

# TRUTH LIVERS

## Onesimus

Rev. George Stephens

November 19, 2023

*“Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. 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, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 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.”*  
(Philemon 8–16, ESV)

## Words that describe Onesimus – and you!

### I. Prisoner/Child –

*“yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— I*

*appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.” (Philemon 9–10, ESV)*

## II. Useless/Useful –

*“(Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)” (Philemon 11, ESV)*

## III. Parted/Received –

*“I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. 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, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever,” (Philemon 12–15, ESV)*

## IV. Bondservant/Brother –

*“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.” (Philemon 16, ESV)*

Questions:

1. What is your irony? How would you contrast what you were before Jesus to what you are now in Jesus?
2. How has your salvation affected past relationships? Are there people with whom you need to reconcile?