



**Fugitive - Part 1
Sermon Discussion Notes**

Opening Thought

Everyone is running from something. People in general want to escape pain and difficulty. Our escape mechanisms may vary; some escaping by food or pleasure or addiction to drugs, alcohol or pornography. Escaping from our current misery may lead us to a divine encounter with a God who can truly change our lives forever.

Discussion Questions

1. As a group read the book of Philemon out loud together.
2. Have someone in the group explain the plot of the book.
3. Questions about Onesimus.
 - Where did he live?
 - What was his status?
 - Where was he running to?
 - Who was Philemon and what could he do to Onesimus if he caught him?
4. Why do people want to escape today? What are people running from?
5. According to Psalm 55:6-8 (See Acts 13:22) do spiritual people sometimes want to escape and run away?
6. In running away Onesimus ran into Paul? Did God have a bigger plan than Onesimus' small plan in running away? How does this story show the sovereignty of God?
7. Discuss this concept: The key to life is not a different location but a profound and deep relationship with Jesus (See 1 Cor. 5:17).

8. Why was Paul sending Onesimus back to Colossae to Philemon? Why is restitution and reconciliation an issue after we meet Christ? (See Philemon 18 & Luke 19:8)
9. According to Colossians 4:7-9 what task was Onesimus given? What is the significance of that honorable task?
10. Why do you think Onesimus may have left his slave owner Philemon? Discuss the importance of each person feeling valued? How did Paul convey this to Onesimus?

Final Thought

Sometimes God sends us back to the very place we have run from but he gives us new eyes to see the place and the people associated with that place in a different way.

Scriptures

Book of Philemon (NIV)

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. 8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9 yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul — an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus — 10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him — who is my very heart — back to you. 13 I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. 17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back — not to mention that you owe me your very self. 20 I do wish, brother, that I may have 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 ask. 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Psalm 55:6-8 (NIV)

6 I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest — 7 I would flee far away and stay in the desert; Selah 8 I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm." NIV

Psalm 55:12-14 (NIV)

12 If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (NIV)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Colossians 4:7-9 (NIV)

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

Luke 19:8 (NIV)

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Exodus 5:10-14 (NIV)

10 Then the slave drivers and the foremen went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. 11 Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.'" 12 So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. 13 The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." 14 The Israelite foremen appointed by Pharaoh's slave drivers were beaten and were asked, "Why didn't you meet your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"