

Communion With God

by J.C. Philpot

The sermon emphasizes the importance of communion with God, which is exemplified in the saints of old and characterized by fellowship and communion with God.

Scripture: Genesis 5:24, Exodus 33:11, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15, Romans 8:37, Ephesians 3:18, Hebrews 4:16, James 2:23, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Fellowship With God", "Spiritual Intimacy"

Description

J.C. Philpot emphasizes the importance of communion with God, showcasing how saints of old like Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and David walked closely with the Lord in fellowship and communion. He contrasts the genuine communion of the living soul with the mere lip-service of formal professors, highlighting the deep sense of brokenness, contrition, humility, and self-abasement that true communion entails. Philpot delves into the struggles and triumphs of those who seek communion with God, illustrating the ongoing battle against sin, self-deception, and doubts, yet ultimately finding rest and intimacy in the presence and love of the Almighty.

Transcript

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Nothing distinguishes the divine religion of the child of God, not only from the dead profanity of the openly ungodly, but from the formal lip-service of the lifeless professor--so much as communion with God.

How clearly do we see this exemplified in the saints of old. Abel sought after fellowship with God when "he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," for he looked to the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. God accepted the offering, and "testified of his gifts" by manifesting his divine approbation. Here was fellowship between Abel and God. Enoch "walked with God;" but how can two walk together except they be agreed? And if agreed, they are in fellowship and communion. Abraham was "the friend of God;" "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face;" David was "the man after God's own heart"--all which testimonies of the Holy Spirit concerning them implied that they were reconciled, brought near, and walked in holy communion with the Lord God Almighty.

So all the saints of old, whose sufferings and exploits are recorded in Hebrews 11 lived a life of faith and prayer, a life of fellowship and communion with their Father and their friend; and though "they were stoned, sawn asunder, and slain with the sword;" though "they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" though "they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," yet they all were sustained in their sufferings and sorrows by the Spirit and grace, the presence and power of the living God, with whom they held sweet communion; and, though tortured, would "accept no deliverance," by denying their Lord, "that they might obtain a better resurrection," and see him as he is in glory, by whose grace they were brought into fellowship with him on earth.

This same communion with himself is that which God now calls his saints unto, as we read, "God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," (1 Cor. 1:9,) for to have fellowship with his Son is to have fellowship with him. As then he called Abraham out of the land of the Chaldees, so he calls elect souls . . .

out of the world,

out of darkness,

out of sin and death,

out of formality and self-righteousness,

out of a deceptive profession,

to have fellowship with Himself, to be blessed

with manifestations of His love and mercy.

To this point all his dealings with their souls tend to bring them near to himself, all their afflictions, trials, and sorrows are sent; and in giving them tastes of holy fellowship here, he grants them foretastes of that eternity of bliss which will be theirs when time shall be no more, in being forever swallowed up with his presence and love.

Even in the first awakenings of the Spirit, in the first quickenings of his grace, there is that in the living soul which eternally distinguishes it from all others, whatever be their profession, however high or however low, however in doctrine sound or unsound, however in practice consistent or inconsistent. There is, amid all its trouble, darkness, guilt, confusion, and self-condemnation, a striving after communion with God; though still ignorant of who or what he is, and still unable to approach him with confidence. There is . . .

a sense of His greatness and glory;

a holy fear and godly awe of His great name;

a trembling at His word;

a brokenness,

a contrition,

a humility,

a simplicity,
a sincerity,
a self-abasement,
a distrust of self,
a dread of hypocrisy and self-deception,
a coming to the light,
a laboring to enter the strait gate,
a tenderness of conscience,
a sense of helplessness and inability,
a groaning under the guilt and burden of sin,
a quickness to see its workings, and an alarm
lest they should break forth--all which we never
see in a dead, carnal professor, whether the
highest Calvinist or the lowest Arminian.

In all these carnal professors, whatever their creed or name, there is a hardness, a boldness, an ignorance, and a self-confidence which chill and repel a child of God. Their religion has in it no repentance and no faith--therefore no hatred of sin or fear of God. It is a mere external, superficial form, springing out of a few natural convictions, and attended with such false hopes and self-righteous confidence as a Balaam might have from great gifts, or an Ahithophel from great knowledge, or the Pharisee in the temple from great consistency, but as different from a work of grace as heaven from earth.

How different from this is he who is made alive unto God. His religion is one carried on between God and his own conscience, in the depths of his soul, and, for the most part, amid much affliction and temptation.

Being pressed down with a sight and sense of the dreadful evil of sin, he at times dares hardly draw near to God, or utter a word before the great and glorious majesty of heaven. And yet he is sometimes driven and sometimes drawn to pour out his heart before him, and seek his face night and day, besides more set seasons of prayer and supplication. And yet this he cannot do without peculiar trial and temptation. If he stays away from the throne, he is condemned in his own conscience as having no religion, as being a poor, prayerless, careless wretch; if he come, he is at times almost overwhelmed by a sight of the majesty and holiness of God, and his open, dreadful sins against and before the eyes of his infinite purity. If he is cold and dead, he views that as a mark of his own hypocrisy; if he is enlarged, and feels holy liberty and blessed confidence spring up in his soul, he can scarcely believe it real, and fears lest it be presumption, and that Satan is now deceiving him as an angel of light; if he has a promise applied, and is sweetly blessed for a time, he calls it afterwards all in question; if favored under the word, to see his salvation clearly, he often questions whether it were really of God; and if his mouth is opened to speak to a Christian friend of any sweetness he has enjoyed, or any liberty that he has felt, he is tried to the very quick, before

an hour is gone over his head, whether he has not been deceiving a child of God.

But by all these things living souls are instructed. The emptiness of a mere profession, the deceitfulness of their own hearts, the darkness, misery, and death that sin always brings in its train when secretly indulged, the vanity of this poor, passing scene, the total inability of the creature, whether in themselves or others, to give them any real satisfaction, all become more thoroughly inwrought into their soul's experience. And as they get glimpses and glances of the King in his beauty, and see and feel more of his blessedness and suitability to all their wants and woes; as his blood and righteousness, glorious person, and finished work are more sensibly realized, believed in, looked unto, and reposed upon; and as he himself is pleased to commune with them from the mercy-seat through his word, Spirit, presence, and love, they begin to hold close and intimate fellowship with him.

Every fresh view of his beauty and blessedness draws their heart more towards him; and though they often slip, stumble, start aside, wander away on the dark mountains, though often as cold as ice and hard as rock--with no more feeling religion than the stones of the pavement, and viler in their own feelings than the vilest and worst--still ever and anon their stony heart relents, the tear of grief runs down their cheek, their bosom heaves with godly sorrow, prayer and supplication go forth from their lips, sin is confessed and mourned over, pardon is sought with many cries, the blood of sprinkling is begged for, a word, a promise, a smile, a look, a touch, are again and again besought, until body and soul are alike exhausted with the earnestness of expressed desire.

O, how much is needed to bring the soul to its only Rest and Center. What trials and afflictions; what furnaces, floods, rods, and strokes, as well as smiles, promises, and gracious drawings! What pride and self to be brought out of! What love and blood to be brought unto! What lessons to learn of the freeness and fullness of salvation! What sinkings in self! What risings in Christ! What guilt and condemnation on account of sin; what self-loathing and self-abasement; what distrust of self; what fears of falling; what prayers and desires to be kept; what clinging to Christ; what looking up and unto his divine majesty, as faith views him at the right hand of the Father; what desires never more to sin against him, but to live, move, and act in the holy fear of God, do we find, more or less daily, in a living soul!

And whence springs all this inward experience but from the fellowship and communion which there is between Christ and the soul? "We are members," says the Apostle, "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." As such there is a mutual participation in sorrow and joy. "He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He can, therefore, "be touched with the feelings of our infirmities," can pity and sympathize; and thus, as we may cast upon him our sins and sorrows, when faith enables, so can he supply, out of his own fullness, that grace and strength which can bring us off eventually more than conquerors.

But here, for the present, we pause, having only just touched the threshold of a subject so full of divine blessedness. Such a subject as this, descending to all the depths of sin and sorrow, and rising up to all the heights of grace and glory, embracing fellowship with Christ in his sufferings and fellowship with Christ in his glory, is a theme for Paul after he had been caught up into the third heaven, and for John in Patmos, after he had seen him walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; nor even could their divinely-taught souls adequately comprehend, nor their divinely-inspired pens worthily describe all that is contained in the solemn mystery of the communion that the Church, as the Bride of the Lamb, is called to enjoy with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the great and glorious Three-in-One God!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-philpot/communion-with-god/>

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