

Foundations, Fellowship and Fraternity

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a standard, specifically the apostles' teaching, as the foundation of the New Testament church, and the need to walk in the light and expose the fruitless deeds of darkness.

Scripture: Acts 2:42, Romans 6:3-5, Romans 6:10-11, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 4:2-3

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of God sending light to the world through His prophets and ultimately through His Son, Jesus Christ. However, despite the light being sent, many people rejected it because they loved their sinful ways. The preacher references Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,' to emphasize the seriousness of God's wrath and the need for salvation. The sermon then focuses on Romans 6, highlighting the idea of being united with Christ in His death and the importance of understanding the significance of His sacrifice. The preacher also mentions the importance of the apostles' teaching, fellowship, and the breaking of bread in the early church.

Transcript

We've been in the book of Acts, so turn to Acts chapter 2, verse 42. Now, you ladies will appreciate this, I think. The Lord has maybe given this to me for you, just to... You know, if you have tasted something really good, you know, we've been to these functions and someone has made something, it's delicious, and you go to them and you ask for the recipe, and they say, well, it's a little bit of flour and a little bit of sugar and a little bit of cinnamon and there's some nutmeg, and you put that together and then you pour a little bit of butter on it and you put it in the oven for 3 hours, you know, an hour and 45 minutes, and then you come out and you top it with a little bit of this.

Are you going to be able to go home and reproduce that? Is that giving you a recipe? Why? It's told you all the ingredients. What's missing? The measurement. A standard, an ability to reproduce something that tastes as good as the original must have a standard.

You know, we go to build something and you say, well, you make it so wide and so tall and... No, you have to have a standard. Without a standard, you'll never replicate something good. You'll never be able to repeat it.

We're not studying the book of Acts just for an intellectual exercise. We need to measure the standard we've been carrying around. We need to see, is this really what God intended the church to be? You have to look at a standard.

We're going to take a look at a standard in the book of Acts, and that's why we're studying it. Because we'd like to see this replicated in our day. The Bible says, may Jesus Christ be glorified in the church in every age.

Not just the age of the early church. We need to see Christ glorified in our age. In Acts 2.42 says, and who's it speaking of again? Just to remind you, it's speaking of those who had gladly received the word.

Who listened to the words of Peter, who were cut to the heart. They gladly received the word. They separated themselves from that corrupt generation.

They were baptized, and we talked about last week how they continued steadfastly. And that means, the Greek idea of that is they fortified themselves towards. They put every strong direction in their life towards these things we're going to talk about today.

And for those people who will fortify themselves to the things we're going to talk about today, you will experience life like the early Christians experienced it. You will experience Christ living in you in a fullness to a degree like they did. And so that's why this is very practical.

What did they fortify themselves to? What did they devote themselves? What did they continue steadfastly in? I want to talk of three of the four. Four things are mentioned, and I want to talk about three today. They continued steadfastly in what first? The apostles' teaching.

And it's no accident that that's first. Secondly, and to the fellowship. And thirdly, to the breaking of bread.

And then fourthly, and unto prayer. I want to talk about the first three. Mainly because if I try to talk about the first four, we'll be here a long time.

So I just want to try to limit myself. Prayer deserves a subject, I think, a full Sunday devoted to itself. Maybe they all do.

But I want to touch upon this, and I want to talk about it three ways. They devoted themselves, first of all, to the apostles' teaching. Why is that so important? Well, because, I didn't really ask Brian to read this verse in Sunday school, but he did.

Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2, 19 and 20. The reason it's so important is because the foundation we have as a New Testament church has to be the apostles' teaching. It has to be.

We can't just meet in the name of love. The hippies met in the name of love in the 60s. They meet, the Elks Club meets in the name of social benevolence.

Our meeting, our foundation has to be the apostles' teaching. And we see it here in Ephesians chapter 2, 19 and 20. These words.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God, the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and the

prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. What does it mean, the foundation of the apostles? Why are the apostles mentioned? Who were they? Who were the apostles and the prophets? Simply men who received the words of God. Any New Testament church had better be founded on the words God has spoken to his apostles and his prophets.

And the words of Christ Jesus himself have to be the chief cornerstone. It is extremely important. Turn in your Bibles to Psalms 11.3. I'll show you why.

There's a reason this is so critical. Psalms 11.3. Psalms 11.3. Someone read that for me. The Hebrew word here for destroyed means pulled down.

So if the apostles' teaching is the foundation that the New Testament church must be built upon, what's the enemy going to seek to undo? He's going to strike to undo the foundations. He's going to strike at the heart of the apostles' teaching. Well, this is a common practice.

In the days of foreign kings, when they would capture a city or capture a country, one of the first things that they would do is they would tear down the temples of their gods. Now, why were they doing that? Were they against religion? It's not that they were against religion, but they knew that the people's devotion to their god would make it difficult for him to maintain dominion over them. So his strategy, once he conquered them, was tear down their god and erect temples to his god, because then it was easier to assimilate them into his culture.

And if he could assimilate them into his culture, he could maintain dominion over them. And you know what Satan's out to do nowadays? In the name of Jesus, another Jesus, another gospel, another spirit, he is tearing down the teachings of the apostles and making them irrelevant, and he's erecting temples named Jesus, churches named Jesus, denominations named Jesus. But it's all designed to assimilate the people into his culture so he can maintain dominion over them.

And it's working. Matter of fact, it's working so effectively, look in, well, we'll go there in a minute. Let me back up and let's go to John chapter 8. How critical are the words of the chief cornerstone himself? John chapter 8. Jesus is speaking to the Jews who had believed him.

He's not speaking to unbelievers. He's speaking to those who had believed him in John chapter 8 and verse 31. Someone read that for us.

John 8, 31 and 32. So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, if you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine. And if you will know the truth, the truth will make you free.

Okay, so what is the key, first key mentioned by Christ to even be a disciple? Abide in his word. Right, continuing, abiding in his word. It did not say abiding in religious teaching.

There's a lot of religious teaching. There's Buddhist religious teaching. There's Islamic religious teaching.

But if you want to be a disciple of Christ, you must remain in the words of Christ. And only a person who continually remains in the words of Christ can even know the truth. And if you know the truth through continually abiding in the words of Christ, then you're set free.

Now, of course, if it's saying you're set free, what's the unstated other condition? Bondage. Bondage to what? Bondage to lies of the devil. Bondage to religious error.

Bondage to things that sound good, but are not the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, are not the teachings of the apostles of Christ, are not the words of the prophets of God. And if what ministers, if what this minister right here says, if it is not in accordance with what you read in 1 and 2 Peter, 1 and 2 John, the gospel of John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, run out of here as fast as you can. Find you a place that will speak what's in accordance with the teachings of the apostles.

Then, for some arrogant man to think he could say something more relevant than the apostle Peter is arrogance. And they're going to stand before God and give an account. All those out there today who are changing the words of the apostles to make them more relevant to our culture are going to go where the culture goes.

And that's not going to be a good place. We had better beware what the enemy is out trying to tear down the teachings of Christ. Is it working? Were we warned that this would actually happen? Yes, turn to 2 Timothy chapter 4. We were warned of this.

Are warnings negative? Gee, you guys have learned too much. No, they're not negative. As a matter of fact, you know what they have all over Oklahoma and certain parts of Arkansas and out there in western Missouri? You know what they have? They have warning systems.

You know what they're looking for this time of year? Tornadoes. They want to give the people some advance notice so that the wind that's coming doesn't sweep them away. Y'all, there is a wind coming sweeping people away, unawares.

And it's called the wind of false teaching. Another Jesus, another gospel, another spirit. And I'm just trying to prepare you that's what's happening.

That's all. I'm not trying to be negative. I'm trying to give you an advance notice so that you can make sure you know the apostles' teaching.

That's why it's critical you know your Bible. You know 1 Peter. You know 2 Peter.

You know 1 and 2 and 3 John. Because if you don't know it, how do you know the minister is going to be telling the truth? If you don't have the standard, how can you make a measurement? So that's why this is so important. Look in 2 Timothy 4 verses 2 and 3. 2 Timothy 4 verses 2 and 3. Someone read that for me.

Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Verse 3 too.

For the time will come when they will not endure. But according to their own, they have itching ears. They will heap up for themselves teachers.

And they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you, be watchful in all things. Endure afflictions.

Do the work of evangelists. Fulfill your ministry. Okay.

There's a warning. A time will come when men will no longer endure. Now what's the word there? Does it say they will no longer endure teaching? Sound teaching.

You see, men want to be taught. It doesn't say there will come a day when men no longer want to be taught. It says they will no longer want to be taught soundly.

What is sound teaching? It is 1 and 2 Peter. It is 1 and 2 and 3 John. It is the book of James.

It is the book of Romans. It is the book of Acts. It is Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

It is every word that has proceeded forth from the mouth of God. And that time has come when that's not really what men want to hear. They want to hear relevance.

They want to hear God is love and how to make you relevant to the culture. How to get along in the world and still make it to heaven. That's what's happening.

They will not endure sound. And what is it? They heap for themselves teachers. This is not talking about a group of people not coming back to church.

This is talking about groups of people calling themselves a church. Heaping to themselves ministers that speak to certain things. Ministers that speak to the satisfaction of personal pursuits.

That's what men want. Men want to be able to go to church and feel good about living a life of personal pleasure. And they heap teachers to make them feel good about this.

And it's a great danger. Look in 1 Timothy. If you're in 2 Timothy, one book back.

2 Timothy chapter 6. And let's go to verses 2. The last half of verse 2. 1 Timothy chapter 6. Find the latter part of verse 2 through verse 5. Find where it says, teach and exhort what? These things. Paul didn't just say, Timothy, teach and exhort. Great, teach what? Whatever you think? No.

Teach and exhort these things. Then he goes on to say what these things. And he follows it with, if anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words.

And then it describes wholesome words. What are wholesome words? The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are wholesome words. Did our Lord Jesus Christ say, all faith are one family? Did he? Would our Lord Jesus Christ say, but the Muslims in us are brothers? Or did our Lord Jesus Christ say, I am the way, the truth, the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but? By me.

And if men say otherwise, I don't care whether they are a peasant or the other P word at the top. They're liars. That's what they are.

If they do not agree to sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ. And not only that. Look what it also says.

It's not just the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because the apostles are speaking too. And the prophets have spoken.

So what is the other thing they have to listen to? What does it say? The teaching according to godliness. See, that's the rub. What did Jesus say men were going to be persecuting us for in our day? Righteousness.

Godliness. See, that's what men don't want to hear. They don't want the description of godliness according to the word.

They want their own definition of godliness. Because the Bible says that terrible times are coming in the last days. Men shall be, number one, lovers of themselves.

Number two, lovers of money. Volatile, proud, abusive, disobedient, arrogant, despisers of that which is good. Haters of good men.

And it says, yet, lovers of pleasure. More than lovers of God. Yet what? Having a form of godliness.

While denying the power thereof. And you know what it says about such people? What's the last thing it says about such people? Right. From such, turn away.

Now, that leads me right to the second thing I want to talk about. They first devoted themselves to the sound words of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the teachings of the apostles. That's the foundation.

So it has to be the foundation of the teachings of the apostles and of the words of our Lord for it to be a New Testament church. Secondly, it is a fellowship. It's a fellowship of light.

Because it just said there's some people you have to do what to? Rebuke or draw away from. Now what does the word fellowship mean? What's the word fellowship? Some of you know this. Right, to have all things in common.

It comes from the Greek word koinonia. We get our English word coin. Why is that word? It was what you exchanged commonly.

Everyone has coins. And if you have merchandise, you exchange coins for the merchandise. It's that which you commonly exchange.

Well, if you devote yourselves to the fellowship, it has to be a fellowship of light. Here's why. Turn to 1 John chapter 1. It makes it very clear.

John is going to sum up the entire message in a short description here. 1 John chapter 1, verses 5-7. We're going to start in verses 5-7.

You want to read that, bro? This is the message we've heard from Him. It's announced to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light, if He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. So, you cannot have fellowship with God if you're walking in darkness. Not possible.

Our fellowship has to be based upon a fellowship of light. Because John sums up the message this way. In all the words of Jesus Christ, in all the words of the apostles, in all the words of the prophets, here's how it can be summed up.

God is light and He wants nothing to do with darkness. And if you want to have in common with God, you and I better have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness. And if you have too much in common with Hollywood, you are already having fellowship with the fruitless deeds of darkness.

You had better be careful. See, it is a fellowship of light. The word ekklesia means called out assembly.

Called out of where? Darkness. Darkness. What did Jesus Christ describe as the place of darkness? The world.

If you have things in common with the world, you are not in fellowship with the fellowship of light. Ephesians. Turn to Ephesians chapter 5. And you'll see this again.

Now, you know, we would think this is radical. Now, what do most people think of the world back then? Better or worse? When we look in the past, what do we usually think of? Was the world better morally or worse? Okay, you all think better. Paul was warning them back then not to have fellowship with the world.

It's worse now. He said it wasn't good enough then to have fellowship with. How much worse now? Ephesians chapter 5 verses 6-11.

Someone read that for me. See, what is a partaker? It means that who shares together with. We should not be sharing together with the fruitless deeds of those people out there in the world.

And also, we get the word membership from this. Become a member of. Do not share in them.

Now, look in verse 13. Someone read for me verse 13. Okay.

So, what is the purpose of light? To expose. Light is to enable us to see things clearly. Roger pointed out, he's such a critical man back there, to Audrey, that the light bulbs we bought have a blue tint.

And he just likes to be critical. No, he was saying there is a brighter light that will enable people to see better. So, what is the purpose of light? Light's purpose is to drive out darkness and to expose darkness for what it is.

Guess why I do now and then mention things in the world. Certain kinds of music. Certain kinds of pictures.

Because, y'all, it is the job of the ministers of God to be what to the world. Ye are the light of the world. What is light supposed to do? It is supposed to expose the fruitless deeds of darkness.

And I do not apologize for saying there are some shows, some programs, some music, some books, some magazines that those who call themselves saints should not touch. They should consider them so unclean. That's what the light is.

Ye are the light of the world. Ye are the salt of the earth. What happens if the salt loses its saltiness? It's worthless.

It's actually worthless. Now, is this going to make us popular? No. I think I'd be a real popular preacher if I cracked jokes.

I'm not saying you can't crack jokes. Humor is great. Humor is wonderful.

Laughter is good, isn't it? The Bible says sorrow is better. You know your Bible? Laughter is good medicine. The Bible says sorrow is good for the heart.

So, it's good to have both. We just want to be sober. Not somber.

Sober. Sober is alert. Somber is down.

We rejoice in the Lord always. We don't want to be that way. Look in John chapter 3. This is what's going to happen if we really are people of the light.

Walking in the light. Having a fellowship with the light. We are the light.

This brings us home. If someone would read verses 19 and 20 of John chapter 3. 19 through 20. 19 through 21, let's say.

So, you know what the message is for the world? And the word here in the Greek is katakrino. The judgment down. The final verdict.

The condemning statement is, God has sent light to the world. God has sent light to the world in the form of His prophets. In the fullness, in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ, who said, I am the light of the world.

He sent this light, but did men like the light God sent? No. And if you love your way of life, and the light comes, and you're defending your way of life against the light, what's the attitude? No one can serve two masters. He will either love the one and cling to the other, or he will do what? Hate the one.

And if you are defending the way you live, if the world defends the way it lives, and we are the light of the world, and light's purpose is to manifest the fruitless, pointless vanity that the world lives in, then what is the side effect for us? Jesus said, if they hate me, they'll hate you. Only those who, fortunately, only those who reject the light, who are wanting to defend their way of life. It is a fellowship of light.

And two cannot walk together except they be agreed, can they? This is not possible. And the last thing I want to talk about, not only is it, you have to have the foundation of teaching, you have to have the fellowship of light, the last thing you have, and now don't panic when I say this, give me a minute to explain this. You know what the early church was? It was a fraternity of death.

It was a fraternity of death. What do I mean by that? What's a fraternity? Fraternity is a brotherhood. How could the New Testament be a brotherhood of death? Alright, that's a good question.

Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Hang in there with me.

1 Corinthians chapter 11. Would someone read verse 26 for me? Okay. Every week here, we observe the supper of the Lord.

Every single week, what are we proclaiming loud and clear? What? Alright, the death of the Lord in that, and Bill's right, and with his resurrection included. We are in a fraternity of death, and let me take it a step further. What kind of death? Death to sin.

We are supposed to be people who are dead to sin, alive unto God. The world are people who are alive unto sin, and dead unto God. He that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son hath not life. He won't even see life, because why? One day, the wrath of God will consume him? It says, because the wrath of God abideth on him presently. It's hanging over him.

Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, pictured hell as the place that only the grace of God kept sinners out of by something as thin as a spiderweb's string. That they were so ready to plunge into hell, that God's wrath was so awesome to sinners, and he painted it by the mercy and grace of God in such a way, and the Spirit was so mighty during the sermon, that hundreds and thousands of people were converted to escape the wrath of God, in a beautiful way. It's a very famous sermon.

Turn into Romans 6, Romans 6 to just see this fraternity of death in action. Let's see it spelled out how Paul told us to think here in Romans 6. Someone read verses 3-5. Amen.

You see? If you've been united with Christ, you've been united into His death. Now, let's look at His death. This verse, this chapter, explains His death in verses 10 and 11.

Brother Grady, since you already read that, would you read 10 and 11 too? Sure. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life He lives, He lives to God. Likewise, you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord, or in the same way be dead to sin in the same way Christ.

In the same way. If it says the death Christ died, He died to sin. And the life He lives, He lives to God.

In the same way, we are supposed to be the fraternity of those who are dead to sin. We're dead to sin. It's not our ruling power anymore.

It does not control us anymore. Now the grace of God is reigning in our hearts. Now Christ sits in the throne of our hearts, directing us to do the will of the Father we're used to.

In our past life, before we came to Christ, we were slaves of sin, compelled to do wrong. That's past. Those who've come to Christ and have been united with Him in the likeness of His death are dead to sin and alive unto God.

But you know, it's not only dead to sin. It's not just dead to sin. This fraternity of death is a death to something else as well.

And Paul said so in Galatians chapter 6. Turn there, see if you can find it. Do a detective hunt. See what you can find Paul was dead to in Galatians chapter 6. As soon as someone finds it, you can say it.

What else was he dead to? What did you say, Christopher? The world. The world. Look in verse 14.

Christopher, would you read that verse for us? 6.14. Well, if someone's been crucified, they are dead. They're dead. And so, if you are really participating in the death of Christ, you're dead to the world.

See, the world, what does that mean? The world doesn't control you. The world doesn't rule you. Here's what it means by that.

You don't think like the world thinks. You don't necessarily have to go along with the world's fads and fashions. What's popular with the world, you can be dead to that.

What does it matter what's popular with the world? What if all the world suddenly thinks planting a big red dot in the middle of your forehead is wonderful? I mean, you're not going to run and do it. I mean, how many of you men have pierced your nose yet? See, you're dead to that, aren't you, in a way? It hasn't affected you. Well, we need to die to the world's influence and the world's culture, and we need to make sure our fellowship is with those who died to sin, died to the world.

And when that becomes those things that we're devoted to, when we devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching, and to having fellowship in the light, having nothing in common with the fruitless seeds of darkness, and we begin to have our devoted fellowship with those that are around us, that are dead to sin and dead to the world, guess what you're going to have on your hands? A New Testament church. And

they're out there. And we want to be one.

So, do you all think it's going too far? What if we just made up a requirement for church membership, and we said, well, you must die to the world? Would that be a good thing? Some people say, well, no one will join. Is that a requirement for going to heaven? It is. We might as well put the requirements on there now, then, don't you think? Didn't Jesus say, no one sets out to build a building, does so without first counting the cost? Let's say, if you want to join our church, you just must die to sin, die to the world, have nothing to do with the fruitless seeds of darkness, come out and be separate from them, touch no unclean thing, completely live to do the will of God.

And you can be a member of this fellowship. When you have churches like that, you have a New Testament church. Then we won't use radio or TV or popularity or relativity to draw members.

Then we'll let the Spirit of God draw people who He draws. And He'll be pleased. And that's what we need.

Oh, I am done early.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11007.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/alan-martin/foundations-fellowship-and-fraternity/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net