A Brother Beloved

Intro: As a basis for our lesson turn to Phm. 16 “Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?” Onesimus, a fugitive slave of Philemon and convert of Paul, was the apostle’s companion and helper in the Gospel. Paul thought of him not as a slave, but as a brother in the Lord Jesus. In the lesson before us we shall think of Onesimus as any fellow-member of the church, as a representative brother: Because he was “brother beloved”

I. WE HAVE THE SAME FATHER.
A. The brotherhood of man implies kinship of the human family.
   1. Acts 17:26-29 “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”
   a. There is a universal kinship of the human family.
   b. We all come from a common Father.
   2. Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
   3. Rom. 8:14-15 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”
B. We cannot think of a brother in Christ apart from God, the Father.
   1. We resemble our Father.
      a. Eph. 4:24 “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”
      b. Heb. 12:10 “For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”
      c. 2 Pet. 1:4 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
   2. We resemble each other—in moral and spiritual qualities.

II. WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY.
A. This family is the church, the household of God.
   1. 1 Tim. 3:15 “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou outhest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
   2. 1 Pet. 2:5 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”
B. This relationship involves certain privileges and responsibilities.
   1. We eat at the same table.
      a. Luke 22:29-30 “And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”
      b. We commune with the Father, and with each other.
2. We wear the same name.
   a. Isa. 62:2 “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.”
   b. Acts 11:26 “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”
   c. 1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

3. We are recipients of the Father’s loving care.
   a. 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”
   b. 1 Pet 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
   c. Both physically and spiritually
      (1) Mat. 6:25 “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”
      (2) Eph. 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
   d. Phi. 4:19 “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

4. We are under solemn obligation to uphold the Father’s name and the Father’s family by living in harmony with His will.

III. We Have A Common Foe.

A. We are not to fight and devour each other.
   1. Gal. 5:15 “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”
   2. Rom. 2:8 “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,”
   3. We are to be fellow-soldiers fighting the common foe. Our foe is sin and Satan.

B. Our Enemy.
   1. The world
      a. Jam. 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
      b. 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
      c. Thus, we are to:
         (1) Not be conformed to it, Rom. 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”
         (2) Keep unspotted from it, Jam. 1:27 “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
   2. Flesh
      a. Rom. 8:5 “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”
b. Gal. 5:19-21 “19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

3. The Devil
a. Gen. 3:1-2 “1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the L ORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:”

b. 1 Pet. 5:8 “8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

C. Eph. 6:10-18 “10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

IV. WE LOVE HIM.

A. This love is mutual.
1. John 13:34-35 “34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

2. 1 Pet. 1:22 “22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

3. 1 John 4:11, 20-21 “11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.... 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

4. We love Onesimus and Onesimus loves us.

B. As a result:
1. We are to be compassionate, 1 John 3:17 “17 But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

2. We suffer together and are happy when one is honored 1 Cor. 12:26 “26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

3. We restore him when he falls, Gal. 6:1 “1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

4. We learn to bear one another’s burdens, Gal. 6:2 “2 Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

5. We forgive one another, Eph. 4:32 “32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”
V. **WE SHARE THE SAME BLESSED HOPE.**

A. **We are heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ.**

1. Rom. 8:17 “17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

2. Gal. 4:7 “7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

3. Thus, we have an inheritance.

   a. Acts 26:18 “18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

   b. Eph. 1:11 “11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

B. **All that the Father possesses shall be ours to share.**

1. 1 Cor. 3:21-23 “21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”

2. John 14:1-3 “1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

3. 1 Pet. 1:3-5 “3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Conclusion: Onesimus let us work together, walk together, talk together, rejoice together, fight together, pray together, and at last go home together.