

IN THE WAKE OF THE GOSPEL'S POWER

Philemon 1-3

INTRODUCTION

- A. Grandfather in Springfield, MO after tornado.
 - 1. From the front of the house he could point the path the tornado took.
 - 2. He would take us to the back yard where you could see the destruction in its wake.
- B. Tornadoes are not the only thing leaving clear paths.
 - 1. Jet aircraft as they fly across the sky.
 - 2. Sea vessels leave churning water.
 - 3. Anything of any size and power leaves a “telltale” sign.
- C. The same with the gospel.
 - 1. When the gospel touches the heart –telltale signs can be seen.
 - 2. In the parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:3-9), the heart touched by the gospel will bring forth fruit, some 30, 60 and 100-fold.
 - 3. Notice some other signs.

I. THE EVIDENCE OF THE GOSPEL'S WAKE.

- A. An Impact on Relationships.
 - 1. Paul, an apostle.
 - a. A Jew with an arrogance towards Gentiles and women.
 - b. It is reported in his prayers he thanked God for not making him a Gentile, slave or woman.
 - 2. Timothy, Paul's son in the faith.
 - 3. Philemon, a well to do Gentile businessman.
 - a. Trained by social prejudices.
 - b. Showed contempt for the Jew and those outside his social bracket.
 - c. A slave owner.
 - 4. Apphia, most think she was Philemon's wife.
 - a. Enjoyed high status and wealth.
 - b. Perhaps making her somewhat smug and arrogant.
 - 5. Onesimus, a slave.
 - a. Deserted Philemon – a runaway.
 - b. Perhaps even taking some of Philemon's valuables as he left.
 - 6. An impossible mix: no conceivable way to be “one.”
 - a. Paul – a prisoner, from a proud arrogance of the Jewish race, Eph. 3:1; 4:1.
 - b. Philemon – a fellow-worker, united with Paul in a common service, Col. 4:11.
 - c. Apphia, Onesimus, and Timothy – brothers and sister, reborn into the family of God.
 - d. A slave had become a brother and a Jew was giving thanks for a Gentile.
 - i. Ps. 133:1, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”*
- B. An Impact on Vocation.
 - 1. Fellow workers.
 - 2. It united various people in a common labor, Col. 4:2-6.
 - 3. Desire to achieve a mutual goal as fellow workers with God, Eph. 2:10.
- C. An Impact on Temperament.
 - 1. “Fellow soldiers” and “beloved.”
 - 2. “Soldier” describes temperament toward the world.

- a. Soldiering was about enduring conflicts, 2 Tim. 2:3-4.
 - i. One of Paul's favorite metaphors.
 - b. An aggressiveness in attitudes, 2 Tim. 1:7; 2 Cor. 10:3-5.
 - 3. "Beloved" toward the church.
 - a. Acceptance and tolerating attitude.
 - b. The true mark of a Christian, Jn. 13:34-35.
- D. An Impact on Self.
 - 1. A dramatic change in own self, Eph. 4:22-24.
 - 2. Filled with grace and peace.
 - a. An inner comfort and contentment, available nowhere else.
 - 3. God's grace provides us with a blessed state of reconciliation and fellowship with God, our Heavenly Father.
 - 4. God's peace is an inner harmony in the midst of great conflict, a tranquility of mind, Rom. 5:1.
- E. An Impact on Our Associations.
 - 1. The church becomes the sphere of association.
 - 2. It is the center of our lives – NOT a building, but a family.
 - 3. The family of God: assembling, worshiping and working together, Acts 2.
 - 4. Includes all who are in Christ Jesus.
 - 5. It is the eternal design of the gospel – accomplished only by obedience to God's commands, Eph. 1:3-10.

II. EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE.

- A. Is the Appropriate Change Evident?
 - 1. Have you responded to the gospel as you should? Rom. 6:16-19
 - 2. The relationships you share will be different.
 - a. Paul became a prisoner – indicates cost of following Christ.
 - b. Fellow workers and fellow soldiers.
 - c. Actively laboring for the cause of Christ?
 - d. Aggressively fighting to endure and conquer sin?
 - 3. The gospel brings appropriate changes in your life, and now you are sharing a common life, origin, obligation with fellow Christians.
 - 4. Have you responded to the gospel's power? Eph. 1:13
- B. Appropriate impact of my life in the world.
 - 1. I should have an impact on others, 1 Pet. 2:12.
 - 2. No impact in my life – no impact on others, Titus 1:16.
- C. Understanding of the gospel power to change my life, Romans 1:16-17.

CLOSING

- A. The gospel power leaves a wake.
- B. Everywhere you go, people are impacted.
- C. We live in a world deceived by Satan –
 - 1. A result that is eternal.
 - 2. The lost are saved.
 - 3. Enemies become brothers.
- D. God's desire today, Rev. 3:20, *"I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."*