

THE COMPASSIONATE AXE

PHILEMON 8-16

Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother... To Philemon our beloved fellow worker² and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and 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 when I remember you in my prayers,⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.⁷ For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

⁸ Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required,⁹ yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—¹⁰ I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.¹¹ (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.¹³ 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,¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever,¹⁶ 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.

1. Paul used his _____ instead of his _____ in shepherding Philemon.
2. The relationship of fellow brothers (or sisters) in the Gospel is stronger than any _____, _____ or _____ differences they may have.
3. When the Gospel transforms the _____, it _____.

“But mark this word, – the true reforming of the drunkard lies in giving him a new heart; the true reclaiming of the harlot is to be found in a renewed nature.... I see certain of my brethren fiddling away at the branches of the tree of vice with their wooden saws, but, as for the gospel, it lays the axe at the roots of the whole forest of evil, and if it be fairly received into the heart it fells all the bad trees at once, and instead of them there spring up the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together, to beautify the house of our Master’s glory.” – C.H. Spurgeon

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

JOHN 13:35

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1. Paul used his personal influence instead of his power of position in shepherding Philemon.
2. The relationship of fellow brothers (or sisters) in the Gospel is stronger than any racial, political or socio-economic differences they may have.
3. When the Gospel transforms the heart of one, it multiplies.

“But mark this word, – the true reforming of the drunkard lies in giving him a new heart; the true reclaiming of the harlot is to be found in a renewed nature.... I see certain of my brethren fiddling away at the branches of the tree of vice with their wooden saws, but, as for the gospel, it lays the axe at the roots of the whole forest of evil, and if it be fairly received into the heart it fells all the bad trees at once, and instead of them there spring up the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box tree together, to beautify the house of our Master’s glory.” – C.H. Spurgeon

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