

SQUEEZED, PART 1
GET ME OUT OF HERE!
Philemon 1:1-16

*The gospel of Jesus Christ re-humanizes us so we can flourish
in this life, regardless of our circumstances.*

The more we run from God and his ways, the more he puts the “squeeze” on us, pulling us back to himself.

Everyone in this letter is getting “squeezed.”

Onesimus—the runaway slave
Philemon—the slave owner
Paul—the apostle to the Gentiles

God does the “squeezing” with gentle hands of love so his people will be conformed to the image of Christ.

When you became a slave, you ceased being a human being in the eyes of the Roman Empire.

Slaves were regarded as “living tools” or “breathing machines.”

Onesimus essentially says, “I’m out of here. I’ve had enough. I can’t take it anymore.”

The penalty for getting caught as a runaway slave was severe.

Branded with an “F” on your forehead (from the Latin word for “fugitive”)
Handed back to your master, who could punish you in any way he wanted (including crucifixion)

A change in circumstance does not change who we are on the inside, our character.

True freedom is a mentality more than a locality.

We run from one set of circumstances to another—trying to find true freedom and personhood—only to get imprisoned in our own escape routes.

When slaves hear the gospel, they finally get a taste of true freedom.

At this point, Paul is addressing relationships, not institutions.

Paul wanted to change the world by changing hearts.
To tell slaves that they had real value—that was radical in the first century.

Sometimes God doesn’t want our situation to change. Sometimes he wants us to change in the situation.

True freedom is Jesus—the one who died by crucifixion, the slave’s death—though he himself was innocent.