

Paul Urges Philemon to Free his Slave Onesimus
About 5 minutes, from Paul's brief letter to Philemon

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Onesimus

Philemon

Paul

Prompter Shout a brief line and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Onesimus Let go of me, Philemon! Let go!

Philemon You stole from me, Onesimus, and disobeyed.
Have you forgotten that you are my slave?
I own you! I am going to lash you!

Onesimus I will never work for you again, you dirty pig!
I would die first!

Philemon You will not get far, Onesimus!
I will make you pay, you lazy thief!

Prompter & Echoes You will be sorry!

Onesimus (*Go a distance from Philemon.*)
I break loose and run far away.

Prompter & Echoes Years pass.

Onesimus I am in Rome where I meet the Apostle Paul in prison.
This changes everything for me.
Paul tells me about Jesus, and I repent.

Paul Onesimus, I appreciate your visits; you are a great help to me.

Onesimus And you, Paul, brought me to know our Lord Jesus Christ.
Everything is different now, nothing like when I was Philemon's slave.
I swear I will never go back to that life. Never!

Prompter & Echoes He would die first!

Paul Onesimus, now that you are my son in the faith,
and are living obediently,
I advise you to return to your former owner, Philemon.

Onesimus What? Go back to Philemon!
Never! How can I return to slavery?

Paul Philemon is a believer now.
I will write him a letter for you to take to him.
Things will be different.

Onesimus Well, I trust you, Paul, and I trust God, so I will do as you say.
(*Walk to Philemon.*)

Prompter & Echoes He trusts Paul's advice.

Philemon Onesimus! I don't believe it!
I never wanted to see you again!

Onesimus I never wanted to see you again, either, Philemon,
but something happened to change all that.
The apostle Paul sent this letter to you!
(*Pretend to hand a letter to Philemon*).

Philemon I read the letter twice, and weep.
I will read portions of it to you.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, to Philemon our beloved brother,
and to the church in your house: grace to you and peace
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
I appeal to you for my spiritual child Onesimus,
whom I have begotten in my imprisonment.
He formerly was useless to you,
but now is useful both to you and to me.
I have sent him, who is my very heart, back to you."

Prompter & Echoes What a letter!

Philemon Oh! I don't know what to think!

Onesimus Keep reading, Philemon, please.

Philemon Onesimus was separated from you for a time,
so that you could receive him back forever,
no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother in the Lord.
If you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.
If he owes you anything, I will repay it.
Having confidence that you will comply,
I write knowing that you will do even more than what I say."

Prompter & Echoes Amazing!

Philemon Onesimus! (*Embrace Onesimus.*) Welcome back!
You are no longer my slave; you are my brother!

Prompter & Echoes Freedom in Christ!