

Look Book Took
September 8, 2019
Year C, Proper 18
It's a Love/Hate Relationship

Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Look:

When have you experienced a relationship that dissolved? Is there anyone you can or will not talk to for any particular reason?

Book: (choose 1 if you need)

Philemon 1-21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have

been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love-- and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother-- especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

1. Have you ever heard of this book before?
2. Work together and try to summarize the story. Hints are below:
 - a. Person writing is Paul (we know he wrote this)
 - b. Philemon is the slave owner
 - c. Onesimus is the slave
3. How does it appear Paul feels towards Onesimus?
4. How do you think Philemon should feel when receiving this letter?
5. Does Paul want Onesimus free?
6. Paul says he could appeal to Philemon on the basis of duty, but he asks him on the basis of _____?

Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of

you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

1. Do you think Jesus meant to actually "hate" the people listed?
2. Jesus is our first priority and our other relationships are transformed because of following Jesus. How does Paul, in the first letter, ask Onesimus to put Jesus first? How does that change the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus?
3. Describe what it means to be a disciple to a newcomer to the Christian Church.

Took:

What possessions get in the way of your ability to fully follow Jesus teaching and example? What relationships might you put above your relationship with Jesus, even if accidental.

How do you think of relationships differently when we first recognize Jesus in the relationship?

What are the different parts of our society (example: first class, middle, Republican, Democrat)?

Do you think you could use either of these passages to begin a conversation with someone with whom you would not speak normally because of different places in our society or community? (Of course, if you were both compelled).

What do you think you need to give up to be a follower of Jesus, a disciple? What do you need to keep?