

FELLOWSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning - October 18, 1998

Text: 1 John 1:3 "That WHICH we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the **Father**, and with his **Son** Jesus Christ."

I want to talk about fellowship and read the first two verses.

1 John 1:1-4 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)"

John is being a witness not only to those to whom he writing the epistle to, but he is being a witness to us to day. John says, 'that which from the beginning, that which we have seen, that which we have looked upon, that which our hands have handle of the Word of life' were are going to tell you about these things so that you can have fellowship with us. He continues to define who they were having fellowship with. They were having fellowship with the Father and with His Son. It is essential for us to have the information that God is trying to present to us in 1 John, that we can have fellowship with each other, and that we can fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

WITNESSES DECLARE

Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be **witnesses** unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

John was a witness and all of us should be witnesses. Witnessing is not just for the preacher or for the missionary, but it is given to all of us to be witnesses. Witnessing will help the lost to be saved and witnessing will help the saved to know who you are so that you can share your life with them. I was in the Navy and had the opportunity to spend time in the Mediterranean area, and I can't tell you the joy from experiences I had having fellowship with other believers. The Lord allowed me to find those who loved him in places like Barcelonan, Spain; in Port-Lyautey Morocco; in a little island off the cost of Spain, Mallorca, and in the city of Palma. Because of their relationship with the Lord, the bond of being part of the body of Christ was already established. The level of fellowship that I had with these believers was that of being a part of the family. We need to understand and appreciate that there are some essentials that we need to have for real fellowship. What John is doing in these first three verses is laying out that doctrine is needed for real fellowship. Doctrine is essential in fellowship.

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are **witnesses**."

STEDFAST IN FELLOWSHIP

Acts 2:42 "And they continued **stedfastly** in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Luke list four things that the early church continued doing and they were doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Notice that doctrine is first in the list, then fellowship. Fellowship is before breaking of bread and prayers. The order of these practices is significant. They are listed in order of importance, and doctrine was first then fellowship. Fellowship is essential for successful Christian living. If you do not have fellowship and you isolate yourself, you are

preparing yourself for ruin and shipwreck. You can not isolate yourself and be healthy in the Lord. Here in Acts 2:42 I think he says they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine so they could have fellowship.

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, **I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**"

This is fellowship. This is not salvation. Jesus is not knocking on the door of your heart so He can enter and you will be saved. This message in verse 20 is to a church who I believe had lost their vision of having fellowship with the Lord. The only way to have fellowship with the Lord is through the Word of God. The church at Laodicea was lukewarm, self-sufficient and in need of nothing. The spiritual condition of this church made it hard for the Lord to get in where it counted to have any meaningful fellowship with them. In verse 20 the Lord is inviting anyone who will hear Him to respond to this invitation to have fellowship with him. Fellowship had to do with eating and talking about things of common interest. Notice the phrase 'will sup with him.' For the Lord to sup with anyone in the church of Laodicea would mean that there had to be preparation by those who in the church behind the door. Personal fellowship seems to require preparation for that fellowship. He can not sup with you if you do not have something prepared for Him.

It takes time away from other things to have fellowship.

1 Corinthians 10:16 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the **communion** of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the **communion** of the body of Christ?"

The word 'communion' is the same Greek word as fellowship in 1 John 1. The Greek word is 'koinonia'. It is communion one with another. This type of communion is reflection on things in the past as well as hopes for the future. When we break bread, it is time of remembering His death in the past and reflecting on the hope of glory in His coming kingdom through His shed blood.

2 Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what **communion** [koinonia] hath light with darkness?"

The word 'fellowship' in this verse carries the thought of participation where the word 'communion' is the word that we are studying. If you are in the light you can have fellowship with those who are in the light. If you are in darkness you can fellowship with those who are in darkness. If you are in the light there can be no real fellowship with those who are in darkness. In 1 John 1:6-7 "If we say that we have fellowship [koinonia] with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [koinonia] one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

WITH

Galatians 2:9 "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, **they gave** to me and Barnabas **the right hands** [hands on] **of fellowship;** "

Before fellowship was enjoyed, the pillars of the church perceived the grace that was given to Paul and Barnabas. Fellowship begins with a reaching out to each other. Have you ever reached out to shake someone's hand where they refused to reach out to you. This behavior destroys the opportunity for fellowship. The extending of the right hand was so they could touch and so that they wanted to be close to them. I believe the perception that they had grace was on

the bases of doctrine. 2 Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,"

In the teaching of the Word in Acts 13:1 they were ministering to the Lord in Acts 13:2 "As they **ministered** to the **Lord**," From this principle of ministry we can draw another principle and that is in the area of fellowship. As we have fellowship with other that are in the light we are having fellowship with the Lord as well.

Malachi 3:16 "Then they that feared the LORD **spake often one to another**: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, **and that thought upon his name.**"

Fellowship promotes thinking about the Lord and the Lord wants to remember this fellowship, so He writes this down in a book of remembrance. I believe that doctrine promotes the fear of the Lord which in turn encourages to think upon the Lord's name.

Fellowship demonstrates acceptance which encourages anyone. Paul and Barnabas felt acceptance even though there were those there that had doctrinal differences with Paul.

The word 'koinonia' is also translated 'common.' The word 'koinonia' is translated 'common' in Jude 1:3.

THINGS IN COMMON

Jude 1:3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the **common** [koinonia] **salvation, ...**"

This salvation is the salvation that all in the body of Christ can have fellowship in. This salvation is the birth from above in John 3:3. The fellowship of this salvation is what Paul, Silas and the Philippian jailor enjoyed when he believed. Paul and Silas were refreshed in his home and doctrine was evident because baptism followed.

Titus 1:4 "To Titus, *mine* own son after the **common** [koinonia] **faith: ...**"

Titus 1:4 introduces to us the fellowship in faith. This is beyond salvation and has to do with pleasing God as found in Hebrews 11:6. "With out faith it is impossible to please him..." Paul was pleasing God and so was Titus and there was fellowship in this lifestyle. This fellowship of faith was for those who had not made shipwreck or departed from the faith.

Acts 2:44 "And all that believed were together, and **had all things common** [koinonia];"

The first idea presented in this verse is being together. Another point of fellowship is that of sharing with those who are in need. Being together will help us to share in each other's needs. People were not holding on to their possession very tightly, but were willing to give them up for the benefit of others.

FELLOWSHIP THROUGH GIVING

Romans 15:26 "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution** [koinonia] for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."

In this passage in Romans 15 the emphases is on the fellowship of giving. The word 'contribution' is the Greek word 'koinonia.'

2 Corinthians 8:4 "Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the **fellowship** [koinonia] **of the ministering to the saints.**"

This verse re-emphasizes the giving ministry to the saints in Jerusalem. We have fellowship with our missionaries by ministering to them financially.

Galatians 6:6 "Let him that is taught in the word communicate [koinonia] unto him that teacheth in all good things."

The word 'communicate' comes from the Greek word 'koinonia.' We are to minister materially by giving to those who teach us the Word of God.

Hebrews 13:16 "But to do good and to **communicate** [koinonia] forget not: for with such sacrifices **God is well pleased.**"

Much of giving today is not sacrificial. Sacrificial giving is well pleasing to God. Fellowship through giving is not to be forgotten. This aspect of our fellowship is that of giving of our financial means so that other do not suffer.

Philippians 1:5 "For your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now;"

Further example of fellowship with a church that ministered to Paul financially as mentioned by Paul in Philippians 4.

FELLOWSHIP IN MINISTRY

2 Corinthians 8:23 "Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is my partner* [koinonos] and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of, they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ."

The word partner comes from the same root word as does 'koinonia.' There is to be a fellowship among those who are working in the ministry of the distribution of the truths of the Word of God.

Philemon 1:17 "If thou count me therefore a **partner**, receive him as myself."

This passage carries the same thought as that of 2 Corinthians 8:23 as being co-laborers in the ministry. As partners in the ministry, forgive and restore Onesimus your servant.

SUFFERINGS

Philippians 3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and **the fellowship of his sufferings**, being made conformable unto his death;"

We are to have fellowship in suffering. The word of God is very clear on the matter of suffering. If you live godly you are going to suffer. Philippians 1:29 "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, **not only** to believe [present active] on him, but also to suffer for his sake;" This is not easy, but needful. If a brother in the Lord is suffering for any reason, we are to enter into our brother's suffering even if causes us to suffer also. The way, it seems to me, that we enter into Christ' suffering is to participate in the suffering of others.

FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING

2 Corinthians 1:7 "And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that **as ye are partakers** [fellowship] **of the sufferings**, so *shall ye be* also of the **consolation** [paraklesis, exhortation]."

Fellowship in suffering allows us to be exhorted to continue in the faith and not quit. If we are alone and not in fellowship, then we can become discouraged. The counsel of Solomon is good counsel. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** "Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. *10.* For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up." This is the reason that fellowship is so important. We need the encouragement of others.

DOCTRINE

1 John 1:1-3 "That WHICH [nominative singular] was from the beginning, [that] WHICH we have heard, [that] WHICH we have seen with our eyes, [that] WHICH we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, [concerning] OF the Word of [the] life; 2. (For **the life** [nominative singular] was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you **THAT eternal life** [the life the age-lasting], which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3. **That WHICH we have seen and heard DECLARE WE UNTO YOU**, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

The Greek word that is translated 'that which' is nominative singular. All of the verbs in verses one and two are in the plural. The gender of the nominative singular 'that which' is neuter. The use of the gender in the Greek does not try to describe whether it is male or female or no gender at all, but it helps us to tie words together in a sentence. Words that are male in gender will tend to modify or be related to other words that are also male in gender. This applies to the feminine and neuter gender as well. The words 'that which' is nominative singular and so is 'the life' in verse 2. What John is talking about in verse 1 is to be associated with the life in verse two. This life is later defined in this verse as 'that life the age-lasting' in the Greek text. He makes reference to having seen it.

John continues in verse two telling them that we bear witness to that life because we have seen it. I am persuaded that this reference to seeing this life is because they had eyes to see the mystery of this life which is age-lasting life

1 John 1:6-7 "If we say that we have **fellowship** with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship** one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we are liars. The only way that we can maintain our fellowship with him is by confession of sin. Our salvation does not take care of unconfessed sin. You have to confess on unconfessed sin if you expect to maintain fellowship with the Lord. In verse 7 it speaks of walking in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with him. The cleansing by the blood in this verse I believe deals with sin that are unknown to us or sins we have forgotten about. 1 John 1:9 still comes into play when we know of sin in our lives we must confess it. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

LIKE MINDED

Philippians 2:1-2 "If *there be* therefore any **consolation** [EXHORTATION, paraklesis] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any **fellowship** of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2. Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be **LIKEMINDED**, [DOCTRINE DOES THIS] having the same love, *being* of one accord, of **ONE MIND**."

If there is to be exhortation, comfort, and mercies there needs to be doctrine. Doctrine produces like mindedness among believers and this encourages fellowship. Included in the list is that of 'fellowship of the spirit'. Just because the word 'spirit' is capitalized does not mean that it is the holy spirit. Putting a capital 'S' on spirit is interpretation and not translation. Some Greek manuscripts have all capital letters. This spirit of fellowship is that of love, of being of one accord as brought out in verse 2.

Romans 12:15-16 "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16. Be **OF THE SAME MIND** one toward another. **MIND NOT HIGH THINGS**, but **CONDESCEND** to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

Is rejoicing with them that rejoice and weeping with those who weep fellowship? Absolutely that his fellowship. We need to come along side a brother that has a heavy heart, shedding tears. When you have fellowship with those who are rejoicing, let it rub off on you and you will go away rejoicing. Proverbs 15:15 "All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but **he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.**" If you have a merry heart, invite someone to your banquet. Fellowship is being blind to ones status in life. We should treat every one the same when it comes to fellowship. You may be high in society and well off financially, but that should not effect you fellowship with those who are poor and of little esteem.

ESTEEM DOCTRINE

John 14:21 "He that **hath** [**ESTEEM**] my **commandments**, and **keepeth** them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

This word 'hath' I believe would be better translated 'esteemeth.' The word 'hath' is a present active participle. Because doctrine is essential for fellowship, we need to have a high esteem for his commandments, which is His word. If we will have a high esteem for his Word and demonstrate our love to the Father and His Son by guarding them, Jesus will manifest himself to us. Our esteem for his commandments will provide a way for the Father and the Son to disclose themselves to us.

GUARD DOCTRINE

John 14:23 "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man **love** me, **he will keep my words**: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and **make our abode with him.**"

In the context of esteeming and keeping the Word of God in verse 21 we find the word 'keep' again in this verse. Love for the word of God and doctrine will open the way for the Father and the Son to make their abode with us. What does it mean to abide with someone? I think from Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will **sup with him**, and **he with me.**" we can see fellowship.

NOT ASHAMED

1 John 2:28 "And now, little children, **abide in him**; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and **NOT BE ASHAMED** before him at his coming."

This verse I believe encourages fellowship with Him in the Word and doctrine. This means esteeming, guarding, and being obedient to the Word of God. If we do not have the esteem for doctrine found in His word, we will not have the fellowship that we need to stand confident and without shame in his presence.

In 1 John the apostle John was having fellowship with the Father and with His son and he was inviting those to whom he was writing to have fellowship with him so that you could learn to have fellowship the with the Father and His Son.