

Our Daily Homily - 1 Corinthians

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of our partnership with Christ, the quality of our actions, and the necessity of love and discernment in the Christian life.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 Corinthians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 3:10, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 Corinthians 7:24, 1 Corinthians 8:13, 1 Corinthians 9:27, 1 Corinthians 13:13

Topics: "Fellowship with Christ", "Building a Godly Life"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the profound partnership believers have with Jesus Christ, highlighting that we are called into fellowship with Him in His redemptive work and glory. This partnership assures us that Christ's interests are our own, and we can rely on His resources to meet our needs. Meyer encourages believers to recognize their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and to build their lives with care, ensuring that every action contributes to a structure of gold, silver, and precious stones. He also stresses the importance of love as the greatest virtue, which binds all other qualities together and reflects God's nature. Ultimately, Meyer calls for a life lived in constant communion with God, where every aspect is dedicated to His glory.

Transcript

Called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord - 1 Corinthians 1:9

The word for fellowship is the same that is employed in Luke 5:10, of James and John being partners with Simon. We have been called into partnership with the Son of God, in His redemptive purposes, His love and tears for men, and ultimately in His triumph and glory. He has entered into partnership with man, and we are now summoned into partnership with Him through the communion of the Holy Ghost. In the words of the apostle, "our fellowship [or partnership] is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

How fruitful of comfort is the thought that Christ's interests are ours, and that we are at liberty to draw upon His resources to the uttermost. Suppose a poor clerk were to be summoned from his desk into the counting-house of a Rothschild, and informed that from that moment he was taken into partnership with the firm: would it not be less of an honor than this which has fallen to our lot? Association with millionaires in money-making were infinitely less desirable than association with the Son of God in world-saving. And would that poor clerk feel any anxiety as to his share in meeting the immense liabilities of the concern? However great they might be, he would know that the resources of the firm were adequate, and he would be able to sleep easily at night, though millions were due on the morrow. Child of God, cannot thy Father

meet all His Son's engagements?

The call to this partnership is from the Father. It is He who has chosen us for this high honor of cooperating with His Son. Will He have led us into such an association, and leave us to be overwhelmed by the difficulties of the situation He has created? It cannot be! He will supply all our need.

God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit - 1 Corinthians 2:10

Eyes of my soul, ye have no need to wait until the vail of the flesh that screens off the beatific vision has been rent in twain by the mighty hands of the Angel of Death, ere ye behold the land that floweth with milk and honey!

Ears of my heart, ye need not remain dull and listless till the peal of the archangel's trumpet thrill you, and summon you to the music of the harpers harping on their harps or the chime of the glassy sea.

Heart of mine, be expectant! Awake! Lo, there shall come into thee, penetrating, pervading, filling thy every recess, all those blessed things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. They shall enter thee, as a retinue of knights might enter a beleaguered castle to make it strong against any possible combination of the foe.

Only I must love God. Through Isaiah I am taught that I must wait for Him (Isa 54:4); here I learn that I must love. For love is quick to know. He that loveth knoweth God. It was the apostle whom Jesus loved that beheld Him on the margin of the lake. It is to the warm, tender atmosphere of loving hearts that the unchecked, ungrieved Spirit unfolds His secrets. Let me, therefore, bathe myself in the gracious atmosphere of my Saviour's presence, never going outside its genial glow, never falling behind His going forth, until I am entrusted, through the Spirit, with the deep things of God.

"God only knows the love of God;

Oh that it now were shed abroad

In this poor stony heart!

For love I sigh, for love I pine,

This only portion, Lord, be mine--

Be mine this better part!"

Let every man take heed how he buildeth - 1 Corinthians 3:10

A fitting illustration of the Christian life for the people of Corinth, famed for its architecture. We are all builders, whether we choose or not! We may be temple-builders! Each heart, each life, each character, may become a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Every act we do, every word we utter, the way in which we spend any moments of our time, is either a fragment of gold, silver, and precious stones, or of wood, hay, and stubble, built into the rising structure of the erection entrusted to our skill and pains. It does not so much matter what we do, but how we do it. Every time we perform any action with the best motives and spirit, we deposit a tiny grain of gold-dust; whenever, on the other hand, we do aught after a slovenly, superficial, and careless manner, we weave

into the structure of character a material which will yield as inevitably in the hour of temptation as wood, hay, and stubble before flame.

We sometimes, at the end of the day, reviewing the past hours, bitterly lament that we have done nothing in the way of character-building. "There is nothing to show for this day," we say mentally to ourselves. Ah! but there is. Every moment has left its record on your heart. Every act has left you confirmed in a good habit or in a bad one. The soul-life has not halted for a second; one has been growing to moral health, or toward decrepitude, consumption, and decay. If not gold, then wood; if not silver, then hay; if not costly stones, then stubble.

We shall not be saved on account of our works. The only thing that can secure salvation is the being built into God's foundation, the Rock Christ Jesus. But we shall be rewarded according to the manner in which we have built up the structure.

He that judgeth me is the Lord - 1 Corinthians 4:4

There are four courts of trial.

First: Man's judgment.--It is significantly spoken of as man's "day." Our conduct is narrowly scrutinized and weighed by many eyes which we know not of, but which are fixed on every act and word--the eyes of our neighbors, associates, fellow-work people, servants. They are ever reasoning about us, comparing our lives with our professions, partly with the view of excusing themselves, if there is any gross inconsistency. But, after all, their verdict need not greatly move us. It is only for a day.

Second: The judgment of fellow- Christians. --We are perpetually being summoned before the court of the church circle to which we belong; not always because we are inconsistent with our professions, but whenever we overstep the pace at which the majority is slowly moving. To be too zealous, too eager, too earnest, too particular, will, in some Christian communities, expose to a great deal of adverse criticism. But we have not to look right and left to get the sentence of our fellow-believers when we are clearly prompted by the Spirit of God.

Third: The judgment of conscience.--" I judge not mine own self." We are all apt to arraign ourselves at our own bar, and pass verdicts which are altogether favorable, because we compare ourselves with characters and standards inferior to ourselves. It is a great mistake to judge yourself, for even if you score a favorable verdict--if you know nothing against yourself--it is liable to be reversed by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

Fourth: The Lord's judgment.--The Lord will come, bringing to light the hidden things of darkness, and making manifest the counsels of the heart.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast - 1 Corinthians 5:7,8

At the time of the first Passover, outside, as the ominous midnight hour approached, Egypt gave herself up to her usual life. " They ate and drank; they married and gave in marriage." But within their homes, the children of Israel stood around their tables, their loins girt, their staves in their hands, with unleavened bread packed up with their kneading-troughs in their clothes, waiting for the signal to depart. The Passover Lamb had been sacrificed; its blood was on the door; whilst its flesh, roast with fire, was being eaten. For seven days, all unleavened bread had been put away out of the houses of the chosen people, because leaven, in the Bible, is the symbol of the working of the corrupt principle.

The believer should look back.--The Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for us on the cross. Though He had done no sin, and was without blemish, yet He was slain for us without the gates of the city. He made there a sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, oblation, for the sins of the whole world.

The believer should look around.--With lighted candle, search the heart of your house, that there may be no speck or mote of leaven. Let us keep the perpetual feast of the Christian life, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The believer should look on.--Soon we shall hear the midnight trumpet sound, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest!" and we shall go forth from Egypt, where we have suffered, and toiled, and been misunderstood; where also our Lord was crucified. It is but a little while (how little, how little!) and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy ghost which is in you? - 1 Corinthians 6:19

This is a sentence which should be deeply pondered; every clause is significant. We evidently should know its deep and solemn meaning. Apparently it is one of the commonplaces of our holy religion. This knowledge, however, should not be merely that of the intellect, but born out of the deep musing of the heart.

The holy temple.--Built up of the dust of the earth, our bodies are rarer than the most glorious structures that ever the sun shone on, because they are meant to be the shrine and home of God. Jesus spoke of the Temple of His Body; and if He was so zealous for His Father's House that He drove out the unholy traffickers, and refused to allow a vessel to be carried through the courts, should we not be equally careful? We are the custodians of the Divine residence; let us be very careful that there be nothing to offend or trouble the celestial Inmate.

The Divine Inmate.--Too often He is grieved, and driven to occupy the most secret shrine, concealed and hidden beneath the heavy vail of our inconsistency and unbelief. He is not driven out by our sins, but driven in. Whenever, on the contrary, we put away our sin, and walk in the light as He is in the light; whenever the vail is rent and the whole heart thrown open to Him --He comes in power to occupy every part of our being, so that there is no part dark, and the very body becomes transfigured.

The great Price.--Bought as any slave standing in the marketplace for sale! Ransomed from the direst slave master to the dearest Lord! The price --not corruptible things, as silver and gold--but precious blood! Our life is henceforth not our own, but His.

Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God - 1 Corinthians 7:24

Strong temptations to restlessness beset the early Christians. The great change through which they had passed from heathenism to Christ threatened to dissolve all the ties by which they had been held, in the home, the business, and the State. Very necessary and wholesome, therefore, was the apostle's advice. Stay as you are, until God clearly leads you into something else--only with this difference, whatever be the vocation of your life, therein abide with God. Paul was only careful that the thought of God should penetrate their entire existence; all else would come right in time; and he was only anxious that they should be laid hold of by that central, vivifying, transmuting influence.

Practice the presence of God.--A godly brother used to say that we should establish ourselves in a sense of God's presence by an act of the will, which put aside wandering, frivolous, and evil thoughts, and that

we should be continually conversing with Him; that we ought to give ourselves up to God, making Him the end of all our actions, and seeking our only satisfaction in doing His will; and that even the set times of prayer should not greatly differ from other times, because all were equally filled with God.

Such a sense equalizes our lot.--The slave realizes that he is God's free man; the master that he is God's slave. The poor are enriched, and the rich are convicted of their poverty. So this holy brother said that, in his business in the kitchen (to which naturally he had a great aversion), having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God and with prayer, he had found everything easy, and was very well pleased to continue in the same post so long as it was God's will.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth - 1 Corinthians 8:13

There are two principles for our guidance in doubtful and debatable questions. First, the law of conscience. The apostle does not hesitate to say that the scruples of the weaker brethren were unquestionably needless. Idols have no real existence, and the presentation of food in their presence before it is eaten is a matter of complete indifference. "If we eat, we are not the better; if we eat not, we are not the worse." At the same time, if a man were not able to reach this high standard, and still believed that an idol had a real existence, and that it was wrong for him to partake of food which had been offered to it, he must abide by that decision, and must on no account force himself to more liberal action. His conscience might be misinformed, and he should take every means of bringing it to a more healthy condition; but if it still remained stationary, he must accept its ruling.

Secondly, the law of charity. We must consider one another. No one liveth to himself. We are members of the body of Christ, and have no right to injure any who are so closely allied with us, and on whose healthy existence our own materially depends. If, then, we see that certain other souls are constantly being caused to stumble, because of what we do; not simply surprised and startled, but actually made to sin; trying to do as we do, but as often as they attempt it, falling short; unable to take our steep path without falling; always brought into condemnation when in our company; there is no alternative--for their sakes we must forego what is innocent and pleasant to ourselves. It may be a daily glass of wine, or attendance at some form of amusement, or some evil habit--but the love of Christ forbids.

Lest I myself should be a castaway - 1 Corinthians 9:27

Is it for one moment to be supposed that Paul really feared being cast away from the love and presence of God into the outer darkness with its weeping and gnashing of teeth? Surely not! Had he not said unmistakably that nothing could avail to separate him from the love of God which was in Jesus Christ! No, it is impossible to think such a thing. He knew too well that none of Christ's members can be amputated; none of His sheep perish.

"The soul that to Jesus has fled for repose,

He will not, He cannot, desert to its foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavor to take,

He'll never--no, never--no, never forsake."

But when the apostle speaks of being a castaway, he means that he feared lest, after having proclaimed the rules of the contest to others, he should himself fail shamefully of the prize. And what was that prize?

Certainly not forgiveness, nor eternal life; because these are not procured by any efforts of our own. These are not the prizes of agility or strength, but the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. What, then, is the prize? The context reveals it. It is surely the guerdon of winning souls; the blessed joy and crown of bringing to Jesus those who had otherwise never known Him.

But we may fall short of this. We may set others to do what we fail to do. We may appear before Christ with handfuls of withered leaves. We may yet be rejected. Esau missed the crown of his birthright; Moses the Promised Land; Saul the founding of a line of kings. We may miss utterly and irretrievably. God help us to watch and pray, and bring the body into subjection!

The profit of the many, that they may be saved - 1 Corinthians 10:33

Probably the world has never seen a more enthusiastic soul-winner than the great apostle. If he visits a strange town, he will cast out the demon from a possessed girl. If he takes up tent making, beside an unbelieving Jew and his wife, he will before long have won each for Christ. If he is cast into prison, he will have baptized the jailer before dawn. If he stands before a judge, he will almost persuade him to be a Christian. If he is a prisoner in a hired house, he will speak to all who come to him, and win a runaway slave like Onesimus to Christ, and make him profitable to Philemon. Always and everywhere, he sets himself to win souls.

Here, also, we see how this one passion ruled his behavior in all things. He was willing to yield to men in matters where only his own comfort, but not his conscience, was concerned. He sought to please all men in all things; not seeking his own profit, but "the profit of the many, that they may be saved."

Oh for more of this sacred passion!--such as inspired, for instance, the Moravians to expatriate themselves for the sake of the lepers of Table Bay!

A woman at the Presbyterian hospital at Canton, hearing of Christ, and loving Him, asked:

"How long can I live if I remain in the hospital?"

"Four months."

"And how long if I go home?" "Two months," replied the doctor. "I am going home," she said.

"But," urged the doctor, "you will lose half your life."

"Do you not think I would be glad to give half my life for the sake of telling my people of Jesus?"

And she went home.

Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body - 1 Corinthians 11:29

How many humble and earnest souls this verse, as rendered in the A. V., has kept from the blessed enjoyment of the Lord's Table! They did not understand the nature of the sin which the apostle was describing; they were terrified by the word damnation, and they felt that it were better to forego the privilege than risk the peril.

The difficulties will, however, largely disappear, when we understand the disorders that disgraced the Corinthian Church, and which arose from the abuses of the love-feast which preceded the Lord's Supper.

At that repast each disciple was expected to put the provisions he had brought with him into a common stock, from which all shared alike. But at Corinth, the rich and their friends ate of their luxuries; whilst the poor were allowed to go without. After such an introduction, the Church could not approach the Lord's Table with that appreciation of the solemnity and tenderness of the ordinance which could alone consist with the holy memories of the betrayal night.

The eating and drinking unworthily arose from not discerning the Body. This does not refer to the Lord's Body which was broken for us; but to His Body the Church. "The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ, seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body?" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). We eat and drink unworthily when we fail to discern that the poor, and weak, and simple, who belong to Jesus, belong also to us; that they are members with us; and that we are bound to share our gifts and graces with them for the glory of our common Lord. The one thing which disqualifies us from joining in this feast of dying love is our refusal to feel and manifest love to all in the Body.

No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost - 1 Corinthians 12:3

Jesus is Saviour, but is He Lord? Hast thou yielded to Him the Lordship? Nothing short of this will give thee true peace and power. Thou must be brought to say with the psalmist, "Other lords beside Thee have had dominion over me; but by Thee only will I make mention of Thy name."

Jesus must be Lord of thy heart; every affection must be brought under His most wise and loving control. He must be Lord of thy home, so that no conversation may be indulged, no recreation set afoot, no society entertained, which is inconsistent with His character and claims. He must be Lord of thy business and its returns, so that thou shalt live in perpetual communication with Him, along the lines of the Heavenly Telephone; and in the use of all its proceeds He must have the supreme voice. He must be Lord of thy plans. It is for Him to say Go, or Come, or Do this. That was a true message which Ahasuerus sent through the good Ezra to the Jewish people: "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven." I liked that word exactly.

But this perpetual recognition of the Lordship of Jesus is only possible to those who have yielded their entire nature to the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who loves to glorify Christ. Dost thou seek the attitude of consecration which thus honors thy Lord? Then let the Holy Spirit work it for thee! Wouldst thou have it maintained? Let Him maintain it! And if thou askest thyself, whether thou hast received the Pentecostal endowment, be sure that thou hast, if with all thine heart thou sayest that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This is the certain test.

The greatest of these is love - 1 Corinthians 13:13

What a light must have shone on the apostle's face as he broke into this exquisite idyll, this perfect poem of love! The change in tone and rhythm must have caused his amanuensis to look suddenly up into his master's face, and lo! it was as the face of an angel. Why is love greatest?

Because it is the crown of the other two, and includes them.--Faith is the root; hope is the stem; love the perfect flower. You may have faith without hope, and hope without love; but you cannot have love apart from faith and hope.

Because it is likest God.--God's nature is not specially characterized by faith, because there is no uncertainty with His perfect knowledge; nor by hope, because there is no future to His eternal existence.

But God is love; and to love is to resemble Him.

Because it will immeasurably outlast the other two.--Human knowledge, at best but the spellings of babes, will vanish in the perfect light of heaven. Eloquence will seem like the lisps of infancy. Prophecies will have no place, because all the landscape of the future will be revealed. Faith and hope will be lost in realization. Love only is forever.

Because love brings the purest rapture.--"Where is heaven?" asked a wealthy Christian of his minister. "I will tell you where it is," was the quick reply: "if you will go to the store, and buy £10 worth of provisions and necessities, and take them to that poor widow on the hillside, who has three of her children sick. She is poor, and a member of the Church. Take a nurse, and some one to cook the food. When you get there, read the twenty-third Psalm, and kneel by her side and pray. Then you will find out where heaven is."

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world - 1 Corinthians 14:10

There are the voices of nature.--The deep bass of the ocean wave booming along the shore; the crash of the ice; the silver choirs of the stars; the song of bird, hum of bee, shrill trumpet of gnat, the rustle of the leaves, the patter of the rain, the chorus of the hailstones--how varied, and charming, and musical! No doubt if we could listen to all these from a distance we should detect perfect chords.

There are the voices of human life.--First, the mother's; then of the brothers and sisters of our home (and sad is the lot of the lonely child which has none); then of the teacher, the minister, the friend, the lover, not one could be spared; not one that has not a significance; not one to whose words we shall not do well to give heed.

There are the voices of our daily lot.--Now we are called to experience joy, now sorrow, now gain, and now loss; now of the harsh reprimand of disaster; now of the tender assurances of sunny hours. Behind all these God is speaking. Listen, therefore, heedfully to all, and try to acquire the lesson He is longing to inculcate. What is He saying to you, by your circumstances, at this moment? Is it in tones of pleading, of remonstrance, of blame?

"Where is Thy favored haunt, Eternal Voice,

The region of Thy choice,

Where, undisturbed by sin and earth, the soul

Owens Thy entire control?

"Tis then we hear the voice of God within,

Pleading with care and sin;

'Child of My Love,

How have I wearied thee?"

But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept - 1 Corinthians 15:20

Words which are altogether transcendent! How they thrill us and inspire! What memories they recall! How impossible is it not to feel their majesty. Surely no brain nor lip of man had begotten them! They bear the

mint-mark of heaven.

On the day that Jesus arose, the first-fruit sheaf of the barley harvest was being waved by the High Priest in the Temple, as the representative of the myriads that stood stacked amid the stubble of the fields. It was the specimen sheaf--representative, pattern, and pledge of all the rest. The risen Christ is the pattern and pledge of what His people will be when their bodies shall be fashioned anew in the likeness of His resurrection.

He is pattern.--His body bore the same general outlines as before; so will theirs. It was recognizable by those who had known and loved Him, even to the tones of His voice; so will it be with theirs. It was the ethereal and pliant instrument of His spirit; so will theirs be. It could no more return to corruption; no more will theirs. It was invulnerable to disease and pain; such an experience awaits them too.

He is pledge.--He does not stand alone. He is united to us by a myriad indissoluble ties. What the power of God did for Him it will do for us. Those that sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him, and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up. There shall not a hoof be left behind. Not one purchased body of a saint, however obscure or unworthy, shall be excepted from the effect of the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. Meanwhile, in the kindly embrace of Mother Earth, like the seed-germs of a vast harvest, the resurrection principle in the bodies of the saints awaits the resurrection signal.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha - 1 Corinthians 16:22

This sentence reminds us of the saintly Samuel Rutherford, of whose Letters the holy Richard Baxter said: "Hold off the Bible, such a book the world never saw." And the late revered and beloved C. H. Spurgeon said of them: "When we are dead and gone, let the world know that Spurgeon held Rutherford's Letters to be the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men."

Take this extract, because it indicates how you may come to love the Lord Jesus as he did :--

"Strive to make prayer, and reading, and holy company, and holy conference, your delight; and when delight cometh in, you shall, by little and little, find the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall you be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the delights of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ; and then you shall not be able to loose yourself off from Christ, and to bind your soul to old lovers; then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, and wheels of your soul in a right tune and in a spiritual temper.

"But if this world and the lusts thereof be your delight, I know not what Christ can make of you; you cannot be metal for a vessel of glory and mercy. My desire is that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts to feed myself with wondering at His love. I would I could weigh it, but I have no balance for it. When I have worn my tongue to the stump in praising Christ, I have done nothing to Him. What remaineth then, but that my debt to the love of Christ lie unpaid for all eternity!"

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