

# ***What a Difference Love Can Make***

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*Church of the Advent*

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## **THE LETTER OF PAUL TO Philemon**

### **THE LETTER ITSELF (WIKI)**

- It is now generally regarded as one of the undisputed works of Paul.
- It is the shortest of Paul's extant letters, consisting of only 335 words in the original Greek text and 25 verses in modern English translations.

### **A VERY INTIMATE PAULINE VOICE (Extracts)**

#### **1) GRATITUDE – ENCOURAGEMENT IN AND THROUGH LOVE - MATURITY**

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus . . . I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because **the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you**, my brother.

#### **2) LOVING APPEAL - PURPOSE**

I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless (vis. MANUMISSION) to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, **my own heart (SACRIFICE)** , back to you (LEGAL OBLIGATION). I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced (NEGOTIATION).

Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever (REDEMPTION AND

RECONCILIATION), no longer as a slave but as more than a slave (TRANSFORMED PERSON) , a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

### **3) TRUE STORY - DNTO – ON FIRVIGENESS**

When Katy Hutchison came face-to-face with the man who murdered her husband, she made a decision that would change both their lives: she decided to forgive him. Why did she make that choice? Here is part of her story (full audio version at <http://www.cbc.ca/dnto/2010/07/whats-on-dnto-july-24.html>)

“My name is Katy Hutchinson, I live in Victoria British Columbia. New Years 1997, my husband Bob and I were entertaining a few couples in our home in Squamish, BC, when one of our dinner guests arrived. He asked us if we knew that there was a party happening at one of our friends’ houses, and Bob said he would phone the young guy just to check up on things. So he phoned and somebody answered and said that they couldn’t locate him. Bob got concerned and knew that we couldn’t pop our own bottle of champagne until we knew the kids at the end of the street were OK. Bob walked into a scenario with about 200 youths. They were upset to see him. Few words were exchanged but a punch was, and Bob was put on the ground by a young man and he was pushed by another young man and while he was on the ground he was kicked four times and it was those kicks that took Bob’s life.”

Katy was left on her own with young twins and a veil of silence fell on the community of Squamish. Katy moved back to her hometown to re-build her life, but when the police called five years later to say they were about to make an arrest in the case Katy made an unusual request. A few days later she found herself waiting to meet her husband’s killer, Ryan Eldridge.

“I found myself in the room, waiting to meet Ryan. Looking back, I suppose I was expecting some kind of monster, and when the door opened, and a slight, young, clean cut, young man walked in and slumped in a chair across from me and started to cry. All I could think about were people in my life of that age, people I cared about, and that somebody out there cared about this young man too, and there was a part of me that cared about him as well, because he was part of the community. I wanted him to know that we was going to be OK and wasn't going to cause more harm. It was complicated, it was conflicting, it was nasty the way I felt I guess that's an overarching feeling about harm and forgiveness and that life is nasty and messy and this was one of the messy parts.

## **FORGIVENESS AND COMMUNITY**

1. a church school theme
2. a song

### **HYMN: It Takes a Whole Village**

It takes a whole village to raise one child,  
In love and beauty undefiled.  
To grow in wisdom or to run wild,  
It takes a whole village to raise one child.

It takes a whole city to care for the poor,  
The homeless and hungry at our front door.  
Open your heart, you'll receive much more,  
It takes a whole village to care for the poor.

It takes a whole nation to build our pride,  
Working together side by side.  
Respecting our people we have to decide,  
It takes a whole nation to build our pride.