

Gospel Community Distinctive:
Reconciliation (Part 2), Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation
Philemon 8-25

The supernatural bond of a gospel community results in shared responsibilities to work toward reconciliation with and for one another.

- Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)
 - To Appeal (vs 8-11)

 - To Send (vs 12-14)

 - To Receive (vs 15-17)

 - To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)

 - To Consider Others

 - To Obey

 - To Depend

Reflection:

Is the sharing of/participation in your faith being made effective by the way you pursue reconciliation?

Think of an unreconciled relationship you have... how might the Lord use you to “Refresh the hearts of the saints” if you were to radically pursue reconciliation with that person the way the Lord pursued you?

Consider Paul... How does his role in the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus challenge us?

Gospel Community Distinctive:

Reconciliation (Part 2)

Philemon 8-25

Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation

Gospel Community Distinctive:

- A visible characteristic that is a reflection of the supernatural realities brought about by the gospel
- Something that makes a gospel community distinct from a natural community
- Notably distinct (different) from ordinary community

Reconciliation:

- The restoration of fellowship between two parties, which is marked by the exemption of hostility and the existence of harmony
- The end of the estrangement between God and humanity that was caused by original sin
- The “substance” of the gospel
- An inevitable by-product of gospel community

- Background of Philemon

- To Philemon, but not private

- To the church at Colossae, but also to you

- A Plea for reconciliation

Reasons for reconciliation:

- The fundamental reasons why we should be concerned about reconciliation with each other
- The truths, values, and realities that establish a framework for reconciliation as a distinct function of gospel community
- The convictions that would lead us to pursue reconciliation with one another, even at great cost

Gospel Community Distinctive: *Reconciliation*

The Reasons for Reconciliation (vs 1-7)

- Because of our union with Christ & with each other (vs 1-2)
- Because of the Grace & Peace we've received from God (vs 3)
- For the effective fellowship (sharing) of our faith (vs 4-6)
- For the encouragement of the saints (vs 7)

To be *bound to Christ* is to be *bound to the gospel message*...

If you belong to Christ, then the
gospel message belongs to you!

The gospel message is inherently a message of *reconciliation*

Active participation in our faith
is displayed through
reconciliation with each other

Philemon (NASB)

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper, 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. 15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon (NASB)

17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. **18** But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account; **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, **24** as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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Reconciliation (Part 2)

Philemon 8-25

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Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
- To Send (vs 12-14)
- To Receive (vs 15-17)
- To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)
- To Consider Others (vs 20)
- To Obey (vs 21)
- To Depend (vs 22-25)

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2 Cor 5:17-19

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled** us to Himself through Christ **and gave us the ministry of reconciliation**, 19 namely, that God was in Christ **reconciling** the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

*As ambassadors of Christ
and ministers of reconciliation,
appealing for reconciliation is part of who we are.*

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Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)

- Because you are bound to Christ and to his gospel message
- Because you are bound to each other in invisible but unbreakable ways
- Because of the grace and peace you have received from God
- Because active & effective faith is made visible by reconciliation
- Because I have already seen the Lord at work in you to encourage the saints

8 *Therefore*, though I have enough confidence
in Christ to order you to do what is proper

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in
Christ to order you to do *what is proper*

... A willingness to reconcile is the only
option that is consistent with your faith

Our belonging to Christ and to each other in a gospel community should create a confident expectation that reconciliation can and should take place...

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10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

“Because of everything I’ve mentioned previously, I have enough confidence in Christ to exhort you to be reconciled to Onesimus, ***even more so***, I exhort you ***for love’s sake*** to be reconciled to him.”

1 John 4:10-11; 19-21

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another...

19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

We are to *pursue reconciliation*
out of the overflow of *love*
that *we have received from God*
when He reconciled us to Himself.

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10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

Onesimus' conversion holds out the hope that reconciliation is possible, and it strengthens the appeal for Philemon to forgive him and regard him as a brother who is useful in Christ.

Gospel Community Distinctive: *Reconciliation*

Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
 - Verbally
 - In Confidence
 - For the sake of love

Gospel Community Distinctive: *Reconciliation*

Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
- **To Send (vs 12-14)**

12 I have **sent** him back to you in person, that is, **sending** my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.

Gospel Community Distinctive: *Reconciliation*

Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
- To Send (vs 12-14)
 - When it's **Hard**
 - When it's **Costly**
 - When We're **Vulnerable**

Gospel Community Distinctive: *Reconciliation*

Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
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- **To Receive (vs 15-17)**

15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would **have him back** forever, 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 If then you regard me a partner, **accept him** as you would me

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Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
- To Send (vs 12-14)
- **To Receive (vs 15-17)**
 - Forever (unconditionally)
 - As a Brother in the Lord (not a slave)
 - As you would receive Paul

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- **To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)**

18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, **charge that to my account**; 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that **you owe** to me even **your own self** as well).

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Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-25)

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- To Send (vs 12-14)
- To Receive (vs 15-17)
- To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)
 - By forgetting theirs
 - By remembering ours

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- To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)
- **To Consider Others (vs 20)**

20 Yes, brother, **let me benefit from you** in the Lord;
refresh my heart in Christ.

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Our Responsibilities in Reconciliation (vs 8-28)

- To Appeal (vs 8-11)
- To Send (vs 12-14)
- To Receive (vs 15-17)
- To Cancel the Debt (vs 18-19)
- **To Consider Others (vs 20)**
 - Benefit (“use”) in the Lord for each other
 - Refreshment for each other’s hearts

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- **To Obey (vs 21)**

21 Having confidence in **your obedience**, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.

“Philemon, because I have seen the Lord at work in you, producing obedience and a submissive response to the call of the gospel, I am convinced that the Lord is able to do even more than I ask through you”

“I have confidence in the God who is at work in you to bring about obedience”.

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- **To Obey (vs 21)**
 - An expected distinctive within a gospel community
 - A confidence rooted in God who is already at work.

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- **To Depend (vs 22-25)**
 - On each other
 - On His Grace

Reflection Questions

- Is the sharing of/participation in your faith being made effective by the way you pursue reconciliation?
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How might the Lord use you to “Refresh the hearts of the saints” if you were to radically pursue reconciliation with that person the way the Lord pursued you?
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