

Reconciling Relationships (part one): The Reasons for Reconciliation

Philemon 1-7

- Understanding reconciliation is understanding how to repair relationships when we hurt one another.
- Pursuing reconciliation is how we effectively display the gospel when relationships are broken.

Philemon (NASB 1995)

**1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, 2 and to Apphia our sister,
and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: 3 Grace to
you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, 5 because I hear
of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all
the saints: 6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective**

Philemon (NASB 1995)

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

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

Main Idea

The truth of the gospel should motivate us to be reconciled with one another, even if it comes at a great personal cost.

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)

¹ Paul, **a prisoner of Christ Jesus**, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, ² and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

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*

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our **beloved brother** and fellow worker, ² and to Apphia our **sister**, and to Archippus our **fellow soldier**, and to the church in your house:

You are bound together in a life-changing way and unified around the gospel for which you are willing to fight and die...

Now make that bond and unity visible by being reconciled to your brother!

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker, ² and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, **and to the church in your house:**

“To the called out ones who assemble together and visibly represent the household of God, which is the Church of the living God”.

*Paul takes an ***unreconciled relationship*** between two Christians and makes it a matter of public ***concern for the entire Church***

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)

³ **Grace** to you **and peace from God** our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we measure the debt we have had forgiven, our impulse ought to be one of mercy, with a desire to make that same forgiveness known.

Reconciliation between those within the church serves as a visible witness to the reality of the covenantal relationship that we share.

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)

³ **Grace** to you **and peace from God** our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reminding Philemon of the peace, that is, the reconciliation that came from God, was also a reminder that this peace was a result of grace...

Philemon was declared not-guilty and saved from the wrath of God not because of his doing, but because Jesus endured that wrath for him.

How could one in such a position refuse reconciliation with another?

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)
3. For the effective fellowship of our faith (vs 4-6)

⁴ **I thank** my **God** always, making mention of you in my prayers, ⁵ **because** I hear **of your love and** of the **faith** which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; ⁶ and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

I thank God for you...

because you're the real deal, brother. I'm sure of that because I see your faith in Christ and your love for Him and His church.

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)
3. For the effective fellowship of our faith (vs 4-6)

⁶ and **I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective** through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

“Philemon, I am praying that you would put your faith into action...”

Forgiving and reconciling with a fellow believer is an expected result of our participation in the faith.

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)
3. For the effective fellowship of our faith (vs 4-6)

⁶ and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective **through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.**

Reach into the vast reservoir of all you have in Christ, consider it, acknowledge it, and with God's help, demonstrate it to your brother.

To withhold forgiveness or delay reconciliation would be an ineffective participation in the faith... a faith that is not being shared in proportion to the acknowledgment of every good thing we have in Christ.

The Reasons for Reconciliation

1. Because of our union with Christ and with each other (vs 1-2)
2. Because of the grace and peace we've received from God (vs 3)
3. For the effective fellowship of our faith (vs 4-6)
4. For the encouragement of the saints (vs 7)

⁷ For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

“Brother, the Lord has used you to refresh the hearts of this church, and I know he’ll do the same as you effectively display every good thing you have in Christ by forgiving and being reconciled to Onesimus.”

Reflection Questions

- Why is reconciliation difficult?
- 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?

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