



PART 6: CHRIST IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Colossians | 9.21.25

Libin Abraham

(The following text is automatically generated and has not been edited)

Libin Abraham 0:00

I don't know about you, when I was a kid, one of my favorite days of the school year was Field Day. Anybody else out there look forward to Field Day? I loved it because I love tug of war. More claps than that for missions week. That's crazy. Okay, field day, I'm kidding. I look forward to tug of war. You know, you got chalk dusted, ropes, heels dug in, and the PE teacher just yelling, pull, pull, pull. And then sometimes one side would decide to completely let go, and if you're on the other side, you just had an involuntary trust fall right into the grass. And we learned at tug of war that teamwork matters and that rope burns are real and they will stay with you for a long time. Tug of War is fun as kids. But today, when I look at the culture around us, it sort of seems like there is a massive gain of tug of war by adults in many ways, over the last few weeks, we see and we have been revealed to the animosity of the political tug of war, happening in our country, one where the racial divide seems to be deepening, pulling people apart for so many reasons. Tug of war was fun as kids, but now, when it's done within the public sphere of life, it's concerning, it's wounding,

Unknown Speaker 1:18

and even can be divisive. What

Libin Abraham 1:21

I've seen on social media this week is that this social, political, cultural tug of war isn't just in the world. It is actually dividing the Church of Jesus Christ. And the truth is that all of us in this room and online, we come carrying different stories. Many in this room have been Texans for generations. Others have grown up in immigrant communities where, like me, you weren't born in Texas, but you got here as fast as you could. It's a good place to be. Some have felt and have known racial biases and the wounding that's come from that. And others have never had to think about it. Some here may be leading companies and organizations. Others are working multiple jobs just to make rent. Some may vote red. Some may vote blue. Others feel politically homeless. And if we're not careful, if we don't lay those differences under our faith, or at least beside our faith, we'll end up laying those differences over our faith, and that becomes the filter through which we view one another. And when that happens, agreement becomes a precursor to belonging, and we confuse discipleship for news feed algorithms that are on our social media pages and contempt for even righteousness. Well, the Gospel has a solution to that that the culture cannot offer us. And today we're going to be in Colossians chapter three, where Paul drops in a statement that is like a bell being rung to scatter, to gather a scattered people. And eventually, I just want you to know as we look at this text, as we live in a climate that is increasingly becoming more and more divided, and even a church culture within America that is increasingly becoming more and more divided, Paul's words are needed for us. They're instructive for where we are. Church in Colossians, colossal was very diverse and very gifted, but they also face the temptation to measure up each other or to size up the person next to you based on the labels of the day. So Right? And we saw this last week in Colossians chapter three, where Paul tells talks to us about putting off some things and then putting on this new life. He drops in this powerful statement that's needed for us today. And he says in verse 11 in Christ, there is not Greek and Jew. That would have been an ethnic distinction, a race distinction, people who grew up in different ethnic backgrounds, but neither is there circumcision and uncircumcision. That's a religious upbringing, people who grew up in different faith systems, and you got the Jews, who were the covenant people of God, having the Torah and the promises of Israel, and the Gentiles, who had no context for that. And these two groups of people were told to stay separate your whole life, and now they are here within the same church. How do you navigate that tug of war? Then he says, Neither is our difference between barbarian and Scythian. That's a cultural distinction. People who have a very different view of society and norms, and even language was different,

and the slangs they used were different. Barbarian and Scythian are brought together, and there's no difference between slave and free, this socio economic distinction, one of status and levels of freedom and privileges and authority. Oh, even they are brought together. Why? But Christ. Let's say this together. But Christ is all and in all, let's say it one more time with a little bit more power. But. Christ is all and in all. What Paul is urging the church in Colossae to do is not to get rid of their differences or to act like it doesn't impact their life, but what he's asking them to do is don't let this be the dominant leading of your life, these markers that people have used to draw rank and to grow distant from each other. He says, in the body of Christ, you don't look to politics or your ethnicity or your religious upbringing or societal norms, whatever it may be. You don't look to those to define who you are truly. There is a better way to think about this. There is a more accurate way to see yourself. He doesn't get away and dismiss the differences, but He recenters them, and he invites people to lay aside every label of their day.

Speaker 1 6:01

He says you are being brought together, because Christ is all and he is in all. So I want to just remind us, in a time and day where so many things can divide people in the world and people in the church, as we are part of this faith family together, we continue daily to lay aside every badge and every label that divides us, and we find unity around this fact we belong to Christ, who is all and in all, this is going to be the heartbeat of our church, amen. Amen church. This is Paul's heart for this church. You may thinking, well, how can that be a reality.

Libin Abraham 6:41

What produces that kind of a community where they live like this and they treat one another like this? Well, Paul tells us, therefore, as God's Chosen Ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion. The world needs a little bit more compassion. Put on kindness again. The world needs a little bit more kindness. And the rest, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a grievance against one another, how, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive in a world and a time where offenses are easy to find love the people of God, the church of Jesus, is invited into a path of forgiveness, above all, above all the labels that differentiate us, above all the badges we put on, all the hats we wear, above everything, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. This is what we are known by. This is what differentiates the church from the rest of the world. We put on love. So in this climate we're in, we need to put on the full armor of God from Ephesians six. It's important. We need it. And we need to put on these virtues of Colossians three. And the church is powerful when we wear the spiritual armor of Ephesians six, and we daily embody the virtues of Colossians three, this is what makes the people of God unique and distinct, causing wonder and astonishment in the world. This tug of war that's not just being felt in the culture out there, in the politics out there.

Speaker 1 8:24

Oftentimes the struggle war is seen and felt within our own families. Is seen and felt where husbands and wives are at odd with each other,

Libin Abraham 8:35

but parents and kids can live under the same roof, but they feel worlds apart when the innermost relationships of your life with a co worker or neighbor or family member, it just feels so broken and so alienated, you wonder, can we be a people that are one in heart and mind and soul? Is this possible? Well, today in Colossians three, as we wrap up the series, Paul addresses in very practical way some of the innermost relationships of our life, and what he's saying to us, look, Jesus isn't just Lord of the universe. The way you receive Him as Lord of the universe, like chapter one and chapter two talked about, is to make him the Lord of your relationships. It's so that this union with Jesus have direct implication on every earthly human relationship of your life. Jason, I've been married for now over 11 years, and the moment after we said I do to each other, every other relationship on Earth changed, because this covenant was not priority, and we viewed every other relationship with this filter. Before I got married, I could go play basketball every night of the week, and it was fine. But now I'm like, let me just check the family calendar. Make sure we're good. If someone showed interest in her after we got married, she would just happily put up a ring finger. Look, I'm happily taken. Get away, dude. Right? Like this covenant changes everything. This union. Faith changes everything in the same way. If we've been raised with Christ, crucified with Him, raised with Him, our life is hidden with Jesus, and we will appear with Him in glory. That union is most felt where at home, it's experienced in our relationship. That's where faith works itself out in love, in the innermost relationships of our life, bleeding into the outermost relationships, into the globe. And this is what Paul wants to address. How does your union with Jesus change the deepest relationships of your life? He, as an example, gives three specific illustrations. Here. He talks about

the relationship between wives and husbands, children and parents and slaves and masters, wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves and masters. I need to do a little bit more teaching today than preaching, because it's really important for us to get an understanding of first century context for these words to really make sense to us. Otherwise we do it a disservice. So let me try to paint this image of the tug of war happening between these three groups of people. Let's talk about wives and husbands. First in first century culture, husbands, people or men, would get married around the age of 20 something, in the legal age of marriage, for a girl was 12. So you can just imagine that in a marriage, the husband is far older than his wife, and in this context, only the husband usually was educated, so he had all the power, all the authority. He carried legal authority over his wife and children. And it was stated by both Greek philosophers, Roman philosophers and even Jewish philosophers, look, your wife is simply a possession of yours, not someone to love, but someone to use. She's there simply to carry on your lineage. There was no inherent value given to women. There was no rights and authority given to a wife. That's the context

Unknown Speaker 11:49
of first century culture.

Libin Abraham 11:52

At the same time, oftentimes, wives were coming to faith in Christ first, before their husbands did, so, they were placing their faith in Jesus, and now discovering this newly found freedom and worth and dignity as image bearers, sharing in the inheritance of life eternal with Jesus. And you can imagine that freedom they're experiencing in the church,

Speaker 1 12:15

and then coming home to unbelieving spouses husbands and feeling the limitation at home, there was that tug of war beginning to happen. So Paul begins to address that talking

Libin Abraham 12:25

about parents and kids, the father held all legal rights and authority to their children. Children had no rights. In fact, in first century, dads could single handedly decide when his wife gave birth to that child, if he wanted to keep the child or kill the child based on gender, or whatever things were going on. If he was not pleased with the baby that was born, he could decide, completely unchecked, no accountability, he could decide to take the life of his child. So that's the kind of power structure you have between parents and kids, and then kids haven't changed all that much in 2000 years. They don't want to really follow the rules, even if it's good, they want to think they're wiser than their parents. So there is this power struggle at home.

Speaker 1 13:07

In the last leg, you have slaves and masters, and this is really important for us to understand. First Century slavery was very, very different than the transatlantic slavery that happened between the 15th and 19th century.

Libin Abraham 13:20

In the transatlantic slavery, millions of image bearers from Africa were kidnapped, treated inhumanely, unjustly, bought and sold as property and sent to the Americas. It was completely not okay and unjust. In fact, the Bible, this Bible, condemns very explicitly, that kind of slavery, and the reason it perpetuated so long in America was people ripped out those pages of the Scripture and created a slave Bible that promoted that and took verses out of context and left passages like the exodus in Egypt out of the Bible. That's a big deal, you know, but that's not what you have in first century. In first century Roman culture, slavery was not based on race, it was based on socio economic need, so anyone could become anyone's slave, or what they called indentured servants and slaves could occupy any role in modern life or even in government positions, and sometimes people voluntarily chose to be servants and slaves because it's what secured food and shelter, and it became the fastest path to citizenship in Rome and outside of prisoners or war or criminals, slavery was not a fixed status, it was A temporary process. So it's a very different context than what we experience here in America. But still, slaves had no rights and legal authority and power. So Paul addresses these three groups of people specifically. Now this is a letter, and when this letter gets to Colossae, it's going to get read in the public gathering of the church. Church. And guess who's in the church? Wives sitting next to their husbands. It's gonna go awkward, children sitting next to their parents, and slaves sitting next to their masters, and they're about to hear this letter from the Apostle Paul at the same time. And first century, churches had probably more wives than slaves, because this was a movement that was attractive to the marginalized and

the disenfranchised, because this was about a God who left power and left glory and took out the form of a servant of a slave and died on the cross for them. So yes, the church had powerful people in it, but it was mostly attracted to the powerless. And as this letter is being read, wives, children and slaves would have been shocked by at least two things. From just the beginning, they would have been shocked that they were even listed in the letter that the apostle Paul chose to address them because everyone else forgot them. There was not any other letter that were written to them and talked about them, so they would have been like. We're seen, we're noticed, we're directly addressed. It actually was empowering and dignifying for Paul to address the powerless groups of people in first century, and two in each of these sections, notice who's listed first wives before husbands, children before parents, and slaves before masters,

Speaker 1 16:27

because Paul was honoring them in a way that never had been honored before. He was speaking directly to their worth and their dignity and their value, while instructing how they are to live within this faith context of a new spiritual family. So let's begin with Paul addressing wives and husbands. In verse 18, he says, Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands love your wives and don't be bitter toward them. I know I just used the S word submit,

Libin Abraham 17:03

and that's a word that can be triggering, because you've seen passages like this or other verses be used to weaponize and to demean women. But I want to give you some clarity on what the New Testament means by the word submission, or to submit. Here's two things. First of all, submission is a voluntary yielding in love, submission is never forced. It's not coerced. It's not threatened by it is a voluntary yielding in love. It is always a response to love. It is always a response to kindness. It is a I submit out of joy and gladness because I want to, because I've experienced sacrificial love towards me, so I choose voluntarily to submit. And second of all, submission is a spirit filled quality for all believers. It's not gender specific in Scripture. It is a spirit filled characteristic of every Christ follower in Ephesians, five Paul addresses what it means to be full of the Holy Spirit. And one of the attributes of a life filled by the Holy Spirit is this. In Ephesians, five verse 21 submit, submitting to what one another, in fear of Christ as Christians, yielding to one another, giving preference for one another, yielding their own interests and wants for the sake of the other. Mutual submission is a quality of a spirit filled life. Why do we do this in fear of Christ? We do it in honor of him, in view of him, because this is how Jesus lived, and this is what Jesus taught you. Remember Philippians, two consider the need of others above your own, adapting the same mind as that of Jesus, Christ, too, being in the form of God, gave everything up, emptied Himself, became obedient to the point of death on a cross. That's submission. Jesus lived a submitted life to the Father's Will for your good and for your joy.

Speaker 1 19:07

So we live submitted lives to one another, in love for Jesus and love for one another. It is a voluntary act of love yielding to one another, and it is a quality of a spirit filled life. Now go back to that verse. So Wives submit yourself to your husbands. In the culture of this day, every women were told to submit to any man, and here, Paul says, No more. You only need to submit to your husband. That was actually incredibly empowering. You didn't have to submit to every man. You only had to be submitted to your own husbands.

Libin Abraham 19:46

And Paul says, as is fitting in the Lord, that's important as is fitting in the Lord, especially in the context of a Christian wife and a non Christian husband, Paul says, Your first priority is to be submitted to Jesus. Jesus. So if you ever have to choose between submission to Jesus and submit to a spouse, you submit as is fitting to Christ. You choose him, his gospel, his way, his truth. That's the parameter for what submission looks like. And then Paul says something to the husbands that would have been so radical in first century. He says, Husbands love your wives and don't be bitter towards them. And the husband's thinking, and this church are thinking, I've been told all my life to use my life and to abuse my wife for my gain. This is different. You mean she has worth. She has value. She used to be loved. And the word for love here is agape love, not just surface level, not selfish love, but a full self, giving, sacrificial, unconditional love. And the husbands in first century are told something they've never heard before, to agape their wife, to put their well being ahead of yours, to sacrifice on their behalf, to cherish and nourish them.

Speaker 1 21:11

Paul gives more clarity on what loving your wife looks like when you're in union with Jesus. He says it in Ephesians, five verse 25 he says, Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. By the way, his love for the

church sent him to the cross. In the same way husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no one ever hates his own flesh, but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, since we are members of his one body. Wow. What the Scriptures do is it redefines the role of a husband, the leadership and responsibility of a husband, and it says your role is to serve. Your leadership is to sacrifice. Leadership is in dominance. It's not control. It's not because I'm the husband. You have to do what I don't know it is, what can I do to put down my preferences and my conveniences to serve you.

Libin Abraham 22:12

This is a radical new way of life, both then and now.

Speaker 1 22:18

It's a responsibility to serve first, to forgive, first to embody the self giving nature of Christ's love for His church. This was different than anything that this church in Colossae had heard. But this is what our union with Jesus does to our marriages. Second of all, now Paul addresses parents and kids.

Libin Abraham 22:39

Now Paul says in verse, 20, Children, obey your parents. I know parents, if you're sitting next to your kids, you want to kind of elbow them right now, but don't worry, they have a chance to elbow you back. Obey your parents in everything. For this pleases the Lord, and then he says, fathers do not exasperate your children so that they won't become discouraged again, dads and moms had especially dads had full control over their children. And the kind of parenting Paul is advocating is one that has guardrails and one that is incredibly gracious, because one without the other doesn't work. You need guardrails that are good, that protect your kids, that are around convictions of Scripture, who God is, what you want for them, and one that is incredibly gracious. So Paul says it is good for kids to obey parents, because your parents love you. They want what is best for you. They're looking out for you. So obey parents everything. Paul even says it pleases the Lord. I was thinking about that man. We've just heard about Jesus, who holds all things together, the one who is the creator of the universe, the one who is seated above the heavens, the one that every dominion and authority and power has been their knee to Jesus. And Paul says, but this Jesus is not just distant and transcendent somewhere out there. He is so near to you that he noticed even a small act of obedience, and he rejoices over just the little things we do in obedience to Him, that God sees even in the privacy of your home. When children obey their parents, trusting in them, trusting in God, it pleases the Lord.

Speaker 1 24:20

Our obedience doesn't carry the affection of God, but because we have the affection of God, it makes way for glad obedience. And then he says to fathers, specifically, fathers who remain unchecked and unaccountable for even their unjust actions towards their kids, don't exasperate your kids for it discourages them.

Libin Abraham 24:40

He's saying, don't use your legal rights to crush their dreams. Don't use your position in the home or community to rob them of their joy. Correction is good. Discipline is good. Obedience wanted from your children is good. But don't exasperate, don't embitter them. It because it is discouraging. Don't just point out all the flaws, all the ways they've missed it, but nourish their heart, cultivate their character, speak life, speak hope, speak joy into them. Remind them who they are and whose they are. Remind them who their Heavenly Father is. I'm learning this all over again because my son, Liam, is in flag football. Now, for the first time, there's so many things I want to correct, so many things, like he needs to learn this. He needs to know this. I've been thinking, Liam and Libby, don't exasperate your six year old boy, but he's not going to make him the NFL. He's Indian. He's not going to make he's fine. Just let him. He doesn't have the genes. Like he's going to be gonna be fine. Just let him enjoy. Let him make some mistakes, correct. But encourage, speak lie. Speak joy.

Speaker 1 25:50

Don't exasperate. But encourage speak life, knowingly or unknowingly, your children, dads and moms can be discouraged by either you being overly ambitious or consistently absent. Overly being ambitious or consistently being absent, whether you see it or not in them, it is discouraging.

Libin Abraham 26:14

So ambitious says, I live my life through you. You got to be this because that's what I really want.

Speaker 1 26:21

And you crush their creativity and imagination, or overly absent, or you may be physically there, but your mind isn't there, your heart's not there. In our home, there's a phrase my kids have grown to love a little too much. It's simply this, be where your feet are

Libin Abraham 26:41

so they see me at home, or say, See and we're on our phones. Or if I'm not fully present, they are quick to call me out there. Be Where Your Feet are. Be right here. Be locked in, be in this conversation. I want to encourage you, dads and moms, I know you're busy. You got a lot going on. You feel like you're carrying the weight of the world,

Speaker 1 27:03

but be where your feet are this week, a little bit more than last week. Be present. Be fully engaged, because otherwise, either overly being ambitious or consistently being absent, it's a cause for discouragement. Now, the third group of people that Paul writes to slaves and masters and again, put your first entry, indentured servanthood. Bond servant caps on. As you think about this passage,

Libin Abraham 27:30

Paul says to them, addressing slaves first, obey your human masters in everything, I want to just pause there. When Paul says, Obey your human masters, he's actually drawing a distinction that maybe slaves and their masters forgot to see that these are just earthly people. They're human, and there is a heavenly master above them. So he's actually saying to the slaves these servants, even if you're being mistreated by your earthly masters, human masters. You have a God who is just, who sees you. Have a heavenly master, and by the way, masters, you're just earthly, your life also will end one day you belong to this earth, but you have a heavenly master who sees what you do. So even that little phrase is actually empowering to slaves and warning to the masters and these slaves are invited to trust in the justice of heaven for their actions and for their obedience. So obey your human masters in everything don't work only while being watched as people pleasers, again, first century Roman culture and slavery, you could get promoted based on how good you worked. You could get your freedom quicker based on how good you worked. And they were maybe doing. Some of them were doing what we would like to do at work. We're only working when our boss is watching. We're working extra hard when it's time for promotions and Paul says, no, no, don't work as people pleasers only when you're being watched, but rather work wholeheartedly. That little phrase is work from the soul. Work with everything, work with passion, work with excellence. Serve genuinely, not because you're seeing or maybe celebrated, but work, fearing the Lord, and whatever you do, do it from the heart as something done for the Lord and not for people.

Speaker 1 29:32

This is the way to serve, even in less than ideal conditions. We look to Him. We see our earthly sacrifice and service as one that serves our heavenly King, and we do it because he sees, he recognizes and he is doing something in our earthly work, there's

Libin Abraham 29:50

three specific motivations that Paul gives to these slaves of why they are to keep serving Jesus, even in their earthly work and even through their. Servants and indentured servanthood. And I want to just say that maybe some of you are going through an event or relationship where it feels unjust, not talking about abuse, because we always encourage safety when it's abuse, but some of you may be called to stay in something that's hard. It could be a work relationship. It could be something with a friend or a neighbor or a family member, where you are feeling how unfair it is, and you're feeling the pain of that, but you've been called to stay. I think what Paul says next, these three motivations are applicable to where you are. Here's what Paul says in verse 24 next verse, knowing why do you serve the Lord wholeheartedly, even in less than ideal conditions, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord? He's saying again, God sees you. He recognizes the injustice, the pain, the agony and what God sees you, serving Him and loving people and serving genuinely, even if it's not noticed or celebrated, there is a reward from him, which is the inheritance that comes from the Lord. It's a reward greater than a paycheck, greater than human acknowledgement. It's a reward that cannot be taken from you. It is spiritual in nature. It is eternal in nature. Why?

Speaker 1 31:26

Because God sees and he is a just God who rewards, though the American slavery story and the season in multiple centuries was so different than first century, I have been over and over again inspired by slaves here in America who held on to their faith, looking forward to this reward,

Libin Abraham 31:50

they knew that ultimate freedom was not external, but internal. They recognized that through earthly poverty they were achieving eternal riches. So hymn writers were right, longing for that sweet chariot coming for to carry me home. They looked forward to that home beyond the Jordan where they could receive inheritance from the Lord. They were right, one of my favorite hymns the morning, when I rise, give me Jesus, and when I come to die, just give me Jesus. You can have all this world, but just give me who Jesus.

Speaker 1 32:37

Take all of this, but just give me. What were they doing? They were living this out. They were looking forward to a reward. It made their present struggles temporary.

Libin Abraham 32:50

It inspired their faith. It gave power to their endurance. They held on to this promise, knowing that God sees and he rewards. Second of all, Paul says, Okay, go back to last verse. He gives rewards, which is inheritance from the Lord and you serve the Lord Christ. The Lord Christ, that's a really rare phrase in the New Testament. Usually it's the Lord Jesus or Jesus Christ, but these are two amazing titles for Jesus, which both point to His sovereignty and His power and His Lordship. He is Lord. He is God of the universe. He is seated on the throne. He's not out of control. He is in control, and he's in control of your life. This would have been so comforting and encouraging these, for these slaves, to hear men that Jesus, I cling to. He is Lord, and He is the Christ. He is the long awaited savior who doesn't just save me eternally, but he saves me daily. He rescues me when I'm in need. He is my Redeemer. He sees me. There is a promise for me in Christ. He is so Lord Christ so they can endure the poverty, the injustice, the pain, the lack of privileges, because they knew that their Jesus was the ultimate Lord and the ultimate Christ. And it's true for you, amen, we can praise God for that he is

Speaker 1 34:13

the Lord the Christ. And the last encouragement to them was this, for the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done. And there is no favoritism, no partiality in God. Imagine this was a word both to the servant and the master. The wrongdoer, the one who is unjust, will be paid up pay back. Why? Because your heavenly Father, your heavenly master, he is just. He is righteous. There's no partiality in him. He sees. This is a word of comfort for the slave and a word of warning for the master, because they recognize, okay, one day I'm going to have to give an account for the way that I treat people.

Libin Abraham 34:59

I will have to give an. Answer for the injustices I've caused. A day of accountability is coming. So it would draw their attention to the fact that even earthly masters had a heavenly master over them, and they needed to be mindful of how they treated people, and to do it in a way that God has treated them in the next verse, it spills over to chapter four. Verse one, Paul speaks directly to the Masters, and he says, Masters deal with your slaves justly and fairly, since you know that you too have a master in heaven. So he's speaking to masters and saying, you don't just have a slave. You are a slave in the sense that you have a master in heaven. You are a servant of God. Your actions matter. How you treat people matter. I think this applies to if you're a manager or a boss, you have influence at your workplace, or you have leadership somewhere. God was said, Are you using your leadership, leveraging your influence, in view of your heavenly master, carrying out his will in your life, his goals, his desires in the sphere

Unknown Speaker 36:10

of influence that God has entrusted to you? What's

Libin Abraham 36:15

amazing about New Testament writings, especially around the social constructs of their day, so the gospel never comes out explicitly and overthrows systems like slavery or other things. But what it does do, it creates a whole new framework of how people are to relate to each other, motivated by what Jesus has done, empowered by the Holy Spirit, people begin to

change how they viewed one another. What Paul's doing is he's laying the seeds for revolution. He's laying the groundwork for the abolition of slavery in Rome, which did happen precisely because of the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles. But the early apostles knew the most effective way to bring change is to preach the gospel and change the consciousness of the human heart, to change how people saw each other and thought about each other. So they didn't first and foremost, go and turn down systems or to change laws. They prayed and they preached to change the human heart, and when the human heart was changed, guess what happened? As a by result, as a by product, laws changed and systems were overthrown, because, relationally, people were now operating in a new framework. They had a different conscious. Their SEER conscious was revived by the gospel of Jesus, and it changed the world. When commentator write it like this, wrote it like this, the radical brotherhood and equality explicit in the gospel would be a death nail. A death nail to slavery. Paul's words are seeds for revelation over the for a revolution that would come into the Roman Empire. And it did come as an

Unknown Speaker 38:02

example. Of that

Libin Abraham 38:04

when Paul comes to the end of Colossians, as he's giving his greetings, he mentions two men by name that are going to take this letter from Paul, who is likely in a prison in Rome, and deliver it in Colossae. The first name is a guy named Tychicus who is going to deliver this letter. But Tychicus has a friend, a companion, coming with him to deliver this letter to Colossae. And notice what Paul says as he closes up this letter in Colossians 49 he meaning Tychicus is coming with say, with me. Onesimus. Onesimus, you're thinking, Onesimus, isn't he? In Philemon, what's he doing in Colossians, Tychicus is coming with Onesimus, a faithful and dearly loved brother who is one of you. And they will tell you about everything here, Paul, what's happening here. Here's what's happening. Onesimus is a runaway slave who belonged to a man by the name of Philemon. And you know where Philemon lived, Colossae. Philemon is one of the masters Paul is addressing here. Onesimus runs away from Philemon finds Paul in Rome. Paul leads him to Jesus, and Paul says, Onesimus, you got to go back home to Philemon and make things right. But before you go, let me write two letters. I'm going to write a letter for Philemon, and in this letter, I'm going to tell him about what's happened, and in this letter, I'm going to tell Philemon that he used to receive you not as a slave, but as a brother, but not just as a brother. Paul says, receive him as he were, me an apostle of Christ. Onesimus gets a double upgrade. He goes from slave to being a brother and from being a brother to being treated like an apostle. Oh, so he writes, Philemon, I can just see Onesimus coming home to Colossae. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon. Can you read it before you make a judgment on me? And then Paul says to Onesimus, Hey, before you go, I'm going to

Unknown Speaker 40:16

also write a letter to the entire church of Colossae,

Libin Abraham 40:20

and I'm going to lay down some groundwork and some principles about how they are to receive you, not to receive you as a slave or even a former slave, but to receive you as a brother who

Speaker 1 40:33

is one of them sonssimus gives this letter to Philemon that Paul wrote called Philemon, and he gives and he reads, perhaps, or he gives this letter to somebody who reads the entire letter of Colossians. This is how the power dynamics and the struggle and the structures are turned on its head because of their union with Jesus.

Unknown Speaker 41:01

What's happening is the end of the tug of war. It's the end of the strife. It's the end of this score.

Speaker 1 41:11

Your wives and husbands are brought back into union because of agape love and the call to submit and yield. Parents and children are reconciled because of the gospel, and slaves and masters find a new identity in Christ that brings them together. No more slave, no more free, no more barbarian, no more Scythian, no more Jew, no more Greek, no more circumcised, uncircumcised, no more male and no more female. Why? Because Christ is all and he is in awe. Would you bow your heads with me? I wonder if there's a relationship in your life that has not yet been profoundly impacted by the gospel, by your union with Jesus. I wonder if you find yourself in a power struggle where you either struggle to love agape love, or you

struggle to submit,

Libin Abraham 42:14
either you struggle to obey

Unknown Speaker 42:17
or you struggle to encourage, you

Libin Abraham 42:20
struggle to serve genuinely and wholeheartedly,

Speaker 1 42:24
or you struggle to see your life as under your heavenly Master. How does your union with Jesus change the stuff at home, the stuff at your workplace, the stuff in your day to day life, Paul ends Colossians by simply saying this as his last word, he says to them, Grace, be with you. So today, as we close this letter, this is my prayer, Grace, be with you to every single person in this room, student, adult, husband, wife, Grace, be with you.

Libin Abraham 43:01
So, Father, we need the grace of God to live this kind of community out, to live this gospel empowered life, a cross shaped life. We need the grace of God that enables us when we fall short. Because in our flesh God, we want to Lord Our influence over people. We want to remain autonomous and unaccountable. But today, May grace abound in your church. May grace abound in homes, in workplaces, in families, in dinner tables. May the grace of Jesus abound empowering us, strengthening us to lay down the rope, things that are pulling people apart and differentiating us and dominating us today, Jesus recenters us to our shared identity as the people of God purchased by the blood of Jesus, in union with Him, in union with one another,

Speaker 1 44:00
because Christ is all and he is in all. So continue to foster this unity, making us one, making us bold and courageous. For the gospel of Jesus, may the God of the universe be best found in the homes and in the relationships of our life. In Jesus name we pray. The church said aloud, amen, amen, amen. Can we give God a thanks for this amazing letter preserved for us. It's been a joy to lead this teaching over the last six weeks. Amen.