

## Introduction

- Colossians and Philemon... QT...
  - previously preached on here a couple of times, in a family service in 2007 and here at the evening service back in 2004!
  - I was struck, particularly in looking back at the 2004 sermon, at what I **didn't** lead us into thinking about!!
- I did talk about Onesimus needing to **face up to the facts**, the reality of his situation
  - runaway slave, broken the law, recompense needed....
  - facing the reality of life is very often the beginning of growth and positive change
- I did talk about the **risk** Onesimus was taking in going back to Philemon:
  - quite literally risking his life
  - taking risks at God's prompting is also very often part of a process of growth in character
- And I did talk about the **reaching for reconciliation** embedded in this letter for Onesimus as he is part of the process of reconciliation
- *Contrast those with **stagnant Christian lives** which are often filled with (i) escapism, (ii) avoidance of risk and (iii) a satisfaction with shallow, broken relationships.*
- (So that was the sermon from 2004!)

## So what did we miss?

- **The key theme of the book is what we missed!! Ooops!!**
  - call on Philemon to forgive, give up his rights, reach for a degree of relationship that had not been present before...

### What is Paul's ask?

- v. 17, "**welcome him as you would welcome me**"
- How would Philemon welcome Paul?
  - "**welcome him as you would welcome me**"
  - brother... free... partner...
- Philemon was in the right - not Onesimus, and not really Paul!
  - he had been deserted, let down, betrayed, stolen from.....
- And he is the one who has spiritual work to do!

## Application

- Paul is applying Jesus instruction about forgiving as we have been forgiven to the specifics of Philemon's situation:
  - Luke 6:37 "**Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.**"
  - Matthew 6:12 "**Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**"
- Who is our Onesimus?
  - who has deserted us? Who has let us down? Who has betrayed us? Disappointed us? Stolen from us? (can be time or energy as well as money)
  - who do we need to "**welcome him as you would welcome [Paul/Billy Graham/Christian example or leader from our lives]**"?
  - forgiveness, reconciliation, actual words and actions...