

Gospel Shaped Work

Session Five: *The Gospel and Your Work*

Watch Part One of Video

Philemon 10-17

I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother – especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

1. How does Paul refer to the slave Onesimus? What does Paul think of him?
2. What appeal does Paul make to Philemon?
3. Why might Philemon find it difficult to accept Onesimus “as a beloved brother”?

Watch Part Two of Video

1. What stories does our culture tell us about being employed, and being an employer?
2. How does the gospel message challenge those stories, both for employer and employee?

3. Which story do you tell yourself most often during a working week? What effect does this have on you?

Watch Part Three of Video

1. What do you think is the difference between someone who calls themselves “a Christian plumber” and someone who would describe themselves as “a plumber who is also a Christian”?

2. Imagine holding up a sign like the ones at the start of our first video today. It says: “I am a _____” (fill in your own daily occupation). Now put the word “Christian” in front of your occupation. Is this how you usually see yourself? What difference would it / does it make to how you view your daily occupation?

3. How do the people you work with see you? As a _____ who also happens to be a Christian? Or do they see you as a Christian _____? And if it’s the first, what changes might you make so that they come to see you as the second instead?