

Fellowship - Part 1 (Principles)

by Lance Lambert

Lance Lambert's sermon emphasizes the vital principles of true fellowship among believers and the necessity of seeking God's will in a time of crisis.

Scripture: Isaiah 21:11

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the current state of the world and the need for the people of God to seek Him and understand His will. The speaker mentions the Vietnam War and the rise of communism in Portugal and Italy as examples of the challenges faced by society. The speaker also highlights the battle for the soul of the nation being fought in universities. However, the speaker emphasizes the importance of unity and sharing in Christ, as it brings the beauty of the Lord upon the people. The sermon encourages believers to be aware of the work being done by God and to rely on His Spirit for empowerment and guidance. The speaker urges the audience to take advantage of the freedom and time given to them to seek and do the will of God before it becomes too late.

Transcript

I'll be back again. I did say, after coming last year in July, that I would never again come to the States in July. And as you have prayed for this good weather, I can't help feeling that the Lord had mercy on me and not you, and sent this cool weather.

I'm very glad to be able to be back again with you to see those we already know and to meet new brothers and sisters in the Lord. There are just one or two scriptures I also would like to pass on. First in Isaiah 21 and verse 11 and 12.

Isaiah 21, verse 11 and 12. One calleth unto me out of fear, watchman, part of the night. Watchman, part of the night.

The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night. If ye will inquire, inquire ye. Turn ye.

Come. It's a rather strange word to have, but I think it fits in very well with what Ron has said. We haven't discussed it together.

To inquire of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. If ever there was a time in the history of God's people when we need to inquire of the Lord, surely it is now. We are standing,

it seems to me, in the so-called free world on the brink of tremendous catastrophe.

And it has only been the grace of God that has held back not only the flood of evil, but of war and of very much unhappiness. I believe the Lord has held that back and given us all a breathing space. In the Yom Kippur War, we came to the brink of world war.

I don't think for a moment that most people in Europe, and I don't think here either in the States, realize just how far that seemingly local, petty, Middle East war went. But I believe that we have a time given to us in which we as the people of God might seek the Lord. And know, because God will give us an understanding of his will, what it is that he requires of us today.

You in America must surely bemoan the fact of Vietnam. Fifty, six thousand of your best young lives thrown away with nothing whatsoever to show for it. We in Europe must wonder what is happening when one of the bastions of our defense, Portugal, has gone communist.

And when another bastion of our southern defense, Italy, nearly every major city in Italy is now under communist administration. I travel through the universities of Europe and Britain and Scandinavia and I see first hand the battle for the soul of the nation being fought in the universities. It is hard to believe that things have gone so far in even conservative countries.

Now what has all this got to do with us? Very much indeed. We do not know how long we have before we are all caught up in the vortex of some worldwide strife. And in the breathing space that we have left to us, we need to inquire of the Lord.

Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning comes and also the night. May God give us grace not to sleep through the morning that is given to us. There is a time of respite, a time of freedom, a time when we can work as we have never worked before.

A time when we can not only seek the will of God but find the will of God and do the will of God. Before that night comes when no man can work. What are we to do? It is not only politically and economically that we see so much happening but spiritually.

We see some of those things, those movements, I believe movements of the spirit of God which seem to hold so much promise within them of seeing the purpose of God fulfilled going right off the rails one after another. Systematized and seemingly alienated now from the real purpose of God. What are we to do? What is the purpose of the Lord for his people? I believe the purpose of God for us, his people, is the same purpose that he has always had for his people if we only had ears to hear.

Listen to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 16 verse 18. Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Under thee have I given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

What we need above everything else to discover is what God really means in practical terms by this statement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Why should we become the subjects of devilish propaganda? Why should we, as it were, allow the enemy to impose upon us some idea that is all impossible simply and not only because of political and economic conditions but more because we see so many things that have within them the promise of fulfillment going right off the road, right out of the way.

Why should we allow the enemy to say that it is impossible if our Lord Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church and added for our comfort and strengthening and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it then I for one say the gates of hell are not going to prevail against it. We need to inquire of the Lord as to what he means. And so the burden that I have in my heart is very simple.

It is to do with fellowship, true fellowship. And in the times that I had by the grace of God I will seek, unless he completely changes the whole course as far as I'm concerned to speak about principles of fellowship. I hope that God will help me and you to get right down to some of those practicalities about fellowship.

We desperately need to know what fellowship is. For the most part the people of God don't know what fellowship is. We have false ideas about it.

We don't understand the principles that govern fellowship. And because of this so often we are at sea spiritually. And although we may grow individually we never really see this being built together in Christ as a habitation of God in the spirit.

That is my burden. I believe that in Zechariah chapter four we have in many ways the key to our present dilemma. As for many of you it's a well-known chapter.

But you will remember what it says here in verse six. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto the rubble, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before the rubble thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the topstone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of the rubble have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it. And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

For who hath despised the day of small things? For these heavens shall rejoice and shall see the promise in the hand of the rubble. These are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth. Our God has given his word.

The mountain that's of difficulty and problem and impossibility that stands before the building work of God's Christ will disappear before him, not by human might or genius, nor by our human activity or endeavour alone, but by his Spirit. Not his Spirit in some vague, ethereal sense, but his Spirit indwelling us as the people of God, anointing us, empowering us, gifting us, equipping us, so that this work of the building can go forward to its completion. His hands began the work.

His hands will complete it. And the topstone shall be brought forth with shouts of grace, grace unto us. God has given us a breathing space.

May we take advantage of it and not sleep through these days, not only these days of conference, but through these days, these years that we have, our freedom. That we may be enabled to really be in the centre of his will and purpose. Do not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

This is Monday evening, July 14, 1975, in Ashland, Virginia, at the Christian Family Conference, Randolph-Macon College. To the first letter, the first Corinthian letter, in chapter 12. 1 Corinthians chapter 12, reading from verse 12.

1 Corinthians chapter 12, from verse 12. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For in one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one spirit.

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee.

Or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble and necessary, and those parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness, whereas our comely parts have no need. But God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care, one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.

Shall we just have a further word of prayer? Perhaps every one of us could really stand together into that anointing which is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ, for speaking and for hearing. Lord, we bow here in thy presence, and once more we just want to recognize that we are, Lord, cast upon thee, utterly dependent upon thee, if thou art going to get something into our hearts of lasting value. And by faith, Lord, now we all come under the anointing which is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ, that anointing which runs down from the head to the hem of the garment and covers every single member of the body.

By faith we stand into it, speaker and hearer alike, that we may know a divine enabling in our speaking and in our hearing, and thus, Lord, may know thee in this time this evening. We commit ourselves to thee that thy will shall be done for this evening in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

There's one further verse that I want to read in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, and verse 9. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And it has been my burden to speak about, in the times that I have, given to me, about this matter of fellowship, and particularly principles of fellowship.

Now, it might be good if we were at the very beginning to define what we mean by principle. A principle is not a regulation. There's a very great difference between a regulation and a principle.

A regulation is something man-made. It comes into human law. A principle, really, is in that sphere of natural law.

Now, let me explain it this way. The speed limit is a regulation. Maybe here it is 55 miles per hour.

That has been made by man, and, of course, we are all bound to keep it. Nevertheless, you can drive in an area which it has up everywhere 55 miles per hour at 70 miles per hour, and providing the police do not see you and catch you, providing you do not have an accident, and providing you have no conscience, you get away with it. There are many, many such sinners here gathered this evening who have gone well above the speed limit at different times.

The police have not caught them, they have not had an accident, and they have had little conscience, if any. You got away with it. You got away with it.

It was a regulation, but you got away with it. Nothing happened to you. If the police didn't catch you and you didn't have an accident, nothing happened to you.

Body principle is a very different thing. If you were to go to the top story of the dormitory that you are sleeping in, or the house that you are found in, and open the window and step out, the law of gravity will take over. It doesn't matter whether the whole police force of Ashland is present or not.

You will fall with great speed to the ground. Is there a question? Of whether you're caught or not, the fact is that it is cause and effect. It is a principle.

It's natural law. Something happens the moment you step out of that window. You may have an hour of prayer, and two hours of Bible reading, and a day of fasting, but unless the law suspends natural law, you will still fall swiftly to the ground.

Now, that is the difference between regulation and principle. And spiritual law is all principle. It is cause and effect.

And we're not speaking about regulations of fellowship, as if God has given us a whole lot of things that would be good to keep, particularly if we have a tender conscience toward the Lord, which we will get away with quite well, if we do not keep, if we break them. We are dealing with principles of fellowship, which mean that if these principles are seen and adhered to and obeyed, then certain consequences will follow. There will be increase.

There will be development. There will be cohesion. There will be gifting.

There will be equipment. There will be a progress. There will be authority.

All these things flow out of the principles of fellowship. And therefore you see that it is of the utmost importance that we should understand first what fellowship really is, and secondly, how God has called us into it, and then we need to begin to understand some of the principles of true fellowship. Now this evening, what I plan to do, by the grace of God and the enabling of the Holy Spirit, is just to introduce this subject of fellowship.

I know that some of you will know as much, if not a good deal more than I, on this subject. But nevertheless, it's good for us to look at this whole subject again. What is true fellowship? I suppose fellowship, along with a number of other words, is one of those words which has been devalued by evangelicals.

What is fellowship? Some people seem to think fellowship is friendliness. That's all it is, just a little bit of friendliness. If a few people smile at you, there's a bit of fellowship there.

How many people know? There's no fellowship. Other people seem to think that fellowship is just a kind of bonhomie, a kind of, just a comradeship. It goes a little bit more than friendliness, but that's really all it is, a sort of sense of comradeship, a being sort of a little bit more together than just friendliness.

Others feel fellowship is informality. If you're in a house meeting, that's fellowship. If you're in a chapel, you've got no fellowship.

The more informal you are, the more impunctual you are, the more everything is more haphazard, that's real fellowship. If there's any order, that's bondage. That's not fellowship.

But there's an idea that somehow or other fellowship is informality. Well, there may be some informality, real informality in fellowship. It may be necessary, but nevertheless, that's not what fellowship consists of.

There are others who seem to think that fellowship is chit-chat. If you just don't have a little bit of sort of chit-chat with one another, a little bit of small talk, that's fellowship. You know, people say, I'm telling you to have a spot of fellowship with so and so, and off they go.

And it's just a little bit of chit-chat, a bit of gossip, a little few tales we told, perhaps a spiritual word from the calendar thrown in, and that's fellowship. Providing you've had just that little bit of chit-chat and lifted it on to a higher level than normal, that's fellowship. But that's not fellowship either.

There are others who believe that fellowship is spiritual talk. If you can get a person into a corner and give them a heavy word from Obadiah, or a kind of paraphrase of the Sermon on the Mount, or an outline of the Book of Jonah, or a revelation in three easy lessons, then that's fellowship. But I can tell you this, you can talk for hours on Bible outlines and there be not an atom of fellowship in it.

And you can talk about a motorbike together and have deep fellowship in the Lord. It is not just spiritual talk. There are those, of course, who think that fellowship is a meeting.

They speak of meeting together and that is fellowship. You never have fellowship outside of a meeting. When we're meeting together, that's fellowship, but not on any other level.

And then again, there are those who seem to think that it is a description of an organization or a society. We speak of the fellowship. The fellowship here or the fellowship there.

Strangely enough, the word is never used like that in the Bible. We never find that it's called the fellowship in the sense of a place we go to or an organization to which we belong or a membership of believers to which we are attached as some kind of institution or organization. Now, fellowship may include many of these things and may exclude others, but none of these adequately convey the real meaning of the word fellowship.

The Greek New Testament word *koinonia* comes from the root to have in common. To have in common. And it is variously translated in the New Testament.

Sometimes we have the word partner. Sometimes we have the word partaker. Sometimes we have the word participate.

Sometimes it is the word communion. We have all these words. Fellowship is another word, of course, that we have it translated as.

But I think the best way to understand this word is to use the word to share. To have in common. Fellowship is that we all have something in common.

We share something. And that is the basis and the dynamic of all our fellowship. It is much more fundamental than usually understood.

Now, listen again to this word. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, let me put it in a sweet translation.

God is faithful through whom ye were called into the sharing of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Doesn't that transform it? We have got this ecclesiastical idea about the fellowship of his Son. Somehow we are so used to the word that it just goes in one ear and out the other.

God is faithful through whom ye were called into the sharing of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. What is it that we have in common? What is it that we believers have in common? Well, let's just think for a moment. Do we have race in common? We certainly don't.

There are Asiatics here, Orientals here, Occidentals here. There are Jews, I have no doubt, here. And there are Gentiles here.

We haven't got that in common. Well, then have we got nationality? Certainly not. In spite of the American War of Independence we have not got nationality.

Why have we got every nationality under the sun here, haven't we, in one way? All different nationalities back there. Well, very well then. What have we got in common? Well, maybe we have got class in common.

We are all the same class. Are we? I don't suppose we are if we really looked into it. Maybe Europe has got a moral level and an equal type of class consciousness over this side.

But we haven't in Europe. Not yet. Well, then what have we got in common? Ah, we have got temperament in common.

No, we haven't. Why? There must be every kind of temperament here. Supposing we were to say our fellowship is that we all are alike.

We have the same temperament. You know, we can all shout Hallelujah again and again for all volatile people. Or perhaps it is the other end.

We are all cautious people, quiet people. But we haven't got that in common. Well, then what is it that we have got in common? Ah, we will say we have got denomination in common.

We are all Episcopalians. Or we are all Methodists. Or we are all good Southern Baptists.

Or what else? Or maybe every kind of thing. No, we have not that in common. Then what is it that we have in common? It is not colour.

It is not race. It is not nationality. It is not social class.

It is not temperament. It is not religious denomination. Then what is it that we have in common? We have the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is not a person in this place tonight who is a true believer who has not come through our Lord Jesus Christ into the family of God. Not one. Not one.

That is the only way. Jesus said, I am the God by me. If any man enter in, he shall be saved.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the light. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. Every single one of us, it does not matter what our colour is, what our race is, what our nationality is, what our social standing is, what our temperament is, or what even religious denomination we belong to or have belonged to is.

The fact of the matter is that we have all come through our Lord Jesus Christ into the salvation of God. We have come to experience a common salvation. It is one salvation that we have.

It isn't a Lutheran salvation or an Episcopalian salvation or a Brethren salvation or a Pentecostal salvation or a charismatic salvation. It is the salvation of God that we have come into through our Lord Jesus Christ. And now we find that we have something in common.

We are all in the one Christ. And the one Christ is in all of us. Don't you begin to understand something of what fellowship is? God is faithful through whom ye were called into the sharing of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We are all in the one Christ. You see how Paul begins this letter to the Corinthian church? He says here in verse 9, And God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Quantity of a modern version put into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I think it is much more accurately rendered into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. But even if we understand it is into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is the Lord that I am having fellowship with different to the Lord you are having fellowship with? Have I got an Episcopalian Christ and you a Lutheran Christ? Have I got a Pentecostal Christ and you a Baptist Christ? Of course not! There is only one Christ and that one Christ is unique and supreme, absolutely sovereign.

God has made Him head over all things to the church. What a wonderful thing, therefore it is when we read through this Corinthian letter and we come to that 12th chapter and we suddenly find the Apostle describing our being together in the one Christ as being members of a body. Why? He says in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse so far as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also is Christ.

Many, many members are only one body and Christ has within Him as it were, joined to Him many, many members but there is only one Christ. He comprehends all. He includes all.

Every born again believer is included and everyone who is religious but not born again is excluded. What a fellowship! My body is a fellowship. I have many members in my body but they are my fellowship.

One has his own fellowship and Brother Kong has his own fellowship. They are sitting there. They are fellowships.

They are sitting there and the front row. They are fellowships. My toe does not look like my little finger.

My ear does not look like my foot and my arm doesn't look like my thigh but they are all part of one life, one personality, one intelligence, what there is of it, one being and that is me. This is my fellowship. This is the fellowship of Lance Lambert.

My little finger may say I belong to the fellowship of Lance Lambert. I am a very small member but I am in the fellowship of Lance Lambert. I am not in the fellowship of one brother.

He has his own little finger and that is in his fellowship. But you see all these different members some which you can see, some which are inside and hidden but more important are some of the ones you can see. They all share one life, one intelligence, one name, one head, one body and every single part is interdependent and related to the rest.

It is a fellowship. A fellowship. I can guess what the Apostle Paul was trying to get at when he said God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have we not devalued the gospel sometimes in our way? We have explained it. We seem to have given the impression that all there is to the gospel is that you get saved, you are forgiven, justified and then you sing hymns, say prayers, read the Bible and one day go to heaven where you will sit on a cloud and play a harp forever after in a glorified nighting. It will all be a part of some eternal hallelujah chorus.

Now when do the world laugh at us and say, well that kind of thing belongs to the Middle Ages. Is that what their God gave his Son to bring them into? So they could sit on damp clouds and play harps and sing a kind of endless hallelujah? It must be very boring. But that is not the gospel.

The gospel that I understand is that God has saved us as we heard throughout Dr. Stephen Kong, some of us, this morning in that second time. God has called us and brought us into his Son to be as it were partakers of his divine nature. To be partners in his Son.

To become as it were members of Christ. I say that that is tremendous. No wonder the apostle said we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

That's the gospel. God has brought us into a fellowship with himself. God has brought us into a fellowship with himself.

Not just some kind of comradeship. Not even a friendliness. Not even a kind of, may I put it if I can reverently a kind of spiritual chit chat.

God has brought us into the deepest meaning of fellowship. He has made us partakers of his own nature. Through the exceeding great and precious promises we have become partakers of the divine nature.

That is the gospel. What a salvation that I have been brought into such a fellowship. And when you think about it of course it is true.

There is only one salvation, isn't there? There is only one name by which we are saved, the name of Jesus. There is only one foundation which no one else can lay but which God has laid which is Jesus Christ. There is only one life.

Jesus said I am the life. When you think about it all well it is simply wonderful. I am in Christ and you are in Christ.

And Christ is in me and Christ is in you. And when we begin to see it like that a whole lot of things fall into place. It is not taking the word of God too far for this is a spiritual entity which God desired from before the foundation of the world.

He wanted to bring mankind into such a union with himself and such a union with one another that he would be in them and they would be in him. And that the very glory of God would as it were radiate out of them. Not this idea that some people have got that the glory of God is a kind of spotlight that shines on you.

But that glory with which our Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured which as it were came from within him and shone out through his flesh and bone and caused even his clothing to be changed. That is the glory of God. We, you and I were designed for the glory of God.

We were meant for the glory of God. Not that we should become exhibitionists but that in union with God he in us and we in him we should know this fellowship this divine fellowship. Nor is that fellowship which God desires to be something somehow other that is an end in itself.

There are these little bless me groups that seem to think that the be all and end all of everything is that we should just gather round shut out a poor dying world all around us and just enjoy ourselves with the Lord. God help us. Our Lord Jesus Christ could have shut out a dying world from the beginning.

And not one of us would have been found in the kingdom of God. But he not only enjoyed his Father he laid down his life for his Father. And in so doing has brought in an innumerable multitude of those who have alienated and divorced from God through sin.

My dear friend I believe that even when we are finally transfigured in glory it will be service that we shall delight in. We don't even know what it will mean in the end. We don't even know what it will mean.

If you think that heaven is going to be some static thing where we all sit round sort of draping the sort of mansions sitting around on gilt chairs while angels wait upon us with various tasty dishes and tit-bit and then we are all called to sessions of singing you have another thing coming. It is perfectly true that we shall be caught up in rapturous worship. We shall be taken out of ourselves in the worship of the Lord.

That will as it were be something that none of us have ever, ever conceived of. So glorious and wonderful will it be. And some of you know it.

When you have worshipped the Lord with a full heart and there has been that ecstasy of joy that has come into you which has just given you a little glimpse of that glory that is yet to be. But you know God, genius will never cease. I don't believe that God will stop creating things stop producing things stop as it were progressing.

Never, never, never. I believe that God wants to go on and this poor old world which has come under the blight of sin which whole development and progress has been arrested will one day be released from that bondage of sin and corruption into all that God originally intended. And the wonder of it all is that the heart of the whole thing is Christ.

And those who have been brought into the fellowship of His Son by grace. Oh, what a calling then is ours. Don't you think it wonderful? Let us go back for one moment to this fellowship of His Son and just think again about this matter.

You see, we tend to think of fellowship as just a little smile here and there across an aisle. Or just an invitation to come back and have a cup of coffee. Or if you're on a higher level a cup of tea.

But so often that's the idea of fellowship. Or sometimes we say to people do come round, we're going to have a little more informal Bible study. Be nice to have some fellowship.

And of course that is fellowship. But it would be to entirely devalue the whole thought of God. To say that that is fellowship.

And all there is to fellowship. The fact of the matter is this. That by the grace of God I, unworthy as I am, insignificant as I am, ugly in sin as I am, God apprehended me and saved me.

And brought me into His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I am continually amazed that the sphere into which God has brought me is His Son, Jesus Christ. It is amazing to me to discover that He is my righteousness.

He is my foundation. He is the name by which heaven opens to me. He is as it were my clothing.

He is my life. In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. And in Him I find completeness and fullness.

All in Him. Isn't it wonderful? It is. I think I've said this to some of you before, but I will say it again because I think it helps us understand.

We take a well-known verse like John 3.16. We have this whole thing there. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And there are very few people who have the King James version or the revised version or the old standard version who ever think about that word believeth on Him.

Have you ever asked yourself why it says believe on Him? Again and again it says in John 3.36 for instance He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. Why does it say on the Son? Because the little preposition in Greek is a preposition of motion and really literally it is for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth into Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And our godly old translators of the King James version had much discussion as to how to translate this because it just didn't seem right in English.

And finally they said we cannot translate it believeth in Him because that means I here believe in Him over there and that is not true. The whole idea is that by my faith I am joined to the Lord I'm carried to the Lord I am thrown on the Lord I become as it were joined to Him. And so they decided on this phrase which you will find nowhere else in English literature.

Believeth on Him. I don't believe on Harold Wilson our Prime Minister. I do not believe on President Ford.

I believe in President Ford. I don't believe on the Queen of England. I believe in the Queen of England.

But when I am given saving faith by God through the work of His Spirit then I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Something happens which is unique. I am carried into His Son through saving faith God takes me into His Son and joins me to Him so that He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

And I am in Christ. Now Ron also has believed and he is in Christ. And Brother Kong has believed and he is in Christ.

But then have we got our own Christ? There is this dreadful term we have in evangelical circles a personal Saviour. As if He is some kind of personal toilet commodity. Just like you have your own face flannel or your own toothbrush.

Your personal toothbrush. Your personal face flannel. You have your personal Saviour.

But where does it say in the whole New Testament that we have a personal Saviour? We have a personal knowledge of the Saviour. But that is not a personal Saviour. There is not an Episcopalian Saviour and a Lutheran Saviour and a Brethren Saviour and a Pentecostal Saviour and a Baptist Saviour and a Presbyterian Saviour and a Methodist Saviour.

There is only one Saviour. And we are all in Him. And He is in all of us.

It is even more wonderful if I say Christ liveth in me and Ron says well that is strange because He lives in me. And Brother Kong says well that is even stranger because He lives in me. If we are all in the same Christ then the same Christ is in all of us.

Now we begin to discover that we have something in common which transcends colour, which transcends race, which transcends nationality, which transcends social standing, which transcends temperament, which transcends religious denomination. We have our lords in common. I am in Him.

You are in Him. He is in me. He is in you.

What has happened to us then may I ask? We must have a relationship one to another. There are some people who say strange, they all be careful of this kind of thing. Taking it too far.

Taking it too far. But if I am in the one Lord and you are in the one Lord and the one Lord is in you and in me, there must be some relationship between us surely. You and I have now got a relationship we never had before.

Hadn't we? But of course we have. That's why it says in Romans 12 verse 5 we are one body in Christ. It doesn't say we are one body of Christ.

That is perfectly true but that's how most people read it. That is because we are one body in Christ. We are all these members not only of Christ but of one another.

Now do you begin to see how just simply wonderful it really is that God has called us into this fellowship? Now listen again to this word. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. First of all take that word call.

There is such a lot in the Bible about calling. worthily of your calling. This word call is the word that we get from the root comes the same root comes the word church.

Ecclesia. And the same word elect. We get all these words from the same root.

Ecclesia. The church. They are called out ones.

But isn't it strange we always think of them as called out ones. Because in actual fact the ecclesia was an assembly. It wasn't just called out.

It was called. They were the called. They were only called out of all their homes and businesses to gather together in assembly.

Do you understand? Now God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you know that if you are a child of God you have a calling. And this calling is not only that you being called out of the world.

Called out of sin. Called out of darkness. But you being called into the fellowship of his Son.

You being called into Christ. And you being called into the sharing of his Son. I also think it is very wonderful when we think about it.

That from the very beginning God has desired this fellowship. It is in the very nature of God to want to include us. It is amazing isn't it? I mean really when you think of it.

So worthless. Little bits of worthless clay. Into which God has breathed an eternal spirit.

And produced a living soul. But you know when you think of it. God has gone to such lengths.

When we fell. When we turned away. God didn't give us up.

But he has called us back into his original purpose. That you and I should be partakers of the divine nature. That we should become his heirs and joint heirs with Christ.

I find it a very wonderful thought that God uses the word here faithful. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Only those of us who have seen something of this and committed our lives lock, stock and barrel to it discover that all hell comes out against any such thing as real fellowship.

Satan seems to have a vested interest in destroying fellowship just because it means so much to God. And when you think of this Corinthian letter, what a breakdown of fellowship there was here. All kinds of things in this church which were a denial of fellowship.

A contravening of all the principles of fellowship. But right at the beginning the apostle says God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you know every single member is vital in this fellowship.

My little finger may seem not very much to me but you know it has got a part to play somewhere in my whole body. Every single member has a part to play. Every member is necessary.

I often think when we go to some places that you could write over them that word in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 19 and if they were all one member where was a body? Because to go into many places it is all one member. Generally speaking the pastor starts the meeting leads the meeting, gives out the hymn, says the prayer gives the Bible reading, gives another hymn normally allows someone else to give out the notices and generally someone else to take up the collection and then gives out another hymn then preaches the word then prays then gives out another hymn and finally gives the benediction and really you must say he could write over it if the body were one member where was the body? This fellowship is something so wonderful it is simply this that every one of us is not only a king and a priest but we can come and offer sacrifices to God We are meant to do that together. This evening I am only seeking to introduce this whole matter of fellowship.

We shall take up some of these things and talk about some of the specific principles but it is a strange thing that all the historic Protestant denominations have believed in the priesthood of all believers and hardly any of them with a few notable exceptions have ever given place for the exercise of that priesthood. Fellowship. Fellowship is not that all the members do the same thing but there are many members with different functions but they are all interrelated and in one sense interdependent and that the full increase and growth of the whole is dependent upon the way each part of the body functions.

You all know what happens when some small muscle gives up. You get what we call in England neuralgia or sciatica and you suddenly see someone going oh! It is only the smallest muscle that has pain. You know what it is sometimes to put out a finger.

You would think when you put out a finger that really the pain and the discomfort is out of all proportion to the silly little member that has been put out. But it seems to paralyze or at least certainly if it doesn't paralyze completely makes the functioning of the whole body a matter of difficulty. But isn't it a wonderful thing when our whole bodies are healthy? For those of you who are blessed with good health you never think about your body.

You know you can get up out of a chair and get back into a chair and you can lie down on a bed and you never think once about it until something goes wrong and suddenly the simplest things in life that you've never thought about become really difficult. You can say that about many other things can't you as well? But really it's all a question you see of fellowship isn't it? When our body is a healthy fellowship well we don't even have to think about it because we can get on with the job. We grow, we develop, our ministry if you like is fulfilled.

I'd like to say just two other things and then finish this evening. I would like to just say something about the work of the Holy Spirit and fellowship. In 2 Corinthians and chapter 13 and verse 14 and I am not closing this meeting it says the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The communion or the fellowship of the Holy Spirit the only way that we came into Christ was by new birth. That was the way we came into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the way we came into this fellowship of his son and we came in by the Holy Spirit.

It was as the Holy Spirit, as we were born of the Spirit that we were born into the fellowship of God's Son. Nevertheless we must say this we will never function, we will never contribute, we will never grow up together, we will never be built together apart from the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to say that we had an experience of the Holy Spirit of conversion and that there is no more to be had.

The fact of the matter is that there is an anointing of the Holy Spirit. There is a fullness of the Holy Spirit. There are the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

There is the equipment of the Holy Spirit. And no, there can be no functioning of fellowship until the Holy Spirit is free. But when the Holy Spirit is free the thing becomes a spontaneous reality.

Isn't it a tragedy sometimes when we go as I have been at home in Britain and sometimes elsewhere to groups which know all about the church. They've got all the doctrines quite clear but there seems to be no functioning of fellowship. There seems to be no ministry of one member to the other.

There doesn't seem to be any being built together or any of this sharing of the Lord together. I have discovered whatever people may think about the Holy Spirit and His work for and against that wherever the Holy Spirit has touched people, touched a company, or touched individuals, you begin to find that they move into fellowship. Now of course we know there are excesses and we know there are extremes.

But how can we really know this fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord in practice, in reality apart from the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who empowers us and the Holy Spirit who as it were becomes the dynamic. When we look at the book of Acts we find a remarkable thing.

We find 120 saved people in an upper room gathered around the risen Lord with an open Bible opened up to them by the risen Christ. There could have been no more perfect congregation in the whole world. And I know that there would be many, many people here who would be thrilled to the marrow if every so called church in the United States consisted of truly born again believers gathered around the risen Christ with an open Bible and pure doctrine.

These 120 people gathered in an upper room had no question about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There He was in their midst. They had no question about the Bible and its authority and inspiration for He Himself had opened it up by the way it was the Old Testament.

There was no New Testament then. And from Genesis right the way through to Chronicles in the Jewish arrangement including every book of the Old Testament they believed in its authority and inspiration for He had opened it up and given them an understanding of the Scriptures. They believed in His virgin birth.

They believed in His miraculous ministry. They believed in His atoning death. They believed in His bodily resurrection.

They believed in His ascension and they believed that He would come back in the same way in which He was taken from them. But our Lord appears to have been afraid that those 120 would start going all over the place starting congregations of Dutch believers. And He said to them wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes upon you and then ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

When the Holy Spirit came it was one Spirit that came and suddenly there were 120 cloven tongues of fire which settled upon 120 units in a congregation and then the miracle took place. The 120 units became 120 members of the body. It was an essential difference that took place.

There was no more casting of lots to find out who should take the place of Judas. From then on they spoke the Lord with prayer and fasting and found the mind of God through the Spirit of God. From then on it was the Spirit of God who said separate me Paul and Barnabas and so on and so forth.

From then on there was no more rivalry or infighting in that sense although they had their problems and their collisions. You remember when Peter stood up to preach that day on the day of Pentecost. The eleven involuntarily stood up with him.

They didn't open their mouths to begin with to preach at least that message and yet no one said who does he think he is? Why doesn't he stand back and let me have a go? It was as if the whole eleven thought he is our mouth he is our mouth. What he is saying we are saying. He is our mouth.

We are as it were we can't explain it. We feel we so belong to him we are so part of him that what he is saying we are saying. We are right in it.

Peter and John saw the man who was a paralytic. They acted together but it was Peter who spoke and said silver and gold have I none but such as I have did I unto thee rise up in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The fact of the matter is John didn't have a bad time because Peter said I Peter is speaking for me.

We are in this thing together. We must never be afraid of the Holy Spirit. I do not know any single occasion in the history of the church where the Holy Spirit has started to move where there has not been excess or extreme.

There will always be excess and extreme and the enemy will work unerringly to bring in trouble, wrong teaching, faction, division, self speaking and so on. But the fact remains dear friends that what is right is right. We need the Holy Spirit, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We need the Holy Spirit do we not to release us in fellowship to release all the things the gifts of Christ amongst us. To bring out the beauties of Christ. To bring out the excellences of Christ.

To enable us to overcome fear and bondage and all these inhibitions that hold us back from really functioning in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second thing I would like to say in closing is this. There are some glorious consequences of the reality of true fellowship.

When the Holy Spirit begins to make this fellowship of God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord a living reality amongst the people of God some marvelous things begin to happen. First of all I believe there is an expression of Christ. Now what do we mean by an expression of Christ? One thing have I desired that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord.

The beauty of the Lord. I believe this poor world longs to see something of the Lord Jesus. All it sees are our meetings our talks our doctrines our preaching our activities if only the world could see Jesus.

If only the world could see the beauty of the Lord Jesus. If only the world could see the power of the Lord Jesus. If only the world could see the character of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus can never fully express himself through one Christian not even through two Christians, three Christians, four Christians. He needs us all to express something of his fullness and glory through. But what a wonderful thing it is when we are sharing him when we are really related to one another in him.

When we are moving together in and with him. Then somehow the beauty of the Lord our God is upon us. There are failings, there are faults, there are collisions, there are shortcomings and we all know them.

But the Lord covers it with his beauty. And people coming in amongst us touch the Lord and see the Lord. We are very conscious of the work that is being done inside.

The cutting work, the shaping work the fitting work the knitting together work. But when people come in they are not conscious of any tension or stain or problem but only they see the Lord. What a wonderful thing it is when unsaved people come to you and say there is something about this company I have never

seen it before.

I have known atheists come to me and they won't even say it is God. I remember one man who came week after week after week to the company in Richmond he was an atheist. He said to me I have been in Baha'i temples, Hindu temples mosque, synagogue I have been in everything but there is something about this people here that I cannot explain.

And sometimes he said it with tears in his eyes. He never found the Lord, not yet anyway. But even an atheist had to have confessed that there was something more than people.

Oh if only in Washington, in Richmond in New York in all the many other places we came from there was such a fellowship of amongst the people of God such a sharing of the Lord that Christ could be expressed. It is not only you know that unfaithful people need to see the Lord. Many Christians need to see the Lord.

There are many casualties amongst the people of God. Many people who are just downcast they don't know where to turn. All they see everywhere is what is wrong.

Oh that they could see the Lord. And then there is another thing that I would just like to mention about as a result of true fellowship and that is authority. Authority.

You can have your deliverance ministries but unless they are related to the church all of them will ultimately fail. I do not know of a single deliverance ministry that hasn't gone up the rails in the end. Unless it is church centred.

That is it knows something of the meaning of fellowship. Authority. Authority.

You know that God longs about everything else that his people here on earth should be as it were the means by which his authority is established over localities, over areas. We are wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers against the world rulers of this darkness against hosts of wicked spirits in heavenly places. There is a sense in which what God wants to do with us is to so build us together that the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ might be manifested in our communities.

That somehow or other the will of God should be done in the areas in which we live. We are so helpless. Do you know that I know some companies of Christians they don't even know what's happening in their areas.

That pornographic film can sweep over a city doesn't seem to bother them. That the Lord Jesus said you are the source of the earth doesn't seem to bother them. All they are concerned about is growing in the law.

They don't seem to think that it's their concern that they should as it were stand there spiritually and in the unseen touch in the name of the risen Christ those powers of darkness and paralyze them. It can be done. It must be done.

It is the job of the church to take the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ and put them under his feet where they belong. But if you and I do not do it, God won't. The Lord Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

But we have to say that the gates of hell have prevailed against it again and again and again. Why? Why? Because the Lord went on and said to thee have I given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and

whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. What our Lord wants are companies of his people so built together whose lives have been laid down for Christ and for one another that the authority of the risen Christ can be manifested in the areas in which we live.

It's not right dear child of God for us to just say that the Bible says things are going to get worse and worse and worse and worse and so we throw in as it were the ground and say alright then so let it be. Our job is to maintain things for God and to see that the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ do not overcome the work of God and do not destroy the building work of Christ. Now let me say this, if there are evil things in your area whether you know it or not they are affecting the building of the church in your area for all these things are spiritual entities and until they have been dislodged and paralyzed and bound there is no way for the work to go forward.

What did our Lord Jesus say? If you want to spoil the strong man and take his goods first you must bind him. Woe betide any believer who thinks he can exercise the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ outside of fellowship. Woe betide any agency of deliverance or anything else that thinks it can exercise the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ in that whole realm of principalities and powers of world rulers of darkness and hosts of wicked spirits outside of fellowship.

These are church matters these are things that belong to the realm of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. They belong to that realm of fellowship where we are hid in him. And lastly another result of fellowship is that the presence of the Lord is found on earth.

In 1 Corinthians 14 the apostle says an unsaved man shall come in and shall fall down and shall worship saying God is here. Beyond all our preaching, beyond all our meetings, beyond all our presentation of doctrine the most glorious thing of all is the presence of the Lord. When the presence of the Lord has gone the rest is so much paraphernalia but when the presence of the Lord is there things happen.

God commits himself when he finds people who know something of the fellowship of his son in experience. It is the presence of the Lord. I do not think that the United States could have anything more wonderful or more glorious than that in every company represented here in this place tonight it could be said the presence of the Lord is committed to.

When they gather, they gather unto the Lord. When they are found together it is the Lord who manifests himself through them. It is his presence that makes the lasting impression upon all who come in.

O may the Lord do it for us. God is faithful through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord. Shall we pray? Dear Lord we lift up our hearts together to thee thou knowest our need Lord.

O we pray that thou would not allow any of what has been said this evening just Lord as it were to be dissipated. But we pray beloved Lord that thou cause what is thy word to dwell in us richly. O Father blot out anything untoward or anything that is that has been said which has been imbalanced or wrong but Lord everything that is of thyself Lord watch over it to perform it.

O we pray Lord that we thy people in these days may know something of this fellowship in reality and practice. Work it into us Lord thou knowest all those areas of individualism thou knowest all those areas of resistance and rebellion. O Father by thy Spirit work in us all we pray so that we not only see what

fellowship is but Lord we commit ourselves to thee in a new way.

May we know that blessed fellowship of thy Spirit. O Father we commit ourselves to thee in the name of thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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