

Being With Jesus

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing time with God and having fellowship with Him in order to overcome challenges and find direction in life.

Duration: 25:24

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Philippians 4:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, James 4:8

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor discusses the concept of vital truth and its importance in the Christian faith. He emphasizes the need for individuals to read the Bible daily and seek personal growth through their own study of the Word. The pastor also highlights the negative impact of smartphones on communication and fellowship, both with other people and with God. He encourages listeners to prioritize communion with the Lord and suggests attending prayer meetings as a way to deepen their relationship with Him. The sermon concludes with a reminder to spend time with God, allowing Him to speak to and guide individuals through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

In January, I started a series called Vital Truth. Someone asked me, what's the difference between vital truth and truth? So there's all kinds of truths in the Bible, and they're all important, and we're to read our Bibles every day. The growth of a Christian is not supposed to come from sermons from a pastor.

It's supposed to come from every day reading the Word and saying, God, teach us. One of the worst things a pastor can do that I shared at the Cove is to read the Bible for sermon topics and read it for text verses to use for sermons. That's the worst way to read the Bible for a minister.

He's supposed to read it for himself, not to preach. We all need to be fed this Word. Well, there's truths about, let's say, what exactly is gonna happen at the end times, eschatology, the coming of the Lord, and there's different views on that.

There's truth in the Bible about that, especially Jesus is coming again at any moment. The church is gonna be lifted up to meet him. Then what happens or what happens preceding that and the mark of the beast and the Antichrist and all of that, that's truth we need to discuss it, but it's not vital truth to salvation and to your growth as a Christian.

The gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12, that is very, very close to, I think, vital truth, although you can be saved without knowing anything about that or having it emphasized in your church, unfortunately, which happens in a lot of places. But vital truth are these things that I wanna take as many weeks as it takes to give you because this is a necessity to grow in grace, to be a strong Christian, to be a blessing to others, to be able to fight the devil because we're all involved in spiritual warfare, which is another vital truth that we haven't got to. There's a place somewhere out in Colorado where ministers who have moral failures, have to leave the ministry or go on the shelf, go and a study has been made by the people there that every single minister, someone told me who's in leadership there, every single minister that they have to help answers the same response to the question about what led up to that situation where the enemy got the upper hand.

And that truth is also part of the lack of full teaching that we often give people about the calling we have from God as Christians. We emphasize relationship, being born again, to the exclusion of something else. And the answer to both those questions is coming up.

Let's look at a bunch of verses. First Corinthians 1.9, God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord. That word fellowship, koinonia in the Greek, is a word that means communion, fellowship, sharing.

It actually is used someplace of giving. You give, I give back. Let's say my brother Tim Adams, we have fellowship.

He shares his heart, I share my heart. We spend time together. The early church had koinonia, they continued in fellowship one with another.

God doesn't want us to sit here, then go home and not share each other's lives. That is very displeasing to God. He wants us to share one another's lives because we all need encouragement, amen? Now this is a thought, God is faithful, who has called us into fellowship with his son, Jesus Christ.

Let's look at another verse using koinonia. First John 1.3, we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have koinonia with us, fellowship. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ.

Notice the double use of the word koinonia here. John is writing and saying, we're writing these things to you that you might have fellowship with us. In other words, brother Tim and I have fellowship.

But our fellowship, now he's taking it to another level, our fellowship is with the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ. So let's look at one other verse. Revelation 3, verse 20.

Here I am, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me, which is Jesus saying to a church that's not doing well spiritually, look, listen, I'm knocking at the door. All I want you to do is open and I'll come in and have fellowship with you.

I'll eat with you. He's not talking about literal food there. He's talking about fellowship.

And lastly, of the calling of the disciples in Mark chapter three, Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted and they came to him. He appointed 12 that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. Let's get back to that first

scenario I gave you.

The first calling on Jim Cymbala, the first calling on every soprano, first calling on every tenor, the first calling on every alto, everybody who's a Christian here, every deacon, every musician, every keyboard player, every usher, every sound person, your first calling is not to do sound or to play an instrument or to preach or to write books or to start churches or to travel and teach. The first calling that Jesus gave them was that they might be with him. Then that he might send them out to preach and that they would have authority over demons.

Where would they know where to go to preach and how to preach better? Oh, they would get that by being with him. How would they have authority over evil spirits and have spiritual juice, shall we say? Oh, by being with him. So what did that mean to them? It meant they went with Jesus.

When he turned right, they turned right. When he went left, they went left. When they had a meal, they ate with him and they would bring questions to him and then they would listen and he would speak to them and they would just be together and laugh together and rejoice together and pray together.

That was the first calling. Don't do anything. First, just be with me because unless you receive something from me, how can you give anything to somebody else? And that's the answer to that question about that place in Colorado.

Every minister confessed that before the dilemma blossomed, they had broken down in fellowship with the Lord, communion, just being with him, with an open Bible, in a chair, in a room, all alone, listening, not just talking, listening, quiet, sometimes praising, asking questions, hopefully getting answers, getting direction, just being with him. That's the first calling. Now, we have emphasized a very important truth to the exclusion of the fellowship part.

We have emphasized relationship. You must be born again. He that believes in the Son, Jesus Christ, that he died for our sins, has life.

You passed out of darkness into light. Behold what manner of love the Father has showed upon us that we might become and be called the children of God. How many are happy to be in God's family, lift up a hand and say amen? So we're sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

That's relationship, but there are people, many in our church, many I have counseled, who have relationship and proof of biological relationship, but no fellowship with the person they're related to. A woman who got saved here, wonderfully saved, many years ago, she now lives in Virginia. She was molested by her dad starting at about nine, 10, horrible, fled, ran in the street, ended up in a terrible situation, topless dancer, drugs, just every kind of crazy thing.

Hurt, pain. So even after she got saved and found Christ, all those years, she told me, she had relationship. She could show you a certificate, look, I am the daughter of such and such a man.

Relationship, yes. Fellowship, no, no fellowship. And God had a breakthrough in her heart, and she went up to reconcile her to her father and actually told him, I wanted to actually kill you, several times, and hit a screwdriver under my pillow, and all of that, but now I'm a Christian, and I want you to know, the one I've hated, now God has put love in my heart for you, and she tried to lead him to the Lord.

Isn't that beautiful? So relationship is different than fellowship. So it means you can be born again and come to this church, or any church, and be born again. But your life is lacking power, lacking joy, lacking peace.

You don't get direction, what to do in life. You keep bumping into brick walls. The answer probably is, you're not doubting your relationship and my relationship, but fellowship, communion with the Lord, that's where we're lacking.

And we live in a day today that's very hard to have fellowship, because we're texting the universe. The universe is texting us. We have emails, we have smartphones, which lead to, many times, dumb lives, right? Smartphones make for dumb lives sometimes.

And our priorities are totally messed up. And now, because of the phone, we don't even have fellowship with other people. We only have communication with them, right? So that you can see four people in a restaurant, as I saw it recently, and none of them were talking to each other.

They were all on the phone, but they were having lunch together. I mean, why even go to lunch with them? Why don't you just stay in your office and text everybody, right? So communication, real meaningful, even with humans, is bad now, right? And now, more so with the Lord, we emphasize church as production, in some places with lights and smoke and camels and cannons and whatever else. But communion with the Lord, wouldn't you agree that many people are gonna go to church today in America and never make contact with God? Never.

They'll listen to a sermon, but a sermon is not God. They'll listen to music, but a song is not God. God is God.

And is it not amazing that He is the one that wants to have fellowship with us, not the other way around? Oh, let's just stop and think about that. He wants to have fellowship with you and me. Not go to church, not do good works, that all has its place.

But the main thing is, He wants to be with us. Have you ever thought of it that way? God is faithful, who has called us into fellowship with His Son. What He's saying is, be with me.

I will help you, I will bless you, but I love when you're with me. Now, why God would wanna be with me? He is my witness, I have no idea. But I know this much, when you love someone, you wanna be with them.

Any boyfriend who tells his girlfriend, I really love you, and then texts her once a month and otherwise does not see her, he is a liar and the truth is not in him. How many say amen? Because if you care for someone, you wanna be with them, and if you wanna read some heartbreaking stuff, study World War I and World War II, when soldiers from America were called away from their brides, from the one they loved that they hadn't married yet, from their children, and they had to go who knows where, to face who knows what, and the letters that they wrote back will just bring you to tears, because when you're torn apart and you love someone and you can't be with them, you can't eat at a restaurant with them, you can't take a walk with them, that pain is incredible, and this is the pain that God is talking about. Like, I wanna be with you, Jesus is saying.

He called them that they might be with him. I want you to realize that tomorrow when you wake up, because a lot of us need an alteration in our lives. We gotta get our priorities different and we've gotta discipline our time in a different way.

When you and I wake up tomorrow, should we, know this, he wants to be with you. Not with a lot of other people, although you can be with him in prayer and worship right here, but he wants to be with you. Do you think he wants to hurt us? No, he wants to help us, but he wants to be with us.

But Pastor Simba, you don't know how I lived. I'm not what I should be, and I have failed him so many times. He knows all of that, but after giving his life on the cross, don't you think he wants to give you everything else you and I need? But it happens most times when you're with him, when you're with him.

What happens when we're with him? And the pace of life today mitigates against this in tremendous ways, because we are hyper type A society. Am I not right? But the truth of where God's word stands firm, he called them that they might be with him. John says, I'm writing this to you because we love you, but listen, we saw him, and we touched him, and we heard his voice, and now we're telling you about him that you might have fellowship with us, and our fellowship, not relationship only, our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

That's the calling we all have. And even to a church that was lukewarm, it was neither hot nor cold, and they were Christians. Jesus couldn't say to the church at Laodicea, Revelation chapter three, he couldn't say to that church, listen, get saved, they were saved.

He couldn't say be born again, they were born again. But what did he say? You're neither hot nor cold, but because you're lukewarm, I can't take it. In other words, either be hot and fervent in your love for me and serve me, or be cold and not even know me, but don't be in between.

Just don't go to church on Sunday, and then I'm not part of your life. But notice his answer, and it's the answer I have found in my life, if I could share this to you personally, it's the answer to 95% of all my problems, be with me. Low, no commands, I stand at the door and knock.

Don't you hear him knocking in some of your lives, sir, ma'am, sir, ma'am up there behind me, don't you hear him knocking and saying, I just wanna be with you, I'm not gonna hurt you, I love you, and who you're spending time with, and what you're occupying your time with is not helping you, is it, that much? I'm not saying to be a hermit and to go away and be a monk and live in the desert somewhere, but we gotta find time to be with the Lord. How many are with me so far, just lift your hand. If you don't find time to be with the Lord, what are you finding time to do? Well, I'm too busy, Pastor, no, you said it, you're too busy, I'm too busy.

We gotta change our busyness, because without the Lord, what happened in Laodicea can happen, you go through the motions for a while, you're in the choir, you come to the practice. Nobleno, different, you lost something, that glow. Notice, the way to get out of a backslidden condition is just to be with him, and you don't have to talk and get hyper, you can just sit in his presence, just sit in his presence.

Notice what happens, when you're with him, eternity and invisible things become big, and the problems of this life become small. When you're not with him, the things of eternity and his power and his promises become little, and I can't do it, I can't, I can't make it over this mountain, I don't know what I'm gonna do. But if you just were with him, if I was just with him more, you would realize I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Can we say amen to that? But that comes by being with him. Lastly, have you ever had a good friend, a good spiritual friend, I've had a few in my life, really good ones, and no matter how you're feeling when

you're with them, when they get done with you, and you just have fellowship, you feel better. Anybody have anybody like that in your life? You just feel more encouraged.

There's a choir member who, every time I run into this person, they'll just say a few sentences to me, but I invariably leave saying, praise God, God is good. Well, imagine if a sister or brother in the church could lift me by just being with me. Imagine what being with Jesus will do.

Didn't our hearts burn within us on the road, confused disciples after he rose from the dead? They didn't know what to believe. If you're confused today, if you're needing direction, what you need is not a meeting with me or a counseling session first. You need to be with Jesus.

You know why everybody's seeking counseling, counseling, counseling, counseling, and there's a place for counseling, but you really shouldn't counsel with any of us until you're first with him. Believe me, he's a better counselor than I'll ever be. His name is wonderful, Counselor, and when he's with you, he'll iron out things, he'll build up encouragement.

Are you weak today, are you running out of gas, you're lacking endurance because we are in a fight, we're in a race, we're in a battle? No, listen, I can't tell you all the times that that word has proven true in my life. I was just with him, just with him, for five minutes, for five hours. That's why if you come on Tuesday night to the prayer meeting you not only can pray for those cards, but I challenge you, just come because you'll be with him.

You'll be with a lot of people who wanna be with him. See if it doesn't change your life. Turn off that TV.

Turn off that phone. Turn off everything and tune into Jesus. Can we say amen to that? Come on, let's do that loud and strong.

Oh God, how many times have you helped me? It's a lost art. Christians don't take time every day just to be with him, with the word, let the word talk to you. The spirit can also talk to you.

He'll never contradict his word. You pour out to God, share your heart, he'll share his heart with you. He'll encourage you, he'll give you direction.

Let's close our eyes. I described a situation in your life as I was telling you about my own and giving you examples and you say, pastor, that word was for me. I'm in a choir, I'm a deacon, I work in sound, I'm a musician, I'm a member, I'm in the balcony, I'm a visitor, but I want God to know, God, I need to be with you and I'm not even gonna wait.

Tomorrow and daily I have to change, gotta change my schedule, got to, got to. Not an option, got to. Because before I can do anything, I have to be with him.

Before I can preach or witness or sing in the choir, effectively, I have to have communion with him, not just relationship. I'm talking to Christians now. I know God wants to change that in my life, pastor.

So just stand where you are. If you'd like me to pray with you and I'll stay with you for a little while. Just stand right where you are.

Pastor, I needed to hear that. Balcony, downstairs, just stand. Lord, I acknowledge my need of being with you.

That's what you're saying. I need help in being with you more. I need to be with you more.

I need more fellowship. I have relationship, thank you for saving me, but I need fellowship with you, Lord. If you're standing, this was a special word for you.

Come out of your seat. Stand here in the front. Father, we thank you for your word and I pray for all my brothers and sisters who have come forward, that today, as they have fellowship with you, communion, sharing, you will bless them and make them a blessing.

And God, this is really amazing. Jesus, we're astounded. We need to be with you and yet you're the one who says, come and be with me.

And yet you do need to be with us because you love us. And love always says, be with me, talk with me, share with me, I'll help you. And people that we've loved here on earth, Lord, we love to be with them and we've shared with them.

We've shared what we have to help them. How much more will you, Jesus, give us everything we need in life? Just help us now, Lord. Not just now, but this afternoon, tonight, before we go to bed, tomorrow.

Help there to be a change in our lives. Not just a passing emotional moment, a service on a Sunday at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, but Lord, for me, beginning with me, help me to be with you more. Yes, preach, I'll travel, I'll teach, I'll do whatever you want me to do, but Lord, help me to be with you first, to be with you, to tell you what I need, my request, to love on you, to bless you, to praise you, to receive from you, to listen.

That's what we're praying for today, Lord. Closer communion with our Savior, Jesus Christ. I know you're gonna help all the folks who came forward, Lord.

They've humbled themselves, and they're saying, I need that, Lord, and you're gonna help them with the discipline and the self-control and the wisdom. Because we know the devil is against all of what I'm talking about. He knows that apart from you, communion with you, we're weaker, we're weaker, and he's a predator.

He's always looking for weakness. That's why your word says, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Let your power flow through us today.

For we ask it all in Jesus' name.

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