



*Are forgiveness and justice
mutually exclusive?*



The cross is the place where God's justice and love meet.

*At the cross, God condemns sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)
- Justice*

*At the cross, God demonstrates his love in that while we
were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)
- Love*



God is simple. He is not composed of parts.





*Forgiveness and justice are not
mutually exclusive.*



19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

Romans 12:19



Philemon

Main Point 1: There is power in the gospel to transform relationships.

Main Point 2: Reconciliation and unity in the body of Christ, the church, was paramount for Paul.



¹ Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ² and Apphia our sister
and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

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

⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my
prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have
toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the
sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of
every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷ For I have
derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because
the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.



⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.



¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²² At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

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

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



16 no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.



¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.



20 Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.



Slavery: Ancient and Modern

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Slavery in the NT era was widespread. Estimated 1/3 of the population were slaves.

Sometimes the economic conditions for someone in slavery were better than someone who obtained their freedom.

Slavery was often voluntary. Willingly and voluntarily entered slavery to pay off a debt. It was a form of indentured servitude. The relationship was more like employer-employee.

Ancient slavery was not ethnic based, like American slavery.

Freedom was a norm of ancient slavery. Often, slaves worked to obtain their freedom.



Why doesn't the Bible explicitly condemn slavery?

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The early church held no political influence or power. Minority group.

The Bible does condemn “enslavers” (those involved in slave trading) 1 Tim 1:10

The Bible plants the seeds that eventually lead to the abolition of slavery.



¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.



22 For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

1 Cor 7:22



⁹ and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

Col 4:9



⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—



11 (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)

Not a statement about dignity but whether Onesimus is “fit” for gospel ministry.



18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.



*Forgiveness begins with God.
(Vertical)*



*God's forgiveness is the ground of
extending forgiveness to others.
(Horizontal)*