

What We Ought to Do

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SPEAKERS

Tony Arsenal



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1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. 8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9 yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— 10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. 13 I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. 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.

20 I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. So I have to be transparent that I struggled a little bit with the book of Philommon. It's a very short book. When you read the commentators, they all kind of acknowledge that it's not as theological as other books. There's not quite as much to hang your hat on as it were. And so we're going to be jumping back and forth a little bit. Back and forth into the book of Colossians. Because you'll see here in a little bit that the, the book of Colossians, and the book of Philip Philommon, which is also, depending on you ask is pronounced 100 different ways, so we're going to stick with film on their, their symbiotic letters. And so we can understand more about the book of Philommon by reading Colossians. And we can understand more about the book of Colossians by reading and understanding Philommon. So one of the ways that I always prepare for a sermon is I identify the passage that I'm going to be sharing with, and then I listened to as many sermons that I can get my hand on, to try to get my head around what is the church at large saying about a text. And there are a couple typical approaches to this book that I don't think are necessarily wrong, but are not the approaches that I want to take. So one of the ways is to use the book of Philommon. To say that the church should not transform the culture. They argue that Paul in no way was advocating that film on release. On SMS, who was his slave? And so they say it's not our job as the church to get involved in the matters of civil discourse or political sphere. I think there's an element of truth to that. But I think we see that that is certainly not the case. Throughout the history of the church, the abolishment of slavery, was driven by the church in England, the abolishment of all sorts of social ills, was handled by men, rightfully dividing the word of truth. On the flip side, this book is also often used to say that the church absolutely should transform culture. So they look at this and they say what Paul is saying is he's advocating for a radical change in the nature of the relationship between Philommon and an openness amiss. Again, there's a element of truth in this. But at the same time, all the things that were true in the previous way of approaching this are still true. So although we should recognize that the church should influence the culture that we should be protected Voices proclaiming that word of truth, we also have to recognize that our citizenship is heaven is in heaven. And the last thing that I see frequently is that there's a discussion about what exactly it is that Paul is doing here. How is it that he's trying to communicate what he wants Philommon to do. And oftentimes people will talk about sort of the rhetorical skills of Paul here, as though he was sort of manipulating Philommon it would be like, if you were to say to your kids, something along the lines of why I don't have to tell you to clean your room. I don't want to tell you to clean your room, but it would really make me happy if you did and maybe, maybe if you're

most clean, we would have time it'll get ice cream, right. That's a manipulative tactic. That is an absolutely 100% not what Paul is trying to do. But at the same time, Paul is explicitly not issuing an apostolic command. And it's important as we unfold the passage here to understand that because if you think that this is some sort of like backhanded way for Paul to throw around his weight, you're going to get the whole point of the letter ROM. The other thing that I think people sometimes go wrong in when they approach a book like philomon, is they get really bogged down in the historical context of the book. Now, it's important as we study the Scriptures to understand what's going on in history. So a lot of times this will sort of launch into a whole sermon that talks about the nature of the slave master relationship in the ancient world. We actually just covered this in our series in Ephesians. So it's a worthwhile pursuit. But I want to approach philomon in a slightly different way. And what we see here as we open open the book, is that there's a series of relationships that are presented throughout this book and the book of Colossians. That really helps to understand what is going on in and what relationship to that is. And so the first set of relationships we find right in the first verse of filamentous is Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus and Timothy, our brother to fill them on. Our dear friend. So what we see is that Paul considers philomon to not only be his friend, but he hears it considers him to be Timothy's friend and fellow worker. And so we have this nexus of relationships between Paul and Timothy and philomon. And what that tells us in the language of fellow worker is that philomon is not some random guy in a church across the world from Paul, but as a fellow labor and is engaged in the same mission and ministry that Paul and Timothy are. So Paul, as we know was, was an apostle who went around planting churches, Timothy as far as we can tell, held the Office of evangelist so he would go around sharing the faith. Later he became a pastor. And so as far as we can tell, philomon was most likely the pastor or one of the pastors at a church and policy. And that leads us to the next series of relationships here is we hear about philomon app The n arcos. Now, the history of the church is a little bit divided on this. Some people will say that it's absolutely clear in the text that this is a husband, a wife and their adult child, a reasonable argument can be made for that. Others will say no, these are just three random laborers in God's kingdom. I don't think we need to go quite that far. But whoever they are, and whatever their relationship is, they're engaged in some sort of ministry in Kala say together. So if philomon is the pastor of the church, it is pretty likely that apio was his wife who is helping to attend to serve the needs of the church. We see in just a minute here that the church meets in their home. And so we understand that if the church is to meet in the home of the pastor, that the pastor's wife is likely involved in lots of the practical elements of that ministry. And our campus is identified here with a unique title. That's different from how politics Or just some of these others. He says arquebus is a fellow soldier in the Lord. And so Paul has all these different titles that he applies to people, right? He'll talk about a fellow, someone who's in aims for the gospel, someone who's actually in prison or is somehow held captive because of their work in the ministry. A fellow soldier is usually

considered somebody who is engaged in sort of like the combat of the Christian faith. So they've probably suffered persecution, they're probably administering and hostile territory, as opposed to some of the places where the church had relative freedom to move about into worship in the early church. So Philemon is probably someone who is in the trenches of ministry. And then we'll see that as he calls Timothy and other places and other people later in the book here, the fellow laborer is someone who's engaged in the ministry, but it's not necessarily in chains and isn't necessarily facing persecution, but it's your day in and day out Minister for the gospel. For the next series of relationships here, we take a look at our kapos a path for us and the church and policy. So paraphrased isn't a figure we read about him in the book of Colossians. We're going to turn there in a minute, but we read about him in the book of Colossians. We read about him here at the end of Philimon. As far as we can tell, a Papyrus was originally the minister or the pastor in Kala say, and then he went, he was sent by the church in Kala say, to attend to Paul's needs. And so when Paul was imprisoned prison didn't work in the ancient world the way it does in our world, right. If you go to prison, for the most part, your needs are taken care of by the state. You don't have to worry about whether someone is going to bring you food, whether you're going to have clothes, whether you're going to have books or educational materials, for the most part that is provided to our prison. In the ancient world, if you didn't have someone to bring you food, who wasn't in prison, you would starve to death. If you didn't have someone to bring you close, you would freeze to death. So it was very important that that The church was sending these delegates these emissaries to Paul to provide for his physical needs, or we wouldn't have most of the New Testament because Paul would have died in a prison cell. And so Pafford was sent to Paul, in order to attend to these needs. And well he was there. We read and we'll flip over to Colossians chapter one here. What we read is that a paraphrased communicated to Paul, what was going on in policy. So if you flip over to Colossians, chapter one, this was our meditation verse. So we'll read through it quick. But starting in verse three, Paul says, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you, because we've heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints, the faith and love that springs from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven, and the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you, all over the world. This gospel is bearing fruit and growing Justin has been doing among us since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned from a past risk. dear fellow servant who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also told us of your love in the spirit. So Paul is saying here that a Pafford is ministering to him in chains on behalf of the kalasha believers. But on top of that a Pafford was faithful to communicate to Paul, everything that was going on and call say. So there's this this relationship that Paul has with the saints and call us a through a path for us that will become really important to what we're trying to understand here. And then if we look here at the end of Colossians, turn to chapter four, verse 17. I'm going to start reading at 16. It says after this letter has been read to you the letter to the Colossians

see that it is also read in the church of laya decisions, and that you in turn read the letter from laya Dexia tell our kapus see to it that you complete the work that you've received in the Lord. So a path first comes communicate all what's going on. In the collaging, church, he is ministering to Paul. And so Paul sends back a message with the letter of Colossians, to our kapus, who is also administering and Kala say, to say, Be faithful to finish the work that you've been given. Most likely, this was work that had been delegated to him by the apostles, or by one of these evangelists like Timothy or Titus. So there's this clear picture in the early church of kind of how the the institution or the organism of the church is starting to develop. And then the final relationship that we need to understand to understand what's going on here in in Philmont, is the relationship between a man named tyka kiss on this amiss and philomon himself. So just flip back just a few verses to Colossians chapter four, and we're going to look at verse seven through nine. It says take take a kiss will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending into you that for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances, and that he may encourage your hearts, he is coming with anessa miss our faithful and dear brother who is one of you, they will tell you everything that is happening here. So what happens here is a pafford comes to Kala say, he explains what's going on, somehow an Islamist, who we'll see in a little bit as a runaway slave. We think that Philmont owned, ends up being converted under the Ministry of Paul. And so Paul not only sends a missmiss back, because that's the right thing to do. In the ancient world, the master of a slave had the right to determine what was going on with that slave if they were recovered a runaway slave. But not only that, but he now sends him back as a delegated authority to bring the letter of the Colossians and to report the news. So an aneurysm is is not just some random runaway slave who is a Christian that's being sent back, but he's now being sent back as a partner in the ministry. And that will be really, really important as we dig into the rest of the letter. So go ahead and flip back to film on. And we will spend most of our time now, deep diving this little letter. So as I said, hurt a fullness of in church as a whole from a Paris, who is in prisons now in Rome. And we know that from looking at the last, the last little verses here, a Paris has gone from being a co labor and a fellow minister to being a fellow prisoner in Christ. So somewhere between when Paul when Paul began reading and writing the letter of Colossians, and when he finished writing the letter of Colossians and philomon, and sent an SMS and take a kiss back somewhere in there, packrats has now been arrested and imprisoned with Paul. And I want to before we before we plant our flag and film on I want to explain a principle that I think is really important here. Part Part of what I want to do today is to teach you a little bit about biblical interpretation through this book because, as I said, this was a really challenging book for me to really get my head around even though it's small, it was hard for me to really dig into it. So I wanted to share one of the principles that I used to get into this book that I think will help. So if you will turn over, keep your finger there, but turn over to Luke chapter two. And we're going to look at verse 40, through 52. I'm going to read it

quick, but I'll explain in a minute here. So that there's a principle in biblical interpretation and literature that's called an inclusive Zio. And you can think of it as sort of a sandwich approach to set boundaries or two to help understand that a unit of text is a unit of text. So you could think about it if we were writing a book and it was a history book, and I wanted to inject a fairy tale into the book. I would start this section by saying, once upon a time in a land far away and I would end the section By saying and they lived happily ever after. So those two phrases form includes do that show you that those, that chunk of text is a unit that's probably a little bit different than the rest of the text. You might if you have ever done anything in management, you might have heard of the positivity sandwich, where if you have to deliver back to an employee, you say something positive, then you give them the critical feedback, and then you end with something positive. And the purpose of that is to show them that this is ultimately for their good. So you you sandwich that negative or critical statement in between two positive ones, to show them what your intent is. So flip over to Luke two. And I'm going to start reading in verse 40. Keep in mind now that the the little headings that you have in your Bible, those are not original to the text, those are things that the editors have added in to help you so we shouldn't see a difference or a break in the text between verse 40 and 40. One like our, our English Bibles with headings kind of tell us so it says and the child speaking of Jesus became grew and became strong and he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. So that's the beginning of the include do. Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feasts of Passover. When he was 12 years old, they went up to the feast according to the custom and after the feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it, thinking he was in their company they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days, they found him in the temple court, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxious searching for you. Why were you searching for me? he said. Didn't you know that I had to be in my father's, but they did. went out to Nazareth with them and obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and men. So that closes the inclusion to and so what this does for us, is it helps to fight against a common heresy that was developing in the church. So when we read in first john, there was already a heresy developing that later became called dogmatism that taught that Jesus was really this only only divine figure that there was no human element to him, he only sort of seemed to be human, but he wasn't really human. And so all of these different kind of gnostic fanfictions popped up where Jesus as a boy was doing things like turning clay pigeons into real pigeons, or there was one point where he got upset and he cursed a bunch of boys that were teasing him,

they all died, and then he raised them from the dead. So this this passage here could be seen as a supporting evidence for that perspective, it could be seen as saying, see, Jesus isn't just a normal boy. He already knew all about the scriptures. But instead Luke sandwiches in these two phrases where it says no, he grew in wisdom and stature, he had to learn the scriptures as a human just like everybody else did. He had some additional insight to uh, but he had to grow in the wisdom and the stature of the Lord. So this this includes yo tells us something about the text. So now we can go back to film on and I'm going to show you what I think the include do in this text is, and we'll unpack it. So first, second Timothy, Titus philomon. So we see here and picking up in verse, verse four, I always think my god as I remember you in my prayers because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in the sharing of your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we Having Christ and then jump down to verse 17. It says, so if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. Now, this doesn't at first seem like there's anything that connects those two verses. But you have to understand a little bit about the Greek that's, that's underlying it. The word that we translate or that the ni v here translates as sharing the sharing of your faith. We hear that and we think about evangelism, we think about sharing our faith with people in our community. That's a reasonable way to understand this. But the word that actually sits underneath that the original Greek word is the same word that we get fellowship from. Its Koinonia. Its community communion. And so when you go into verse 17, and it says, if you consider me a partner, it's a route for the same word. So Paul is saying, I want you to be partners in the Gospel. I want you to enjoy Holy Spirit fellowship in the Gospel, there should be a unity and a communion and a fellowship among you. And through this fellowship, you'll experience and have full knowledge of all the good things that we have in Christ Jesus. And then in verse 17, he says, essentially, if you consider me part of that fellowship, if you consider me to be in unity of the Spirit with you, then you should welcome and dismiss the same way you welcome me. We see several other places just to give you some context for this word Koinonia. In Acts 242, we see that the disciples devoted themselves to the fellowship. So it's kind of a technical term that refers to the the actual gathered church body that the spiritual fellowship that Christians enjoy with each other. And first Corinthians 119, the church is called the fellowship of God's Son. So the organization the institution of the church is marked as being this unity and communion and the fellowship of the sun. And then in Second Corinthians 1314, the Unity that's brought by the Holy Spirit among the believers is called fellowship, it's called Koinonia. So it's one of those One of those words in Greek that has a real specific meaning in the Bible, it refers to this supernatural bond that Christians have with each other. And so Paul is saying, He's not just saying, if you if you want to, if you want to go in on this ministry thing with me, if you want to do the same thing I am if you want to be a business partner with me in this ministry, business of the gospel, he's saying, if you believe that we have this fellowship of

the Holy Spirit, if I'm one of your number, if I'm a part of your church, then accept and This to me is in the exact same way. We see from Colossians Paul already has this deeper knowledge of the Russian church. He already has heard from, Chris, that the love of philomon has from other Christians. So when he says I, I've heard of your faith, he's demonstrating that he is participating in this fuller knowledge of the good things in Christ Jesus, because he has heard of the way that they are active in refreshing the saints. So we need to we need to ask what is the point of this includes you what what is Paul trying to get across here? Is, is Paul's ministry, an extension of the Ministry of philomon? Is the faith that Paul and Timothy, share with each other separate from the faith that philomon and ARCA share in Kala say. And as I said, I don't think that the text tells us that it is. Instead Paul is presenting this picture of the Universal Church. He's presenting this picture where the gospel as its preached in Kala say, in emphasis in Galicia in Jerusalem in Rome, is one gospel, and that everyone who faithfully preaches that gospel is partners in the faith, whether they have been a Christian since the day of the resurrection, or whether they have been a Christian for only a few days like missmiss. They are partners in the Gospel, and they should be accepted as partners in the Gospel. So Paul, as I said, is saying, if you consider me a part of your fellowship, if you consider me a part of your Koinonia unity, then welcome and missmiss as you would welcome me. So this reframes the whole middle section here. It reframes all of what Paul is doing. in a lot of instances you hear this preached. And the idea is that philomon should love omniscience so much that he should be willing to forgive him. And that's certainly true. But it's it's even deeper than that. This isn't just about the principles of Christian forgiveness and love. It's about the very nature of the church itself. And so he's able to exhort philomon not as an apostle, which he could do, he's very clear I could do this, I could just tell you to do what you're supposed to do. But instead, he appeals to the new reality and the new relationship, this new coin and new fellowship that an SMS and philomon share that they did not previously share. So he says here, I could increase Rice, be bold in order you to do what I ought to do or what you ought to do. Yet I appeal to you on the basis of love, I appeal to you on the basis of the fact that philomon or dismiss is now your brother. I as Paul, an old man and a prisoner of crises appeal to you for my son and missmiss, who has become my son, when I was in chains. So he's communicating to them. He's communicating to film on and to the church meats and filaments house onis. And this is one of you now, right? We heard that in Colossians. It's not just he's not just saying to the Colossians missmiss, who is one of you who's from college say, he's not saying he just happens to be from the same town as you are. He happened to have lived there while you did. He's saying Phil, is now one of you. He's He's a Christian. Now he's become a member of our shared fellowship. Just a side note, can you imagine what it must have been like to start to see messengers from Paul, they're coming down the road. Is that an dismiss? What's going on here? He just ran away from us. He just ran away, he probably stole when he left. Can you imagine what that must have been like? Can you imagine the fear that was probably going through and

dismisses mind philomon had a right to put him to death, a legal right to have him executed, he could have done that. And he would have been within his rights to do so. But instead philomon we know from church history, film on welcomes and missmiss back, he welcomed back with open arms. And then missmiss goes on to be if we understand from church history, he goes on to be a bishop and in other churches. So the fellowship of the Holy Spirit here enables the gospel to spread because philomon does what he's ought to do. So when we understand this, what we see here is not that Paul is manipulating philomon he's not using some underhanded tactic. He's not using a guilt trip. He's simply informing him of the new reality which he was not yet aware of, and then compelling him to do what he should do in light of that. It would be like if we had a new convert in our midst who didn't know, a given thing that they are are not supposed to do. Or you you meet a Christian at your work that you didn't know it's a Christian. And they, they tell you that they're engaged in some sort of activity that you know to be sinful. You're not, you're not compelling them, you manding them to do something. But you might go to the Bible and say, Well, did you know that this is about that particular topic? Do you understand what God's word teaches us about swearing? Do you understand what we're about? We're about hate. That's not a command, at least not from us. But it is a command from the scriptures. So film, I didn't have the liberty in Christ to refuse to welcome and dismiss back. And that's that's what I think people get wrong in this letter is they read this and they say Well, Paul is saying that he's not committed philomon obviously had a choice in the matter, film on didn't really have a choice. I mean, he could have, he could have ignored what he ought to do. Paul is telling him this is a moral and instead he recognizes the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. So we have to ask the question, then what, what do we do with this? What is the what's the practical implication of this? If we understand that Paul's argument is that the ministry he's engaged in the fellowship that he shares with the rest of the church, the ministry Timothy is engaged in the ministry of path versus engaged in that type of kiss is engaged in and that is the very same ministry and fellowship that our campus and fill them on an app via and now onis summits are engaged in. Because of this, Paul can say if onis amiss, has wronged you, then charge it to my account. He's sort of stepping in and filling the role of Christ. This may give some light to a strange passage we read in, in collections where Paul says that he's filling up what was lacking in Christ's sacrifice in the sufferings of his body. I don't know what that means. People have wrestled over it for thousand years now. They don't we can't really understand what it means in light of what we understand the rest of the gospel to me, but whatever it means, it's related to this idea that onis amiss, owed a debt, and Paul was willing to pay it. onis Miss had done something wrong. And Paul was saying treated as though I had done it wrong. How would you react to me? Well, the answer, of course, is that philomon would forgive Paul philomon would would overlook the the debt that Paul had created by sinning against him. And so just as Paul is saying to philomon all repay the debt that onis Mrs. incurred, he's suddenly saying, because that's what Christians do. we overlook The faults

and the sins of those around us that sinned against us. And we we pay their debt by not holding it against them. Right? If someone backed into my car in the parking lot, I can pursue that and i can i can sue for damages. Right? I wouldn't do that, because you're my brothers and sisters, we have insurance for that and all of that. But if insurance didn't pay for it, I'd have the option to go for you. If I instead choose to just say you know what things happen, I'm going to pay for the damages on that. Then I am paying the debt which you owe to me. I rightfully could collect it, but I'm choosing not to that's what Paul is saying he would do for filmography missmiss and by extension when it fell on, or flip that. So what do we do about this? I have a series of questions that I want us to think about. Do the Christians in your life outside of this country places you work the places you visit, people that you know in other churches or maybe where you have family in other parts of the country. Do they know enough about what's going on and new hope Community Church? Do they know enough about the shared Koinonia fellowship that we have, that they can give things on our behalf for what's going on here? Do they know that God has been faithful to meet our budgets, that that we are not in fear right now, of not being able to financially survive because the generosity of God's people has been sufficient to not only meet our needs, but to exceed them? Do they know that? I can tell you a lot of my Christian friends don't know that. They can't thank God for what he's doing in our congregation because we have not told them. Are we active enough in sharing our faith here, among each other, participating in that Queen and new fellowship that we are able to say we have knowledge of everything that we have in Christ Jesus. Not saying that we get the good fellowship, it's saying that we have knowledge of the good thing, because we fellowship with each other. Right? The fact that one of you has a blessing in your life is a good thing in Christ that I may not have knowledge of, if we're not actively fellowshiping. If we're not communicating throughout the week, right, I know, there's the Ashley family, but we ran out of sand. And they were very quick to provide sand for the church. Right? That's a good thing we have in Christ, that we were able to have a safe stairway for us all to walk up today. Because when it came to it, they actually stepped up. There's, there's every number of little things that people in the church are doing and big things that people in the church are doing, that we're not necessarily talking about them i think i think we need to do you consider other faithful congregations particularly in the area? Do you consider them to be partners in the Gospel Would you think of them as as much a part of this family, as you think of the person sitting next to you in your seat? I think that's a sobering thought for us. Because I think sometimes we, as a small congregation feel like we're kind of up here in Canaan, and there's nothing going on. There's not a lot of Holy Spirit movements in the Upper Valley. But there are four or five really active gospel preaching churches that are having a lot of ministry success that we don't regularly consider. This one is mostly rhetorical question, because I think we've demonstrated hopefully, that we are but are we quick to accept new converts in our midst? immediately as part of the family? It would have been very easy for philomon and

archivists and Appiah and the church that meets in their home to say, Well, you know, we'll, we'll accept an isthmus back, but we got to keep an eye on him. We got to keep an eye on Are we quick to accept the new converts in our midst? Or people from other congregations that may come to us? Without strings? Without question marks without pretenses about caution or keeping our distance? Are we quick to do that? And finally, are we willing to repay the debts owed by others in order to preserve the unity and fellowship of the church? Every single one of us in this room is a sinner. None of us have arrived at perfection. And so we are going to hurt the feelings of other people around us. It happens in this church. There are times where someone says something that isn't intentionally hurtful isn't intentionally insensitive, but you know, somebody in the congregation, it rubs them the wrong way. If you're the person that's rubbed the wrong way, are you willing to forgive the debt of the person who offended you? Are you willing to overlook it and to repay To fill up the suffering, to take that debt which they rightfully owe you, and to forgive that debt and to not hold it against them. So the question that I always asked when it comes to the end of the sermon is where's the gospel? Right? This, this was a sort of law heavy sermon, it was a lot about what we should do, what we shouldn't do. So a lot of questions about if we're doing what we need to. So where, where's the God? The Gospel and philomon is that because of what Jesus Christ has done, because he came and died for our sins, He lived a righteous life, He paid the debt that we could not. And he fulfilled the covenant that was ours to fulfill that we failed to hold up. Because of that, he created this family. In Christ, he's created this family, this people of God, who are united thicker than blood. The only blood that unites most of us is the blood of Christ. And that's the gospel For this for this book is that it doesn't matter what you've done, it doesn't matter whether you were the worst sinner in the world or whether you grew up in a Christian home and for the most part stayed on the straight and narrow. It doesn't matter. Because at this point, we are a family now. We are one people in Christ, who have a savior, and a king who loves us and has died for us and saved us. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for that truth for that gospel. That first and foremost, you have saved us from the estate of sin and misery that our sin has brought us in, that you have taken us from a place where we stood under the wrath and curse of God. And where we were liable to the pain and misery in this life, where we were liable to death itself and were apart from your mercy we would be liable to the pains of hell forever. We thank you that you have seen fit and chosen in your infinite wisdom. redeem us from that estate and have brought us into a state of salvation by the only Redeemer we have and the only Redeemer we could ever need Jesus Christ. But I thank you that the gospel does not stop there that the gospel continues to build a community that the good news of Jesus Christ is not just a get out of hell free card, but that it is a seat at the table, the feast of the Lamb. And at that feast, we will certainly be worshipping you and certainly be praising you. But we will not be alone will be praising you in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with our brothers and sisters who have gone before us who will come after us and who we are united to in a way that we do not always

understand. I pray that as we go into the world, that we would be active in sharing our faith with the community of Christians that we interact with outside of these walls, that they would be thankful for the good work. You have started in New Hope Community Church, and that as you finish the good work you began among us, that we would continue to proclaim Your goodness and your mercy throughout all the ages to anyone who will listen and pray these things in Jesus name. Amen