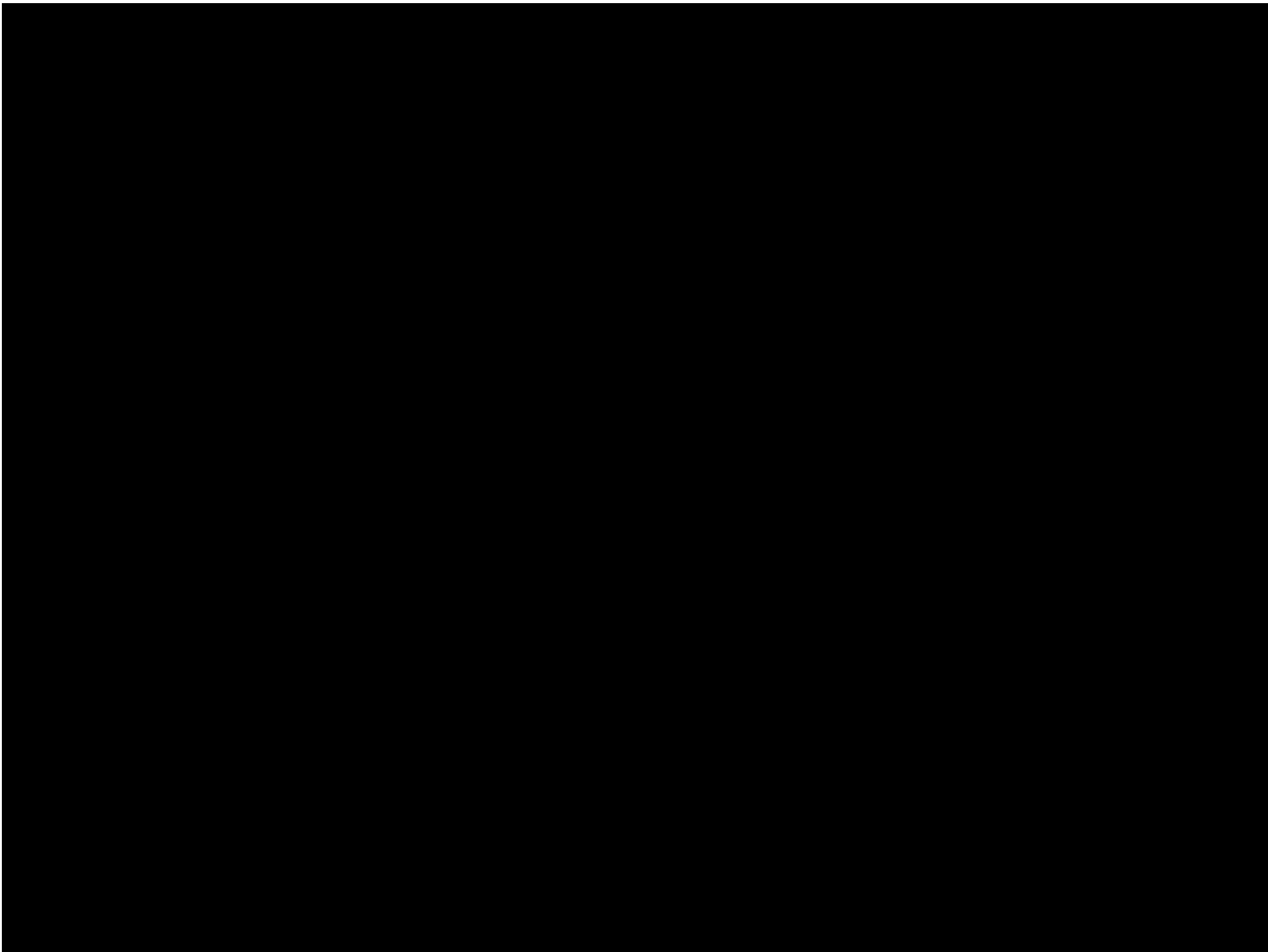
• Application •

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To whom do you best relate now?

1. Philemon the offended?
2. Onesimus the offender?
3. Paul the reconciler?
4. The church as affirmers?





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A large background image for the main banner showing a pair of hands holding an open, small, black leather-bound book with yellowed pages. A semi-transparent dark grey box with white text is overlaid on the lower left of the image.

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