



The Minor Epistles

The Epistles to Philemon

Interpreting the Text:

1. Does the letter to Philemon add anything to how we understand Paul? Does it change our view of him, or impact our understanding of his other letters in any way?
2. What are Paul's main arguments as he tries to persuade Philemon in this letter? What is Paul's primary objective in this case?

Applying the Text:

1. Paul's letters are among the most read and studied parts of scripture, and slavery is a topic that comes up in a number of letters, most notably in Philemon, Galatians, and 1 Corinthians. How should we discuss Paul's teachings that mention slavery given the history of contemporary practices, like chattel slavery in the United States. Can we, as Professor Morgan discusses, identify and isolate the first-century Roman practice of slavery when discussing Paul's writings or do we have a moral obligation to discuss the impact Paul's writing has had on modern practices of slavery?
2. What does this epistle teach us about reconciliation in Christian communities? What questions does it raise for you about forgiveness, repentance, and relationship?