

1 John - Grace of Fellowship

by Stephen Kaung

Fellowship is the fellowship of life, based on Christ, the living Christ, the life, and is experienced by walking in the light, confessing sins, and receiving the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 59:04

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:5, 1 John 1:7-10

Topics: "Fellowship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of young people knowing and understanding the word of God. He explains that as believers grow in their faith, they will inevitably face conflicts, but they can overcome them because of the strength they receive from the word of God. The preacher also highlights how Satan uses the world to tempt and deceive believers, specifically through the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. He then reads from 1 John 1:5-10, emphasizing the need for believers to walk in the light and confess their sins to receive forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ. The preacher concludes by reminding listeners that spiritual growth is a gradual process and cannot be achieved instantly.

Transcript

May we look to the Lord in prayer. Our dear Lord, we do acknowledge that there is no love in us except the love that Thou hast first put it in. And we do love Thee with that love.

We do thank Thee that Thou dost gather us here to study Thy word. Once again we ask Thee to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may know Thee and know Thy word. We lay down our own wisdom, our own understanding, because our wisdom is foolishness, our understanding is darkness.

But how we praise and thank Thee that Thy Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth who will lead us into all truth. So we do look to Thee, to Thy spirit, to guide us into Thy truth this morning. We ask in Thy precious name.

Amen. I hope that you have spent your leisure time in reading over the first letter of John. I don't know how much we can cover this morning, but I would like to read just a portion first.

First letter of John, chapter one, we begin with verse five. And this is the message which we have heard from him, and declare to 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 practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses 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 is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and 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 children, these things are right to you, in order that ye may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have a patron with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world.

We mentioned yesterday morning that the gospel of John is on life, and the letter, the first letter of John is on fellowship. Someone says that the gospel of John is the commentary of this first letter of John. And this first letter of John is the moral and spiritual practical application of the gospel of John.

I think there is much truth in such a statement. The life that was with the Father has been manifested to us, and because of that, on the basis of this life manifested, we enter into a fellowship. It is the fellowship of the apostles, because through the apostles we come to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

But the fellowship of the apostles is not their own fellowship. The fellowship of the apostles is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. So we are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

We are called into the fellowship that the Son has with His Father. We are called into this most exclusive fellowship, the fellowship that once existed only in the gophets, but now it has been expanded and enlarged and includes all the regimes of the Lord. In one sense, our fellowship is the most exclusive fellowship in the whole universe.

Yet on the other hand, it is the most inclusive fellowship. It is so exclusive that aside from the Father and the Son in the Spirit, aside from the apostles, and aside from all those who are redeemed of the Lord, no one else can join that fellowship. But it is so inclusive that all the redeemed of the Lord, no matter how young or how old, the newly born or the fully matured, we are all included in this fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Let us remember that this fellowship is the fellowship of life. The substance of this fellowship is life. It is Christ.

We are not fellowshiping around ourselves. We are not even fellowshiping around the apostles, however great they are. We are fellowshiping around Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.

And that is the very essence of the fellowship we are in. So dear brothers and sisters, let us always remember that this fellowship is the fellowship of life, of Christ. As we share Christ with one another, we are in fellowship.

And we must also remember that because this is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and it is so inclusive, therefore we should not be exclusive in the sense of excluding our brother or our sister for any other reason. This fellowship is not based upon doctrine. It is not based upon teaching.

It is not based upon interpretation. It is not based upon system or form, opinion, experience. How you find God's people today are divided.

They cannot have fellowship one with another because they hold different doctrines. Maybe the doctrines they hold are all truth, but only part of the truth. And yet because of that they cannot have fellowship.

And how many of God's people cannot have fellowship? Because they have different experiences. Granted, all these experiences are from God. And yet because some hold such experience, other hold other experience, and they may experience the ground of fellowship.

No, dear brothers and sisters, the ground of fellowship is Christ and nothing else. It's not a doctrine about Christ even, the teaching about Christ, but it is Christ, the living Christ, the life. Of course, you cannot have the life if you're wrong in the basic doctrine of Jesus Christ, his person and his work.

But anyway, you'll find it is not based upon these things. The ground of fellowship is life, eternal life, the life of Christ. Christ, that is the ground of fellowship.

Now this morning we would like to continue on with the second part of the first letter of John. And it begins with the fifth verse of the first chapter, and it ends with the fifth verse of the fifth chapter. Now in this part we come into the practice of fellowship, or the grace of fellowship.

Fellowship is more than something that is given to us. But fellowship is something that we are experiencing day by day. By the grace of God we are in the fellowship.

But if we want to enjoy that fellowship, to experience that fellowship, and to deepen that fellowship, there are certain conditions that are required. And these conditions are none other than what God is in himself. So we will now enter into the practice, the practical side of fellowship.

What grace we need to have so that our fellowship may be real and living. And not just a word, but it is a very living and real thing in our daily life. And here you will find in this second part, there are three essential points.

Number one, if we desire to have our fellowship real and living, the fellowship must be in life. Number two, if our fellowship is to be real and living, the fellowship must be in righteousness. Number three, if our fellowship is to be real and living, our fellowship must be in love.

First of all, fellowship must be in life. In verse 5 of chapter 1, and this is the message which we have heard from him and declared to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. As we are drawn into this fellowship, the first thing that we hear from him who calls us into such fellowship is that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

God is light. When you think of light, what is the impression that you get? Probably you will think of light as something pure, clean, transparent, open, indefatigable, glorious. And then probably from there you will begin to think of light as that which reveals, exposes, convicts, heals, life-giving.

You can think of all these things when you think of light. But here you will find God is light, so far as God's nature is concerned. God is light.

He is pure. He is clean. He is transparent.

He is open. He is glorious. He reveals.

He exposes. He convicts. He heals.

He gives life. And all these things you can think. That is what our God is.

And there is absolutely no darkness in him. No shade. No shadow.

No compromise. No impurity. Absolutely glorious, pure, transparent.

This is the nature of God. The light here is not the natural light that we know of. You know, we live in this world and in this world, morally speaking, there is a certain light that guides, governs our walks, customs, traditions, opinions of people.

Now these things are the natural light that a natural man is guided in his walk. This light is not even the intellectual light, the light that comes from reasoning. We analyze.

We draw conclusions. Logic. And that will give us a guide, as it were, in our walk.

The best of men in this world are not driven by the natural light, the tradition, but they are driven by their reasoning. But this is not a light that a scripture speaks of. This light is none other than God himself.

He is the light. To use an illustration, you find the tabernacle there. In the outer part, there is no covering.

So all the movements in the outer part are governed by the sunlight. But when you enter into the holy place, it is covered. No sunlight can penetrate into the holy place.

But when the priests move around in the holy place to serve, they are guided by the light from the golden lampstand. But when you enter into the holiest of all, not even the light of the golden lampstand can penetrate the veil. In one sense, the holiest of all is completely shut out from the sunlight, from the lamplight.

It was total darkness, but it was not. Why? Because the glory of the Lord is the holiest of all. And dear brothers and sisters, God is light.

And this light is now in the holiest of all within us. Our body is like the outer core. Our soul is like the temple, the house, the holy place.

But our spirit, which is the holiest of all, and thank God, he dwells there as light. So dear brothers and sisters, do remember one thing, that because we have light in us, and this light is light, in him was light, and the light was the light of man. In Christ is light, and we have received Christ.

We have light in us, and this light in us is the light of man. What governs our walk on this earth? Not the natural light of this world, not the reasoning of man. Today you find God's people are guided in their daily walk by the light of life in their spirit.

The life in our spirit, when it operates, it sheds light upon our path. God is that light. That light is not even the word of God.

In Psalm you'll find the word of God is a lamp to guide us in our walk. It is true. But here you'll find John is not dealing even with the word as light.

How often some people said, I receive a light today, and by that it means they got a new explanation of the word. Well, that is a light, a borrowed light, but John is not dealing with that even. You'll find John is dealing with God as light.

O dear brothers and sisters, do you know that God who dwells within you, he is your light? This is the light of life, and it shines upon your path, and it is this light, by this light, that you have fellowship with him. If we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth. God is light.

And if we say we have fellowship with God, and yet we walk in darkness, we do not walk in the light of life, we lie. And the truth is not in us. In other words, even God has drawn us into that fellowship, and yet truthfully, so far as the real living daily experience goes, you are not enjoying that fellowship.

How can we enjoy the fellowship with the Father and with the Son? How can we enjoy the fellowship with the Apostles? How can we enjoy the fellowship with our fellow saints? We have the ground of fellowship, but how can we enter into the reality, the daily experience of this fellowship? We have to walk in the light. If he is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, our Son, cleanses us from all our sins, if we walk in the light. You know, whenever in the Bible you find the little word, if, you know we enter into the area of experience.

So far as the area of truth is concerned, objective truth is concerned, there is no if, because it is finished. Everything is finished, is done, is accomplished in Christ. This is the objective truth.

There is no if in it. It never changes. It cannot be changed.

It is eternal. But when we come to our daily experience, you'll find it is full of ifs. Now, our if does not change the truth, but our if does change our experience.

So it says here, if we walk in the light. It doesn't mean that if we walk according to tradition. If we walk according to reasoning.

What it means here is, if we walk in the light of life, as we have communion with God, the life within us begins to shed its light upon our feet. And if we walk in the light as God is in the light. Now, do you notice a great difference here? If we walk in the light as God is in the light, God is light and He dwells in the light.

God Himself is light and He is home. He makes His home in the light. That is the atmosphere of God.

It is full light. But we are only walking in the light. Walk.

What is walk? Walks, these are the continuous progress. It is a daily thing. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, well, God is light--unapproachable, purest, most glorious, perfect.

But the light of life that we know today is very little. If we use an illustration, God is light is a hundred candlelight. If we walk in the light, the light here is only one candlelight.

It is true that the light that is within us is perfect. It is Christ. You cannot improve on Him.

But if the light of Christ within us should shine upon our path with its hundred candlelight, we cannot stand it. Therefore you'll find the light that is within us will begin to shed one candlelight first to guide our first step. And if we walk in the light that is one candlelight, we do not see everything yet.

We only see that little bit, but whatever the light of Christ has already shown us. And if we walk faithfully in that light, as God is in the hundred candlelight, even though there is such a difference of degree, yet there is the similarity, the sameness of kind. It is of the same kind of light, and we can have fellowship.

Dear brothers and sisters, the wonderful thing is we are not perfect. If it awaits until we are perfect as God is perfect, then we begin to have fellowship, there is no chance. And yet, however imperfect we may be, if we are faithful to the little light that is already given to us, there is no hindrance to fellowship, even though there is so much darkness that has not been discovered yet.

Dear brothers and sisters, how important it is in the matter of fellowship that whatever the light of life has already shown into you, that you walk faithfully in it. And if you do, even though there is still much ignorance, much darkness, yet thank God you can have fellowship with God and God with you without any interruption. But of course, even if you walk in the light that God has given to you now, in that light you will find you need the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the light of life begins to shine upon us, it begins to reveal what is within us. There is such darkness in us. There is so much that is not like God.

How we need to confess. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness. O dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find when we walk in the light, what is within us will be revealed to a degree, to that extent that we can stand.

God will not overwhelm us. You know, when the enemy comes in to accuse us, he always tries to overwhelm us. But when the Spirit of God begins to convict us and to shine upon our conscience, it comes just to that extent that you are able to bear it.

How gentle is that light. But if we are shown of that light, we begin to realize the darkness in us. Dear brothers and sisters, confess it before God.

If we confess it, the blood of the Lord Jesus will cleanse us, so that our fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and also because of the cleansing, our fellowship with our brothers and sisters will be unclouded, without any cloud, without any shade. Thank God. The closer you walk with God, the more you'll need the blood of the Lord.

Do not think that one day you do not need the blood of the Lamb anymore. If you read the biographies of those men and women of God who live so close to God, they all invariably bear the testimony saying that they need the blood every moment. Oh, the closer you get to God, the more you'll realize even your tears need to be cleansed by the blood.

Even your prayers need to be cleansed by the blood. Oh, how we need the blood of the Lamb. But thank God, He removes all the darkness that stands in the way of our fellowship between us and God, and our fellowship with one another.

Why is it sometimes you find your fellowship with God is clouded? Why is it sometimes you find your fellowship with your brothers and sisters is hindered? Because you do not walk in the light that God has already given to you. God does not require you to walk in the light that He is in. But God does require you to walk in the light that He has already given to you.

Now, if you walk in the light already given to you, then your fellowship with the Father and with the Son is without any cloud. And you will find you can fellowship with all your brothers and sisters, so far as all your part is concerned. But if you do not walk in the light that is already given, not only your fellowship with the Father and with the Son will be interrupted, but your fellowship with your brothers and sisters will be affected.

Oh, how we need that openness. How we need to be transparent. How we need to be pure, to be clean.

Because that is life. We need to be open, to be transparent, to be pure, according to the light that we have received. And dear brothers and sisters, you will find our fellowship with God and with one another will not be hindered.

Accordingly. When we really walk in the light, we will discover much darkness. And is it because of this we draw back and say, we are not perfect, we cannot be perfect, therefore we must sing.

Continue to sing. Not at all. On the contrary, you will find as the light begins to shine upon us and begins to cleanse us from our sins, it shows us that we may not sin.

Because we have the light of life within us, and that light is life-giving. It not only exposes, but it heals. It not only cleanses, but it gives more life.

And by the life that is given to us, we may not sin. What has been exposed is cleansed. And now we go on with the life of Christ in us, and overcome that darkness.

So you find Apostle John says, I write these things to you that you may not sin. He does not say you cannot sin. The possibility of sinning is always there, so long as we are in the flesh and live in this world.

But thank God there is also the possibility of not to sin, because we have the light of Christ within us. So dear brothers and sisters, we have to see on the one hand, if we walk in the light, we will be conscious of our darkness, conscious of our sins, we will confess our sins, and we will be cleansed. But on the other hand, in that light we will receive life, more life, that we may overcome sin, and we may not sin, so that we may go on with the Lord.

How do we know that we are in the light? How do we know that we walk in the light? We know we walk in the light on the one hand, because we abhor sin. We who have been enlightened, we do not want to go back to sin again. And we discover that in Him there is the power, the life, that we may not sin.

But that's negative. If we walk in the light, there is a positive sign there, and the positive sign is, and hereby we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. If we walk in the light, we keep His commandments, not in the sense of keeping the commandments as slaves, not in the sense of trying to keep the commandments by our fleshly energy, but in the sense because we are in fellowship with Him, therefore we find in Him that light, we find in Him that love.

And to keep His commandments is not reason. It is the power of His light within us. And we keep His commandments not out of duty, but out of love.

And by these two things, we know that we are walking in the light. Why? Because if we walk in the light, we walk as He walks. And of course, if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and in such fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with our fellow believers, our life begins to grow.

Fellowship is the best way to grow. Sometimes we think ministry helps spiritual growth. It does.

But fellowship is more powerful in helping us grow in the Lord than even ministry of the Word. And that's the reason why immediately follow you find the Apostle John begins to mention the children, the young men, young people, and the fathers. Now that's true.

How do we grow in life? Real growth. Not in the mind, but real growth in life. The real growth in life comes from fellowship.

From sharing together. From fellowship with the Father and with the Son and fellowship with one another. That's how we grow from little children to young men, people, and to fathers.

That's growth. In the family of God, in our own personal life experience, we begin as little as children. And as children, what do we know? What do we have? As children, we have a consciousness.

We are conscious of our Father. As children, we do not know anything else. But we know our Father.

And you remember how in Romans we are told, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and we cry out out for Father. Showing that we are children. We have a consciousness within us.

We are conscious of our relationship with God. He is our Father. And we cry out out for Father.

And as little children, we look to our Father for our support. We look to our Father for our protection. And we come to our Father.

We rest ourselves upon the breast of our Father. You'll find this is what you have in little children. So John says, little children, you know the Father.

You know your Father. You do not know anything else, but at least you know the Father. Now that's little children.

Now of course, as little children, can be easily deceived. Now suppose someone will come by and say, I'm your father. Follow me.

How do you distinguish? How as little children be protected from being deceived? And now in the world there are many antichrists. And people will come and say, come and follow me. Is there any protection? Thank God there is.

There is a built-in protection there. Not only there is a consciousness of the Father, but as little children we have the anointing within us, the unction within us. Not only there is a relationship with the Father, but there is the anointing within us, the Holy Spirit.

God gives His Holy Spirit to every child of God. And we have the anointing who abides in us. He makes His home in us.

He never leaves us nor forsakes us. And He will teach us in all things. So dear brothers and sisters, by the teaching of anointing, we know what is true and what is a lie.

We may not be able to analyze it. We may not have the knowledge. And yet, intuitively we know the anointing of the Lord works upon the intuition of our spirit.

And intuitively we know this is the truth, this is a lie. Isn't it true? Sometimes you hear some people who may give us a very beautiful airtight message. You cannot find any fault.

It seems to be true. And yet somehow in your spirit intuitively you sense something is not quite right. You cannot explain it.

And yet you sense something is not quite right. And it proves later on it is not right. How do you know? As little children you don't have the knowledge yet.

And yet thank God you find the anointing within you will teach you in all things. How do we abide in Christ? We abide in Christ by the teaching of the anointing. Then we abide in Christ.

And our fellowship with our Father is an influence. But a children's life is a sheltered life. Then you begin to grow.

As you begin to grow you come into the stage of the young people. And the young people are characterized by vitality, by conflict. You begin to enter into conflict.

And life grows in conflict, young people. I write to you because you are strong. And the Word of God abides in you.

And you have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you.

So here you'll find as you begin to grow, from little children if you walk in the light, as God is in the light, then you'll find the candlelight within you begin to increase. From one candlelight to two, to three, to four, to ten. And you begin to grow in the light.

And as you grow in light, you begin to enter into conflict. But thank God you are strong. Why? The Word of God abides in you.

How important it is for young people to really know the Word of God by heart. What can cleanse a young people but the Word of God? Oh, we need the Word of God to be richly stored in us. And in that conflict, you know, Satan does not come out and appear to you.

He hides behind something. He hides behind the world. He uses the world to catch you.

What is the world? Young people find that the world is a real test, a real problem. What is the world? The things of the world. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

They are legitimate things. God creates our eyes to see and to enjoy His beauty. God gives us a flesh we have to eat, we have to drink, to be clothed with.

God gives us a life we have to live. These are legitimate. But when we go over into excess, it becomes.

And the world uses these things to draw out what is the world. To put it very simply, the world is in contrast with the Father. Anything that takes us away from the love of the Father is the world, whether it be a thing, or it be a person, or it be a thought, a desire.

Anything that takes away from us the love of the Father is the world, is the world. But if the Word of God abides in you, you know what it is, and you are able to overcome it. Then as you grow in conflict, you enter into the state of the Father.

And here you'll find where the Father's only one description is given. Fathers, I write to you, I have written to you, because you know that which is from the beginning. And of course, the letter of John begins with that word, that which is from the beginning.

In other words, the Fathers are those who not only know the Father, not only those who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, but the Fathers are those who have grown in knowledge, in spiritual knowledge. They know Christ as the purpose of them. They come into efficiency.

They know the whole counsel of God. And the whole counsel of God is centered upon God from Christ. God is to sum up all things in Christ.

He is to have the preeminence, the first place in all things. And the Fathers have entered into such, because they have entered into such knowledge, their life is anchored in God. And they are able to take care of others.

You know, the children need to be taken care of. The young people can take care of themselves. But the Fathers can take care of others.

And that is how we need to grow in the Lord. Oh dear brothers and sisters, and it all begins with this. If we walk in the light as God is in the light.

One step at a time. You do not jump or leap. One step at a time.

You know, oftentimes people want to be instant spiritual. In this country we have everything instant. Oh, we not only have instant coffee, we have instant tea.

We have instant noodle and instant rice too. And you'll find everything wants to be instant. And among God's people you'll find God's people want to be instant spiritual.

If you can tell them there is a way that you can be spiritual instantly, everybody will like it. There is no such thing. You have to walk step by step, continuously.

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all our sins. And by that we begin to grow in life steadily, steadily.

Until we come to the Father's stage, we can impart the life of Christ that we know to others. And dear brothers and sisters, this is the first condition or grace of fellowship in the light. If we are in darkness, darkness is everything that is opposite, shadow, shame, hidden, sin.

If we walk in darkness, there is no fellowship. You may be called into the fellowship, but you are not living in the fellowship. So may the Lord help us that we may daily walk in the light that God gives to us.

And if you walk in the light God gives to you today, you are cleansed today. You have fellowship. Your life grew a little bit.

And tomorrow the light of life will increase to two candles. And maybe a month later to three. And thus we go on with the Lord.

Oh, it is a walk with the Lord. How our Lord Jesus, when he was on earth, he walked with the Father. He walked from Bethlehem to Nazareth, from Nazareth to Galilee, from Galilee to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Golgotha, and from Golgotha to the tomb, from the tomb he walked and walked to Mount Olive, and he walked until he sits at the Father's right hand.

Just a walk. And dear brothers and sisters, if we begin to walk in life, you know, one day you'll find you walk and walk, and you are there raptured. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank thee that thou hast called us into thy fellowship.

But we cannot enjoy thy fellowship unless we are of the same kind with thee. Oh, we do pray that the light of life may continually shine upon our path, that we may walk daily with thee, we may have our sins cleansed, we may love thee to keep thy commandments, and we may grow from stage to stage, oh, that we may walk until we find ourselves with thee there. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen.

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