

Fellowship

by Manley Beasley

The sermon emphasizes the critical importance of maintaining a genuine fellowship with God for a vibrant Christian life.

Duration: 56:59

Scripture: 1 John 1:1

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by sharing personal anecdotes about his family and their current activities. He then mentions that this year marks his 25th year in ministry as an evangelist and announces plans for a celebration event. The speaker reflects on his 30 years of preaching and highlights the importance of maintaining fellowship with God. He emphasizes that many revivals have not continued because people struggle to maintain their relationship with God.

Transcript

Well, praise the Lord and greetings in the precious name of our wonderful Lord. It is a joy and a privilege to be able to come back to be with you this month, and I trust that God is blessing you. I know as I have come to this time, the Lord is being so rich and real and blessed to me and my family and to the ministry and to my friends that I am meeting along the way.

I've just flown in today from a meeting in Wichita Falls, Texas. A wonderful time, just a sweet time where I've been able to teach the Word of God and people listen to the Word of God and I'm trusting that they will become doers of the Word as a result of this particular time. And the Lord has been so real in what's been going on, and we're just praising the Lord for that.

And I praise the Lord for you, friend, as you listen to this tape. I'm not sure that you are really aware of just how significant you are in the ministry that's going on with me. In fact, if all of my friends that received tapes just stopped all at once, my ministry would be cut in half.

I would move out of the office and I would need no secretary. And Mr. Kearney that works with me would not be needed. And all the equipment the Lord has raised up and given us would not be needed.

And it would just be an unusual thing because half of the ministry would be out and would not be needed. And God uses you every month to keep this thing going. And I know that I'm not depending on you.

You know, as a person, I'm depending on the Lord. But the Lord has raised up people like yourself to have a part in this ministry that we believe God is richly blessing. And I trust that you believe that.

And you will continue to stand with us and receive the tapes and respond by paying and giving and so on. And just that we might see the glory of the Lord together. Well, this time has been a very unusual time for Martha and us.

We have enjoyed our grandson, our one and only grandson at this point, for almost a couple of years. And here last month, they moved off to Oklahoma, about a three and a half hour drive from where we live. And it's been quite an adjustment for Mimi and Papa to get adjusted to that little fellow's move.

Now, we don't miss his mother and dad too much, but we sure miss him. And I'm sure that only a grandparent can understand what I'm talking about. I'm sure that as a daddy and a mother out there, you just do not understand what I'm talking about.

But if you're a grandparent, I know you are sympathizing with me right now, what's going on. In fact, today, as I'm making this tape, our son, Manley Jr., is in Florida in a revival meeting. And his wife, the mother of our grandchild, is down resting.

And the grandmother, Mimi, is out buying that boy a new pair of tennis shoes. And I'm preparing the tape ministry. And as soon as they get through buying those shoes, they're going to come by here and take me home.

I haven't been home since I arrived in my plane this morning. And we're going to have a couple hours just to look things over and talk things over. Well, I trust that you will forgive me for my foolishness.

But as I said, if you're a grandparent, you understand. There are a lot of things that I'd like to say to you, a lot of announcements that I have to make. This year is the 25th year in an itinerant ministry as an evangelist.

I've been in 25 years. And my wife and friends are planning a get-together. And they're planning to get together the latter part of June, either the third week of June or the fourth week of June, just for a Friday evening and a Saturday, most of the day Saturday.

It will be a time when we come together for some preaching, some singing, some fellowship, just some wonderful time with the Lord and with each other. Just a celebration unto the Lord for his goodness and glory. And I hope you'll make plans to come and be with us if you can.

I realize I do not have the definite date. In fact, just today they're trying to get the definite date tied down, but they're having a little problem with a fellow by the name of Jack Taylor. And so if they get it all cleared with him, everything will be just right.

They'll have it made. So think about that announcement. Another thing that I want to say to you is about the Swiss trip.

We have just got back from Switzerland where we had our Congress-owned revival in Interlochen, Switzerland. Many years now I've dreamed of a conference where a great number of people would go from America to Europe. And then the Americans and possibly the Europeans from Europe and England would meet us while in other countries connected like North Africa and so on and so forth.

The Persian Gulf area, people from those countries would come there and meet us and let's have a great conference on revival. Well, let me tell you, that happened this year. We had a great time.

I mean a supernatural time. It was a time of spiritual refreshment first and foremost. And then a time of physical relaxation and just a time of unprecedented fellowship with God and with each other, people from all over the world.

And it was a hilarious spiritual time. The hotel setting was so beautiful there in the Swiss Alps. The Alps were so beautiful to look at.

The weather was just heavenly and the food was just out of this world. And we just had a great time in our Lord. And we believe that God wants to do this again next year.

It will be within the first three weeks of February. The definite date will be coming out soon. And I trust that you will be interested in this.

Or if you are interested in it, you'll let us know and let us help you. Some of the men are planning trips on to the Holy Land in relationship to this trip. If you're interested in that kind of trip, you can write us.

But my part of it, my phase of it will be to set the conference up in Switzerland and just go from here to Switzerland and back. Well, that's not all the dates that I want you to remember. The Lord has constantly told me that he would enlarge me and enlarge me and enlarge me.

And this year we have invitations from Japan, Korea and Brazil. And so we are going to be taking these trips. I want you just to mark these things down and pray for us.

Because you know, for me to take a trip overseas like this, first of all, it's going to be a task physically. And then secondly, it's going to be a task as far as eating is concerned. So I need your prayer.

So definitely, and I want you to write these dates down. We're talking about a time in August of 1981 in Korea. It'll be in August.

And then we're talking about a time in June of 1981 in Japan. And then we're talking about January and February in India. I didn't mention India a while ago, but I doubt seriously if I can even think of taking that on.

And then we're talking about a nationwide or a nationwide crusade in Japan in 1982. Now, these invitations have come in and I'd appreciate you praying for us. Now, this month, the tape is going to be on fellowship, something that I believe God wanted me to send to you.

I trust it'll be a real blessing to you. I preached this message in a revival meeting. And you occasionally you'll hear something you've heard before.

But basically the message is something fresh that God has given me. And I trust that it will reach your heart for his glory and praise. May the Lord bless you, friend.

It's a joy to be able to talk with you and have you praying for me. May God bless you. First John, the first chapter.

And let me make these few comments. I've been in the ministry for 30 years. I've been preaching for 30 years.

And it looks like after 30 years I'd learn how to preach, but I'm still learning. And it's very interesting. I have seen God send many, many, many Holy Spirit led revivals.

But I do not know a one of those that's continued. And the reason they did not continue is because the people did not know how to maintain their fellowship with God. And I have dealt with, I don't know how many Christians, you know, publicly and privately, I've dealt with just thousands of Christians across the country through these years.

And the one issue is the Christian does not know how to maintain his fellowship with God. And I'll assure you that in this congregation tonight, if you could finally scrutinize us down to the point of honesty, if you'd finally get us down to the point of honesty, you would find, beloved, that the issue is we would love to be back in fellowship with Jesus like we were when we first got saved. Even in our ignorance in those days, Jesus was more real to us than he is tonight after many, many years of learning.

And I'm saying this to bring this out. The issue is how to maintain your fellowship. The traditional Baptist concept of fellowship is if you go to church, try your best, go to church, try your best to go to church, and take a job every time they offer you one, and tithe after tithe, read your Bible, and pray, and try your best to tell somebody about Jesus, if you do those things, you're in fellowship.

But you may be as sorry and as mean as the devil wants you to be. Amen? Now, you understand what we're talking about. So what I'm saying is the traditional concept that if you're faithful to church, and you're trying your best, and you're giving your ten percent, and you're reading your Bible and praying, that is not fellowship.

That is not fellowship. But if we got ourselves down to honesty, we'd say, boy, what I need tonight is fellowship with Jesus. And I look at my own personal life, and the biggest issue I face as an individual is how to maintain my fellowship.

Man, I know that Jesus is real. But there's times when I would like to have him as real as he was when I first got saved, or at other times in my life. How to maintain that fellowship where he is real? Last night, we closed on the fact that Jesus Christ makes himself real by his spirit, witnessing to your spirit that you're a child of God.

And that's where we closed. And we said that you just know that you know that you know. And it's wonderful to live on that plane.

Now, tonight, we're going to talk about what is fellowship after we read these verses of Scripture, and then how to maintain it. And this is not a lesson I trust that I'll be able to preach so that we'll all be able to walk with the Lord as we should. But let me read the whole chapter of the book of John, 1 John, the first chapter.

That which was from the beginning, which we've heard, which we've seen with our own eyes, which we've looked upon in our hands, have handled of the word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it. And bear witness and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, and with Christ, Jesus Christ. These things write we unto you, that your joy might be full, or may be full.

This then is the message which we've heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. If we walk in the light, as he's in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, these things write unto you, that you sin not. If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And we'll just stop right there.

One of the most difficult things there is to do for me, is to really define, define what is fellowship. Because it's so beautiful, I just have a difficult time expressing myself about what is fellowship. But I do know this, that it's a relationship established.

A person is lost without Jesus, they've never been saved, they're dead in trespasses and sin. And there they are lost without Jesus. And the Holy Spirit comes along and awakens that person.

And that person becomes aware that they, he or she is a sinner. And that person begins to repent of their sin, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And all at once, their spirit and God's spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 6, 17, is made one spirit.

And they are one with God. I mean one with God. All that God ever was, all that God ever will be, and all that he is right now, he is in the believer that's been born of the Spirit of the Living God.

That's right. And so a person, a person is born of the Spirit of God, and fellowship indicates that a person has been born of the Spirit of the Living God. I mean, really made one with the Lord, brought into union with the Lord.

And it is also expressed that fellowship means a witness of the Spirit. Now this is where we were last night. It means that the Holy Spirit witnesses to your spirit, and your spirit to the Holy Spirit, a Holy Spirit witnesses.

And in other words, it means that there is a beautiful, sweet witness of God in your person, to where you may not understand that you're saved, but you simply know that you're saved. You know that you're really washed in the blood of the Lamb, that you're really saved by the grace of God. I remember in 1971, I was taken to Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, and should have died a number of times there, but I remember several times that they thought I was going to die.

And I mean, friends, and I'm talking to you young ladies that's having a good time back there instead of listening to this sermon. And I remember in that meeting, I remember when I faced death, the doctors were standing around, and they were trying to comfort me because they were aware that I was aware that I was dying. And there was no need for comfort, because I knew that He was right there.

And really, friends, an old boy said, I've been to the river, and I've taken the drink, and death has lost its sting. Death has really lost its sting. And I never shall forget it.

I get examined now by doctors, and doctors say, my, you really came close to dying. And they asked me, said, what was it like when you got so close to dying? And you know, it's beautiful to look back upon the fact that Jesus Christ was genuinely real, so real that the thing that you were most conscious of was that you weren't going to die. You were just going through the shadows, and you were going to pass on.

But what I'm saying to you is this. There was a sweet, sweet witness of God's Spirit in my spirit that I was a child of God in that very desperate, unique moment in my life. Amen? Now, not only is there a relationship established in this matter of fellowship, and a witness born in this relationship, but there is a life that's spontaneously expressed in this relationship.

When you're in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, your life as a Christian is a spontaneous life. Now, I'm going to tell you something. Are you listening? When you are in fellowship with Jesus, you have to backslide to keep from living the Christian life.

Come on. I mean, seriously. Now, that should make a backslidden Episcopalian shout.

I mean, just to think about the fact that if you are really walking in fellowship with Him, you have to backslide to keep from living the Christian life. You talk about, we today have been taught so much that you ought to try your best as a Christian, and do your best as a Christian, that we have neglected to teach the child of God that when they are properly related to Christ Jesus Himself by faith, that the Christian life is a spontaneous life. Amen? Now, for instance, tonight, what do you have trouble with in your life as a Christian life? Telling people about Jesus? Or reading your Bible? Or praying? Or with patience and kindness? Christians, what do you have the most trouble with? Well, whatever it is you have the most trouble with, if you were properly related to Jesus by faith, in fellowship with Him, that thing that you are struggling with would come natural.

The Christian life is a spontaneous life when you're in fellowship with the Lord. I mean, that's beautiful. Amen or oh me? I mean, it's beautiful to think.

You say, well, what does it mean to be in fellowship? It means, my dear friends, there's life and life more abundantly. In other words, there's more life than you need that's just flowing over. And the Bible refers to the child of God having a river in them, but also having a river that's just flowing, bubbling.

Amen? Just bubbling all the time. Not only that, but the person that's in fellowship with the Lord has a living consciousness of the presence of an eternal God that passeth all understanding, but he knows God is there. That's what I've just been saying to you.

Not only that, but when a person's in fellowship with God, there is the righteousness. There is the righteousness in the life that God demands and the world expects. There's the righteousness.

Amen? I mean, that holiness that God demands and the world expects out of you when you're in fellowship with God. When you're in fellowship with God, there's vision. I mean, there's real vision.

And I sense a lack of real vision among God's people today. I mean, my dear friends, they seem to think that it's all over and there's no vision, but when a person is in fellowship with God, there is vision in their personal life. There is vision for their family, for the wife, for the husband, for the children.

There's vision for the church. There's vision for the work of God about them when a person's in fellowship with God. Not only is there vision, but when a person is in fellowship with God, there's faith.

I mean, living faith, a vibrant faith, a faith that's alive and well. There's not only faith, but there's power. I mean, wondrous working power in the person's life that is in fellowship with the Lord.

They have victory in their life. In other words, the things that clutter up their lives can't control their lives and subdue their lives and overcome their lives. They're just mighty power.

So when they hit these storms, beloved, the power breaks the powers of Satan. Not only is there power, but there's something else in the life of a person that's in fellowship with God, and that's works. And we talk about works, but you get in fellowship with God, and I'll tell you, you'll have some works that will glorify God.

James says, you know, he said, you show me your faith without works. I said, you show me your faith. And he said, if it's real, I'll put it like this.

He says, if your faith is real, he said, I'll show you a man that works. That's exactly what he's saying. He said, you say that you have a faith.

He said, if your faith is real, I'll guarantee it works. Well, what I'm saying tonight is identically the same thing. I'm just using some different words.

When you have a relationship and a fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that's right. You will have works that will glorify the Lord. And we're all in need of these works, but nevertheless, that fellowship has to come.

Now, one of the things I want you to see tonight, and I'm just talking out of my heart to you, and I've got a bunch of notes. And the reason for it is that I don't want to get out too far and take you farther than I'm supposed to tonight. And I'm bad about getting off on one point and never getting through the message.

And so I have these notes before me. But one of the things that I want you to look at is the basis for fellowship. Now, I want to just stop here for a minute and say one thing.

Until the child of God learns how to maintain his fellowship with God, he can never expect God to do anything for him. That's right. Until a church learns how to maintain their fellowship with God as a church, beloved, a church cannot expect God to do anything for it.

If a church or an individual is going to merit the blessings of God, they will have to merit the blessings of God on the basis of their rightness with the Lord Jesus Christ. And they will have to learn how to maintain their fellowship in order to have a right relationship to Jesus Christ. The average church that I'm aware of in America does not deserve anything but the judgment of God.

I look at my own personal life, and I'm not speaking to you as an individual, but I look at my own personal life and, brother, I see so much inconsistency about maintaining my fellowship with God that if I got what I deserve, I'd go to hell. Not just as a human being, but as a Christian. As a Christian, I would die and go to hell.

I just enjoy the sure, just the very mercy of God. But there's some basis for fellowship. I mean some real genuine basis for fellowship.

For instance, a man, if he's going to have fellowship with God, is going to have to come to this matter of the penalty of a sinner. He's going to have to realize that a sinner is dead in trespasses and sin, lost and undone. A man that's without Jesus, and that man is going to have to learn that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, became sin for him.

He had no sin of his own. He became sin for him. And when he became sin for him, what it really means is that Jesus took the sins of the sinner upon himself and bore those sins upon the cross, died on the cross, and the thing that brought Jesus to death was your sins and my sins in Jesus Christ.

And then Jesus turned around and gave us his righteousness, and upon the basis of his righteousness, we are children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom, and we are on our way to glory because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us when we got saved by the grace of God. So the first step in the basis of fellowship with God is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on your behalf and my behalf, because none of us deserve any fellowship with God, because originally we were dead in trespasses and sin, and the Lord has quickened us and made us alive, and we've trusted Jesus, and beloved, we have been saved by the grace of God. So I believe we need to realize, you know, that the Lord is the basis, the Lord Jesus himself is the basis of our fellowship with the Lord.

Not only is he the basis of our fellowship, but the blood is the means of cleansing from sin. One of the things that hinders our fellowship as Christians is the sins in the lives of the Christian. Now a child of God can sin.

Amen? A child of God not only can sin, the Bible says a child of God does sin. And in fact the scripture that I read you, the child of God that says he doesn't sin is a liar and the truth's not in him. And in fact this portion of scripture just really bears it out, that a child of God may not be conscious of sinning, but he still sins.

And there's only one remedy for sin in the Bible. One basis for our fellowship in relationship to our sins, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ.

If you confess your sins, he's faithful and just to forgive you of your sins, and to do what? Cleanse you from all unrighteousness. So there is a basis for our sins being cleansed. Not only is there a basis for our sins being cleansed, but man has another problem in relationship to his fellowship with God.

He has a problem with the old man. And not only does he have a problem with the old man, but he has a problem with self. Now I started to separate these two, but I decided there's too much theology for me to handle, and so I just backed off.

And I'm just going to put it down on a very devotional level. But according to Romans 6.6, our old man has been crucified with Christ. Now the old man was what Adam and Eve inherited when they sinned against God.

And it was imputed all the way down. All the way down. Well, when Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary, I went with him.

My old man went with him. And when Christ died, my old man died. And when Christ was buried, I was buried, and when he was raised, I was raised.

Now I have to realize that this old man, according to Romans 6.6, is crucified. And I have to not only realize that, but I have to believe it. And as I believe it so, that it is so.

But if I do not believe it so, it's not so. But this old man is crucified with Christ. And I stand on the basis of the truth of God, and can have fellowship with God, because I have been raised to walk with him in the phrase we use in our baptism, the newness of life.

And I've been able to fellowship with God because this old man is crucified. Now, some of you may get this confused with the dual nature of man. But there is the flesh of man, and the flesh of man must go to the cross daily.

Must go to the cross daily. Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and what? Follow Jesus. Now here's what I'm saying.

I'm saying that the Lord Jesus has given us the cross where the old man was crucified, and where I must come as an individual daily and deny myself, and take up my cross and follow him. And on the basis of the cross, on the basis of the blood, on the basis of redemption, I can have fellowship with the living Lord. I mean have real, living, genuine fellowship with him.

And not only can I have fellowship because of the basis of the cross, but I can have fellowship with the Lord because of Jesus Christ, the living Son of God. You say, what do you mean? Well, the law is a problem. The do's and the don'ts of the Bible problem any serious child of God.

This is the reason why I think so many of our Baptist people are not saved, and I have no right to say anything about the rest of the denominations because I'm not in those. But you see, a person that is a serious, conscientious Christian, beloved person that really, really loves Jesus, has a problem with Mr. Law. And Mr. Law says, do this and don't do this.

In other words, Law says, love thy neighbor as thyself. In fact, Mr. Law says, love thy neighbor, if it's your enemy, as yourself. And to a serious Christian, the do's and the don'ts of the Bible is a serious matter.

And every serious child of God gets in conflict with the law. You know why? Because they try their best and they constantly fail. How many of you try, now don't raise your hand, I don't want to embarrass you.

But how many of you try not to lose your temper and you still do it? And when you do it, you're condemned. See, it's law that condemns you. And it's you trying to live up to law that keeps you from trying to lose your temper, or keeps you from losing your temper.

And I mean, it's a constant threat to those people who are serious Christians. And as far as God's concerned, if you're not a serious Christian, it doesn't count. Amen.

My problem is, I have to really work on being concerned about people not serious. Well, anyway, what happens according to Romans 8, 2 through 4, is this. Where man could not measure up to the law because of the weakness of the flesh, the inability of the law, where man could not measure up.

You know what happened? Jesus Christ himself came and inhabited man and lives his life throughout man and measures up to law and completely satisfies the law. It's just like this. I have a watch right here and I could drop this watch or turn this watch loose and it would drop to this pulpit because of the law of gravity.

And there's a law working in a person of sin and death. And law expresses that and shows itself mighty and strong in every one of us. And we sin against God and we sin and we try not to sin and we sin against God.

And so that law is working in our members. But alone comes Jesus Christ and he inhabits our lives when we're redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And if he has his way in our lives, you know what? He reaches down under that law and supersedes that law and overcomes that law.

And a child of God walks out with victory in their heart in everyday affairs in their life, wherever they're going, whatever they're doing, they have victory in their lives because the life of Jesus supersedes the law that's working in their members. And what I'm saying tonight, the basis of our fellowship is the Lord Jesus Christ who supersedes the law that works in our members of sin and death. And we can see the victory.

Not only that, but the basis of our fellowship, according to the word of God, is on the victory of Calvary where Jesus Christ won victory over Satan and defeated Satan and exposed him openly and made an open show of him. And my dear friends, we have the privilege tonight of walking in this world and have fellowship with the Father because Satan is a defeated foe. I mean, he's a defeated foe.

You can say what you like, but Satan is alive and well. And my dear friends, he is out after you. And you say, well, I'm not aware of him.

Well, he already has you. Every person that he doesn't have is well aware of him. Every person that he already has is not aware that he's working.

And my dear friends, the church is so full of the spirit of the devil today that most churches do not know that they are controlled by the devil. He doesn't care how religious you are as long as you are not like Jesus. What's the number one sin in the church today? Apathy.

If that's not a condition, my dear friends, you are not aware of, I'd like to know what it is. You know who's the father of it? The devil. Apathy.

But what I'm saying is the devil's effort is out to rob you of your fellowship with Jesus. The only person in this world that's giving the devil a problem, that's counting for Jesus, is a person that's working in fellowship with him. And Satan is out to break that fellowship.

But because of what Jesus did for us at Calvary, he defeated the devil. I mean, the devil has been given a final blow, if you please. A final blow.

I mean the word final. I mean when Jesus said it's finished, he meant he defeated Satan. Satan thought he had a victory over Jesus.

When Jesus died on the cross and gave up the ghost on the cross, died on the cross, the demons of hell came out of the bottomless pit, my dear friends, shouting, we've won the victory. But three days later, up from the grave he arose, a mighty conqueror over his foes, and he defeated Satan once and for all. According to John 12, 31, he defeated him.

Many other verses. He defeated Satan. I remember a story that really blessed me along this line.

And it's a little fictitious story, and I heard a preacher give it probably 20 years ago. I've never forgotten it. He said there's two birds, a little bird sitting on the fence of a strawberry patch, by a strawberry patch.

And said one looked to the other and said, I sure would like to have a strawberry. But he said, I'm afraid. Said that man over there in that strawberry patch said he'll kill you.

Said see him out there? Said he's just waiting to get ahold of you and kill you. The other bird said, well, I want a strawberry. And said, I'm going to get one.

I'm going to have one. If he kills me, I'm going to get strawberry. So the second little bird hopped off the fence into the strawberry patch, put his bill in a big old juicy strawberry and pulled it out, waved at the little bird still on the fence, scared to death, said, come on.

Little bird on the fence said, oh no. Said I'm not coming out there. Said that man there will kill me.

He said, oh no. Said he won't kill you. Said he's nothing but a scarecrow.

Let me tell you something, friends. The devil's alive and well. And he's out to do his best to destroy you.

But I want you to know Jesus has nailed him to the cross. And all he can do to the man who walks with God is scare him. He can't handle him.

He cannot handle him. Praise God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

Yes, sir. The basis of our fellowship is victory at Calvary. The basis of our fellowship tonight is the life of Jesus in us.

The basis of our fellowship tonight is the cross of Calvary for us. The basis of our fellowship tonight is the blood of the Lamb that was poured out to cover our sins. The basis tonight of our fellowship is the fact of the redeeming work of Jesus who died on the cross to save us from sin.

And upon the basis of this, beloved, we can have fellowship with the Lord. In fact, God said enter in with boldness, doesn't he? Talks about boldness. Now, in John, the first book that I read from, the first chapter, God says man has two things that he is supposed to do if he is to maintain this fellowship.

Two things. Number one, he's to be obedient to light. And number two, he's to keep his sins confessed up to date.

Now, I won't spend much time on this, but I want to leave it with you. Obedience to light. What is he talking about? If you're a child of God, if you are born of the Spirit of God, God has taken you over and he is the father of your life.

And he treats you as a child, as a child of his. And he's constantly bringing you into what is known as, in the Bible, divine chastisement. Now, when you and I hear that word, most of the time we think of punishment, don't we? But in the Bible, the word is used a little more general than that and a little more, I believe, tender than just punishment.

The word chastisement means that God is constantly bringing you and exposing you to situations to grow you up. And what it really means, he's constantly exposing you to situations that correct you and enlarge you. As a father, he just constantly watches over you and just constantly brings you into this light.

And what he does, he shows you something subjectively and something objectively to bring you to a beautiful, harmonious experience with him. He shows you the wickedness of your heart and he shows you

the sufficiency of Jesus to take the place of that wickedness. In other words, the Lord will let something happen to you and you'll see how wicked you are.

And the Lord will let you see, through the word of God, how Jesus is sufficient to take the place of that wickedness in you. Now, if you obey that light from the heart, you trust Jesus to make that word real to you, you know what happens to your life? You grow spiritually. Now, if you just follow the way in your intellect or have some emotional experience, you're in error.

But if you walk with the Lord, beloved, in the light of his word, you have fellowship with the Lord. That's right. So, you have to be obedient unto light if you're going to walk with God.

You want me to illustrate what I'm talking about? The Lord shows you that you're a thief and he does that sometimes. Amen. I'll tell you, you say, what do you mean, preacher? Well, the Bible says that we're supposed to give unto the Lord.

Now, I'm using this, you know why I'm using this illustration? I'll tell you why I'm using this illustration, because it fits. The pastor that ordained me said, preacher, he said, you may not be smart, but don't be stupid. I said, what do you mean? He said, don't get up and preach to a bunch of 90, 95-year-old people about dancing.

He said, that's being stupid. He said, always preach what's applicable. Amen.

Now, the Lord, in the Baptist church, you can preach about tithing. I guarantee you fit, hit two-thirds of the congregation. So, I just do this where I'm in a big church, a little church, whatever, and I'm not picking on you.

But the Lord shows you, he'll show you that you're sinning against God by stealing. Now, he does get that tough. Amen.

Because if you're not obedient to the light, to the truth about giving, I guarantee you're stealing. I found out I was stealing when the Lord showed me he wanted me to give 20 percent and then 30 percent. And I found out I was stealing because I wasn't being obedient to the light.

Now, I could have argued the Bible says 10 percent, but it doesn't say that. It says whatsoever he tells you to give, but it better not be any less than 10 percent. Amen.

And so, man, I said, Lord, I can't give more than 10 percent. Excuse me, Jesus, you're just out of it. The Lord showed me I couldn't, but Jesus in me could.

So, I trusted him to do it. And so, a year later, he upped it again to 30 percent. And I mean, friend, it blew my mind.

Yes, sir. It blew my mind. And it's blowing my mind today.

I look back and I can't believe it. But it's working. I mean, it's working.

You say, Brother Manley, you haven't had the trouble I've had. I don't know. I've never heard of the word trouble.

My vocabulary disregarded the word trouble a long time ago. You know why? It's not in the Bible. You say, what word do you use for trouble? Opportunity.

That's biblical. Amen. Now, back to the illustration.

You see, the Lord shows you sin in your life, and he shows you Jesus' answer. If you're obedient to that light, if you're obedient to that light, then that's the first step to maintaining your fellowship. The second step, and I could spend a lot of time here, and you know that, but I'm not trying to.

I'm trying to cover more territory tonight than I normally cover. I'm going to tell you why. I could preach a lot more polished preached sermon, but I want you to know something, friend.

I'm going to tell you very seriously. Until you learn how to maintain your fellowship on a biblical level with Jesus Christ, you're no threat to anybody, especially the devil. And you're sure not a blessing to the Lord.

And I have been walking with the Lord all these years, and occasionally he talks to me. And I'll tell you, I wish tonight I could tell the world how to maintain their fellowship. And I don't have all the answers.

I'm just giving you the ones I got. And I'm not getting down in detail and really preaching to you like, you know, that would make you uncomfortable, because I feel like if you really have the heart to do right with God, you'll hear the truth and go with it yourself. Now, even if you obey the light, even if you are obedient to the light God gives you, you still have to confess your sins.

There's not, at the best, my dear friend, there is not a one of us in this place that doesn't need to get broken completely to pieces about every two weeks, and come to the place that we admit that we're nothing but wretched, miserable sinners. You know how often you ought to, you know how often you ought to recognize how sinful you are? Every time you see a sin in your life. Every time you see a failure in your life.

You ought to be broken and realize it's because of sin, and self, and Satan. And the law. And you ought to come back to Jesus.

And confess your sin. And I mean, when he says confess your sin, say what God says about that sin. I mean, say what God says about it.

When you do not love a brother or a sister, or a neighbor like you're supposed to, you see that sin in your life, confess it. Make restitution of it. Get right with God.

Let me give this illustration. And I would have loved to have just preached in this area tonight, and left all this other stuff I've said alone. But back years ago, when I was first starting in evangelism, I was wanting God to show me what kept me away from the power of God to see people saved.

And I went out one night and sat down by the preacher on the rostrum. The singer got up and started singing some anthem. And, you know, it didn't, you know, it just, anthems just do not fit in a Holy Ghost revival meeting.

You know, the kind that I'm talking about. But I was quite opinionated about it. The last night of revival, and his last, holy, holy, holy something.

I mean, man, it was high stuff. And I said to the preacher, I said, I wish to God I'd picked out the song service. Well, I'd been having trouble with that singer all week.

But I had enough self-control that I didn't say anything. Amen. And then, but it was still in my heart.

I didn't have enough spirit control that I didn't have some reaction. Come on. So I got up to preach, and God wasn't there.

I preached my sermon. God wasn't there. I gave an invitation, seven stanzas, and God wasn't there.

But friend, I wanted to see God on the scene more than I wanted myself satisfied. My satisfaction came, in those days, from just pleasing Him. So I just said, Lord, you've got to handle it.

He said, confess. I said, Lord, that preacher, that boy doesn't know that I have one thing in my heart against him. He said, confess.

I went to the preacher and said, I want you to forgive me for what I said. The Lord said, because you are the leader, and this crowd needs to see you broken, and open before God and man, you go before this man, and you walk up to him and tell him you're sorry. And I said, well, Lord, I'm going to do it.

But I said, I'll tell you what. When I do this, if this sin of mine is stood in the way of someone getting saved, I've never realized that a child of God needs to confess their sins, and say what God says about their sins, and confess them publicly. I never realized that you need to do this.

And I said, if this sin is stood in the way of some soul getting saved, I said, Lord, let someone get saved tonight. Now, I wasn't saying this audibly. This is just between me and God.

And when I got through confessing to that singer, I went over, put my arm around him, and didn't have a mic on in those days, and didn't use them. And I said, brother, I'm so ashamed. I've been critical in my heart of you tonight, all week, really.

And I said, I want you to forgive me. And I said, will you do that? And he said, yes, sir, I sure will. And when I got through confessing, there was a man that they'd been praying for for 15 years.

Can you imagine? Sitting in that service tonight, I didn't know him. I just thought he's another member. When I got through confessing, that man got up out of his seat, walked down the aisle.

The meeting was, the invitation had stopped. This man walked up to the preacher and said, preacher, I'd like to get saved. And when that congregation saw that man down there getting saved, man, it just broke them to pieces.

And did you know 19 other people followed him down the aisle and got saved? And you know a great, one of the great Baptist preachers in this nation tonight was one of those 19? Boy, God showed me that a child of God needs to confess his sins and forsake his sins. And when he does, God will forgive him and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse him from all his sins. So if you're going to maintain your fellowship with the Lord, you're going to have to learn to be obedient to the light God gives you.

Obedient to the light God gives you. Amen. And keep your sins confessed up to date.

Amen.

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