

A New Family
August 30, 2009
Philemon 1-16
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Synopsis:

We begin our fall series in two weeks, *A Walk Through the Bible*. Until then we are going to read Paul's letter to Philemon; so short that it doesn't even have chapters!

The letter is about the gospel transforming social relationships. Paul sends a runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his former owner, Philemon, to become no longer a slave but a beloved brother in the Messiah family. This is stunning, given the social conventions of the day.

Because God the Father has reconciled the world to himself in Jesus the Son, we now belong to the reconciled Messiah family. This new family affects our thinking and behavior. This week we'll look at our thinking; next week behavior.

I.

A Brand New Ma and Pa

Phil 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father

Spent vacation in Colorado with Barb's family: Pictures

You and I live in social relationships: Shel Silverstein "Clarence"

Clarence Lee from Tennessee
Loved the commercials he saw on TV.
He watched with wide believing eyes
And bought everything they advertised-
Cream to make his skin feel better,
Spray to make his hair look wetter,
Bleach to make his white things whiter,
Stylish jeans that fit much tighter.
Toothpaste for his cavities,
Powder for his doggies fleas,
Purple mouthwash for his breath,
Deodorant to stop his sweat.
He bought each cereal they presented,
Bought each game they invented.
Then one day he looked and saw
"A brand-new Maw, and better Paw!
New improved in every way-
Hurry order yours today!"
So, of course, our little Clarence
Sent off for two brand-new parents.
The new ones came in the morning mail,

His old ones he sold at garage sale.
And now they're all doing fine:
His new folks treat him nice and kind,
His old ones work in an old coal mine.
So if your Maw and Paw are mean
And make you eat your lima beans
And make you wash and make you wait
And never let you stay up late
And scream and scold and preach and pout,
That simply means they're wearing out.
So send off for two brand-new parents
And you'll be as happy as little Clarence

Some of us wish we could exchange our family!
Some of us wish we could exchange our social relations!

*Paul is writing to change social relations in Colossae
*Let's pay attention

II.

Social Relations in Colossae

Phil 1-2 Philemon our dear friend . . . and to the church in your house

Letter to Philemon:

- short
- to one person
- in Colossae (same names as Col 4, names Onesimus)
- from prison (Ephesus, Caesarea Maritima, Rome?)
- situation:
 - Philemon, a former slave owner: ANE slavery
 - absolute subjection
 - foreigners
 - gave names Onesimus = Useful
 - could buy freedom
 - Aristotle = slaves less than human

Onesimus, a runaway slave
Paul receives Onesimus in prison
Paul wants to send Onesimus back

*But send back in changed social relations:
beloved brother vs. slave (READ 16)

*STUNNING!

Philemon and Slavery:

- Roman world had slavery
- Roman world not democratic (Plato/Aristotle)
- Paul used by abolitionists and slave owners in Civil War
 - Sends Onesimus back = slave owner
 - Changes status = abolitionist

III.

Social Relations in Jesus the Messiah

Phil 16 No longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother

What God has done in Jesus the Messiah (Basis in Col)

- Letters sent together (Col 4:7-9) with Onesimus
READ 3:1-4
- *God has begun the renewal of the world in Jesus

Has changed our status (Basis in Col)

- READ 3:11
- *God has placed us in the renewed family

Look at the new family words in Phil

- brother Timothy 1
- dear Philemon (beloved in Greek) 1
- co-worker Philemon 1
- sister Apphia 2
- fellow soldier Archippus 2
- God Father 3
- love for saints (new status) 4
- sharing of faith in family 6
- love, hearts = feelings 3x, saints refreshed 7
- my brother (Philemon) 7
- my child (Onesimus) 10
- father I have become 10
- *no longer as slave, a beloved brother 16 = 1 (Phil)

*What God has done in Jesus Christ has changed our social relations: A brand new Ma and Pa

- Your primary family is not your family of origin!
- *Quit blaming your family of origin; you have a new origin

- Your family of origin is the Messiah Jesus family
- *Here's what it looks like: Col 3:11

Glimpses of this in life:

- my family of origin = broken
 - e.g My Dad named me = "Not Good Enough"
- Barb's family in pictures: A better family
 - family geography at Evergreen
 - a place to be and love
 - I arrive, take of watch, relax and live

Church = reconciled Jesus family (meets in your house Phil 2)

- *Church = house of God now meets in your house!

- If this is true, what should it look like?
- What should our behavior be?
- How does Jesus family affect our social relations?

*Need to change our thinking

Say to yourself: NOT

Useful

Not Good Enough

Say to yourself:

"I am a beloved member of the Jesus family!"

Next week: How we behave in the Jesus family