

The Gospel Brings Changes

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Oakbrook Community Church (PCA)

Philemon 1-25

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Premise: When God saves a person He changes them with the Gospel

Philemon is a book that puts flesh on the reality of Gospel change that should take place in the lives of believers. 2 Cor 5:17-20

1. Salvation changes our character

• Onesimus – a changed man

Formerly useless, now returning in Christ as useful - v11

As unto the Lord Col 3:22; Don't grumble but whatever... Phil 4:8

Your sin nature is powerless (Rom 6:6) walk in new obedience (Rom 6:4)

• Paul – a changed man

Paul was mean, violent, murderous Act 8:1,3; 9:1; 1 Tim 1:13

But in letter to Philemon we find a gentle, gracious and humble servant

Anger replaced by kindness, compassion & forgiveness: Eph 4:31-32

Sins of flesh replaced by fruit of Spirit: Gal 5:19-23

2. Salvation changes our relationships w/others

• The Gospel is about Reconciliation

We can have peace with God through Jesus Christ – Rom 5:1

God expects our horizontal relationships to also be reconciled!

So much so that He tells us to LEAVE worship & be reconciled: Mt 5:23-24

Not always possible - Rom 12:18, but we do have a responsibility to try!

The Gospel changed relationship between Onesimus & Philemon from bondservant to beloved brother! Phm 16

Believers now relate as FAMILY members!

• In Christ we are now ambassadors 2 Cor 5: 18-20

To those OUTSIDE the church we are now ambassadors for the Gospel!

As church family we have a job to be ambassadors for Christ 2 Cor 5:18-20

Our strong character and family relationships improve our witness

Let us remember that our job is to glorify our Master who redeemed us!

• We are all the Lord's Onesimi

We rebelled like Onesimi & were unfaithful workers 11

We said 'God is not my master' and sought to run away

We were under penalty of sin for our treason Rm 6:23

We were directed by God to truth of the Gospel

We were condemned with no hope of mercy

Jesus says to Father: *receive him as you would receive me 17*

Jesus: *if he has wronged you at all or owes you anything charge that to my account 18* – The Amazing Gospel Exchange!

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Apply and Think:

- Has your relationship with Christ affected your attitude towards those who are in authority in your life? How so? What would those in authority over you say?
- What were you before you became a believer? What is different now? Do others see this in you? What does that matter?
- We all have besetting sins, consider the put off/put ons for:
Angry person : do others see changes in you Eph 4:31-32
Thieving person : Eph 4:28
What other besetting sins can you think of?
- Can you explain the Put Off, Put On dynamic of Scripture? Do you actively practice it? What areas of life do you need to focus on? (Ask those closest to you if you are unsure)
- The Gospel is about reconciliation – how would you explain that to an unbeliever in terms of what Christ has done? Rom 5:1
- Why does God expect our horizontal relationships to all be reconciled? Is that always possible?
- Is it possible to be brothers in Christ and have an "in-Christ" family relationship? Explain how an officer and non-commissioned officer might make this work.
- How does having strong church family relationships help us in our witness or being an ambassador for the Gospel? Why is this important?
- Think of all the ways that you are similar to Onesimi – discuss.
- Pastor told of two brothers who had ST branded on their forehead for stealing sheep. One left the city in shame, the other set out to win back the respect of others. How does this relate to the hope of the Gospel? How does it affect how you will live your life? Do you run in shame or seek to change the old designation of sinner?