

Date: 2017.09.10

Speaker: Bro. Khemraj Daniel Ramnarine

Text: [Philemon1:8-20](#)

Topic: ***Standing In The Gap***

The theme 'Vital Connections' speaks of relationships; relationship with God and relationship with our brothers and sisters. ***Do people in church know what I am going through?***

This letter/epistle was written by Paul while a prisoner in Rome for preaching the gospel. The recipient was Philemon, a leader from Colosse, who hosted a church in his own home. He was a wealthy slave owner who was Paul's good friend. These men had a strong relationship.

Why did Paul write this letter?

Philemon's slave, Onesimus had run away and sought refuge in Rome where he met with Paul. He accepted Jesus as his Saviour and both he and Paul had forged a warm relationship.

Paul knew that Onesimus was profitable/valuable to God's Kingdom and he embraced him not only as a brother in the Lord but as a son (vs. 10). *Do we treat people based on our own perception or on how God sees them?*

Paul, although being aware that the punishment for running away was branding or being put to death, advised Onesimus to return to his master, Philemon. Paul, however, sent a letter appealing rather than commanding that Philemon should accept Onesimus not as a slave but as a beloved brother (vs. 16). He also asked that Philemon put whatever is owed by Onesimus on his (Paul's) account. That is love!

Why stand In The Gap?

Many people come in to church with problems, challenges and issues. We know that where the twos and threes are gathered, God is in the midst to bless, to set free, to answer prayers, to deliver, to heal.

1. ***To help one another (vs. 20)***

[Col.3: 9b-11](#) With Jesus, there is no separation. We all belong to Him; we are brothers and sisters in the Lord. He saved us to be there for one another.

2. ***To feel stronger and happier – to be strengthened and encouraged***

Paul had the authority to command Philemon to accept Onesimus but he didn't because he wanted Philemon to make that decision for himself. Paul knew that Philemon's acceptance of his runaway slave would put a 'big' dent on Satan's kingdom as well as break a lot of mindsets. This would be a clear demonstration of God's love and grace for humanity resulting in church growth.

3. ***For unity among the brethren***

We are all united to Christ [Ps. 133:1](#). This unity is compared to the anointed oil that is made of different spices and herbs. Like the oil, the body of believers come together in the House of the Lord and [Ps.133:3b](#) tells us what happens “there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

There is power in unity. In [Gen. 11:1-9](#) the Tower of Babel – there is unity but a carnal unity. God used different languages/tongues as a means of separation and confusion. In [Acts 2:1-12](#) the Day of Pentecost – there is unity but a spiritual unity. God used languages/ tongues for oneness in the church.

Conclusion

Paul played a significant role in the lives of both Philemon and Onesimus. He stood in the gap. He was able to reconcile one with the other. In this account, Paul represents Jesus; Philemon represents God while Onesimus represents the sinner who accepted Jesus and was reconciled unto God.

1Tim.2:5 Jesus is our mediator. His loves us so much that He stands in the gap for us. We too must stand in the gap for our brethren. We must love each other. When God places someone on your heart,

1. ***Start praying***
2. ***Be like the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:30-37](#)) and say “what is mine is yours”.***