

A REFLECTION OF THE GOSPEL

I. A Tale of Two Brothers and The Choice of Unforgiveness (Philemon 15-16; Lk 15:25-30)

A. Unforgiveness Leaves Us Easily Offended

"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound. 'The older brother became angry and refused to go in."

-Luke 15:25-28

B. Unforgiveness Leaves us Foolishly Resentful

"So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders."

-Luke 15:28-29

C. Unforgiveness Leaves us Often Entitled

"Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends."

-Luke 15:29

D. Unforgiveness Leaves us Unnecessarily Alone

"But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

-Luke 15:30

UNFORGIVENESS LEAVES US OFFENDED, RESENTFUL, ENTITLED, AND ALONE;
BUT JESUS SENDS US INTO A COMMUNITY OF FORGIVENESS
IN A REFLECTION OF THE GOSPEL AT WORK IN OUR LIVES

II. Paul's Demonstration of the Gospel (Philemon 17-19)

17 *So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18** If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19** I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.*

A. "Welcome" him as if you're welcoming me

1. *"So if you consider me a partner"*

-a co-sharer in fellowship and joint-participant in the faith

2. *"Welcome him as you would welcome me"*

-to receive and accept.

-literally to "take hold of with initiative"

- a. Fellow believers receive one another in the same manner in which we receive Christ
 - with the awareness of our own need for Jesus
 - in humility and repentance
 - with a choice of faith to trust
 - in a response to God's initiative of Grace
- b. Fellow believers accept one another with the same mind and attitude of Christ
Romans 15:5-7
- c. Fellow believers accept one another in the same manner God accepts us in Christ
 - 1. life "in Christ" means that His righteousness is now ours. We are clothed in His righteousness
 - 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

B. "If he has done you wrong, charge it me"

- to put on one's account, to *IMPUTE*
- our sin is "imputed" on Christ in the cross
- Christ's righteousness is "imputed" on us in resurrection power.

III. A First Step into Community as a Reflection of the Gospel

- A. Choose the Way of Forgiveness and Repentance rather than Offense
Clarify: Is this actually an offense that has been committed against *me*, or am I just choosing to be offended in this circumstance?
- B. Rest in the Confidence Found in Grace rather than Resent
Ask: How does my new creation identity received by grace through faith uniquely equip me to extend the same extravagant grace?
- C. Pray in Humble Recognition of Total Dependence on God rather than Entitlement
Remember: It doesn't matter how right I am if I don't embody the fruit of the Spirit.
- D. Invest in the Partnership of Faith rather than Surviving Alone
Determine: Community in Christ is the final apologetic of our faith.

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." -John 13:35

COMMUNITY IN CHRIST
IS A PARTNERSHIP OF THE FAITH
MARKED BY REDEMPTIVE RELATIONSHIPS
EMPOWERED BY THE FORGIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL