

Call to the Fellowship of God's Son

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and the need to focus on Christ, not on people like Paul or Apollos, to avoid division in the church.

Duration: 48:10

Scripture: Exodus 3:5, Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, 1 Corinthians 1:9-10, 2 Timothy 2:13

Topics: "Church Unity", "Fellowship With God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the exhortation given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians. The exhortation is to be perfectly united in the same mind and opinion, without divisions among believers. The preacher emphasizes that saying the same thing does not mean blindly following a party line, but rather finding unity despite having different minds and opinions. The sermon highlights the sacrifice and love of God in giving up his only begotten Son to bring humanity into fellowship with him. The preacher also reminds the audience of the positive statement in 1 Corinthians that God is faithful and has called believers into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians, the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 9. 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 9. God is faithful by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. God is faithful by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank Thee, that through Thy finished work on the cross, we are able to come to Thy very presence. We do praise and thank Thee that Thou hast said, where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them. So we know that we are in Thy presence.

Dear Lord, teach us how to remove our shoes, take our rightful place, that we may be able to hear what Thou hast to say to us. Speak, Lord, Thy servants hear it. We ask in Thy precious name.

Amen. As you open this first letter to the Corinthians, you find the Apostle Paul at the very beginning of this letter. Give us a tremendous statement.

The more I meditate on it, the more I marvel at it. He said, God is faithful by whom ye have been called into fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ. I hope we just do not let this statement pass carelessly.

Because here you'll find a marvelous, glorious, way beyond our thoughts, a statement which is eternally true. God is faithful. Whether we are faithful or not, it doesn't matter.

He remains faithful and He is faithful to one thing, to His calling. He calls us into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Can you think of anything nobler, higher, heavenly, spiritual, perfect, more than this calling? To be called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Thank God that this statement not only applies to the Corinthian believers, but this statement applies even to us. Because in the beginning of this letter, this letter was written to the assembly in Corinth. And to all, everywhere, who calls upon the name of the Lord.

And thank God, we do call upon the name of the Lord. And therefore, this statement applies to us. In other words, brothers and sisters, do we realize that we are called into something? Even beyond description, there is nothing higher than this.

That we are all called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Now, what is fellowship? Fellowship is sharing in common. It is an equal, common sharing of the very nature of the death which is to be shared.

In other words, it is a joint participation. And this is the fellowship. Of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, what is it? That is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. With whom he is fellowshiping with. With whom he shares equally in common.

With whom does it have the joint participation. Not just as speculation or spectator, but a joint participation. Now, we know that his fellowship is with the Father in the Spirit.

That is the fellowship. He and the Father share equally, in common, everything, together. He and his Father participate jointly in everything that they do.

All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him. He is with the Father, the Father is with him, their fellowship is the fellowship in the Spirit. It is a perfect oneness.

It is a perfect sharing together. Nothing more, nothing less. And his fellowship with the Father.

And the Father's fellowship with him is eternal. There's never a cloud, never a shade, a shadow, never disagreement. They agree on everything.

One in heart, one in mind, one in speech, one in work. It is so harmonious, so heavenly, so sacred. And that is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact, this fellowship exists even before the foundation of the world, before there were anything created. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, they are one and they are in sweet fellowship. Sharing together, participating together from eternity.

This is the most glorious fellowship there's ever in the world. In one sense, it is most exclusive fellowship. Why? Because there are only three members.

Nobody can join. Only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But on the other hand, it is the most inclusive fellowship.

But it because includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot imagine, because there is something way beyond how sweet, how perfect, how harmonious, how loving that fellowship is. There is never a break, never an eruption, perfect.

But to our surprise, in their fellowshiping together, they come to a conclusion. That is, because of their love, they want to enlarge their fellowship. They want to include man into their fellowship.

Not into their deity, Godhead, but into their fellowship. And this is perfectly agreed by the Father and the Son in the Spirit. They want to do it.

They want to extend it to mankind. You remember when God created man? He created man in his own image, after his likeness. Now, why did he do that? He didn't create anything in that way, but only man.

He created in his own image. Is it not because he had this in mind, that he wants to extend his own fellowship to man? And because of that, he created man in his own image. Give them the possibility of receiving his own divine life.

Because life is the only condition, one and sole condition, that can join that fellowship. It is a fellowship in life, in divine life. And nothing but divine life can enter into that fellowship.

So, he created man in his image, and enabling man to receive his divine life. Man is the only creation in the whole universe that can receive God's life in him. The angel cannot.

The animal cannot. The mountain cannot. The sea cannot.

But man was created with that capacity. If man should receive his uncreated life, then man will be joined into his fellowship. And will be able to enjoy that perfect fellowship.

Life is the one and only condition. But to accomplish this is not an easy task. In order to bring man into his fellowship, the father has to give up his son.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. Brothers and sisters, we are yet to fathom, to understand what sacrifice, what love, what giving up the father did. He gave up his only begotten son.

One who is so one with him, never a ripple, one who so pleases him, this is my delight in whom I'm well pleased, and yet, he gave up his only begotten son. And what a price the son paid for it. He gave up his life.

Not only his position on the throne, he emptied himself of all his glory and honor, came into this world, took up a human form, in the spirit of a born slave, and obedient to the father, even unto death, and that the death of the cross. What a price he paid for that fellowship. And the Holy Spirit uses all his energy, with long patience, coming to us to bring Christ to us, not only to beget us, but to transform us, according to the image of God's son, Jesus Christ.

What labor of love the Holy Spirit is doing. And all these are for one reason, that the way may be open to mankind, to enter, to join in, that most exclusive fellowship in the universe. Brothers and sisters, the more you think about it, the more you meditate on it, the more you are surprised.

Why should God do such a thing? Knowing us so well, what love is behind it, but what responsibility? So here you find the Apostle Paul, in the very beginning of this letter. Now brothers and sisters, we often look at 1 Corinthians as a very negative letter, because it deals with all kinds of weaknesses, sin, world, flesh, unbelief, disorder, confusion, division. It's a very negative letter.

How much better to only talk of efficiency, but brothers and sisters, it doesn't believe negative. It begins with the most positive statement in the universe. God is faithful.

By whom we have been called into the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ. Do you know you have been called into this fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ? It is God's doing, not because of what you are or what I am, but because of what he is. It is all grace.

We have joined the most spiritual, heavenly, perfect, eternal, loving, holy fellowship in the whole universe. You're there. I'm there.

All by grace. You remember the apostle John said, in 1 John, he said what we have seen and heard, what we have contemplated, what we have touched, what we have known, experienced, we report to you that you may have fellowship with us. In other words, the apostles shared everything that they have received with us.

They fellowship with us. They share with us in common, equally, with our reservation that we may have fellowship with apostles. What they have, we have.

There will be a joint participation. And the apostle said, our fellowship is with the father and with the son. In other words, the apostles do not have fellowships of their own.

All that they fellowship, the sharing that they give to us, comes from the father and the son. It is none other for the fellowship of the father and of the son. Notice, the apostles do not have their fellowships.

As a matter of fact, the apostles reject that kind of thinking. I'm a Paul. I'm Apollos.

No, we don't have any fellowship other than the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ. So the fellowship of the apostles is none other but their fellowship with the father and with the son. It is the same as the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ.

So you remember in the early church, those who believe in the Lord Jesus, in Acts chapter 2 verse 42, it says, they all continued in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles. Notice, the teaching is singular. The fellowship is singular.

The apostles are plural. There are many apostles, but only one teaching. Only one fellowship.

Because it is teaching of Christ, it is the fellowship of Christ and nothing else in breaking of bread and prayers. And that's how you find the early church. They're all together.

Nothing said, no one said, this is mine. They're gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus. They talk about the Lord and nothing else.

Unfortunately, in the church in Corinth, they began well into the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ. But gradually, they began to break the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ. Something happened.

And you know, very strange. Because the first letter to the Corinthians by Paul, in one sense, it's his reply to their letter, questioning, asking about a number of things. Because in the church in Corinth, a number of things happened.

So they wrote a letter to Paul, asking him about these problems. But strangely, in that letter they wrote to Paul, they never asked this question about the breaking of fellowship. Never.

Maybe they are ashamed to ask. Or maybe they are so dull that they did not even realize it was a question. It's our problem.

But so far as the apostle is concerned, this is the first and foremost problem. Because it strikes at the very center of the fellowship that we are called into. We are called into the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ.

And to break that fellowship is the basic problem of all problems with the people of God. So instead of answering their questions at the very start, he began with making a positive statement. Don't you remember that you are called into the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ? Don't you remember that this is such a sacred, holy, blessed calling? How can we violate our calling? This is the very center, the very life of God's calling to his people.

He spent four chapters on this question. He said, now I exhort you. Now after he had laid down that statement, then he said, now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same thing.

And that there be not among you divisions, but that ye be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same opinion. What is the exhortation? The exhortation is, by the name of the Lord Jesus, you say the same thing. And that there may be not among you divisions.

Now how can we say the same thing? Are we going to toe the party line, parroting the same word? Why cannot we say the same thing? It is because we have different minds, different opinions. If you have different mind and different opinion, how can you say the same thing? You say different things. So in other words, there is something that comes in.

The fellowship is the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The fellowship is the fellowship of the Father and of the Son. The fellowship is the fellowship of life, divine life, pure life.

But when anything that is not of God, not of Christ, not of divine life, anything that comes from man, from the natural man, from the flesh, from the world, when these things begin to come into that fellowship, it breaks the very nature of that fellowship. In other words, this is the most exclusive fellowship in the whole universe. Why? Because not only it can only be joined by those who have divine life, but also it can only be enjoyed by those who live by that divine life.

If we try to bring ourselves in, the good self or the bad self, anything that is not of Christ, not of God, not of the Spirit of God, of man, of ourselves, of the flesh, then you have different minds, different opinions, and different words. These are foreign to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. When we inject ourselves into this divine, sacred fellowship, we break it.

That's division. How can we say the same thing, same word? And what is the same thing? What is the same word? The Apostle Paul said, I know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That's

the same thing.

Christ is our wisdom. Christ is our power. Christ is all and in all.

That is saying the same thing. Having the same mind, with the same opinion, can it be wrong if we do that? Some say, I'm of Paul. Some say, I'm of Apollos.

Some say, I'm of Cephas. And some say, I'm of Christ. Is Christ divided? In other words, when some are saying it, they are saying it with a divisive spirit.

They honor the instruments of God than God Himself. Who is Paul? He is a servant of God. He is instrumental in bringing these Corinthians to Christ.

He was like a father to them. But to say, I am of Paul. I belong to the Paul sect.

You divide the fellowship. You break up the fellowship. Whenever we have man in view instead of Christ in view, we honor man more than Christ.

We center. We follow man instead of follow Christ. Something is drastically.

I'm of Apollos. Why? Because Apollos is a great teacher. He taught us many doctrines, many teachings.

We are for him, against Paul. Lifting up one, looking down upon another. Instead of keeping our eyes upon the Lord and lifting none but Christ Jesus.

That divides God's people. I'm of Cephas. Why? Because Cephas is the first apostle.

First among the apostles. The most orthodox one. We are the orthodox one.

And you are not. And then some other out of pride, out of narrowness, and I'm of Christ. I'm of Christ.

You're not of Christ. I'm of Christ. With that kind of spirit.

That's division. Brothers and sisters. This is the problem in the church throughout the centuries.

This problem is more serious than any other problem. Because it strikes at the very calling that God has called us. Into.

Whenever we introduce ourselves, inject ourselves into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, it breaks it. And here you'll find Paul. There are people in Corinth, even though many in Corinth rejected Paul.

And yet there were still people in Corinth who uplifted Paul. I'm a Paul. Now, how did Paul react? Thank God he used himself as an example to refute those who favor him.

He said, is Christ divided? We know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Is Christ divided? Has Paul died for you? Have I? Are you being baptized in my name? God forbid. Brothers and sisters, Paul used himself as an example.

Showing the people that we need to focus upon Christ. And not focus upon even people like Paul or Apollo or Cephas. Who is Paul? He's but a servant of the Lord.

Who is Apollo? A servant of the Lord. Paul, soul. Apollo, water.

But it is God who gives the increase. If you want to glory, glory in the Lord. Do not glory in man.

So, the Apostle Paul tried to bring the mind of the people. These Corinthian believers. That took.

Do not think of Paul. Do not think of Apollo. Do not think of Cephas.

Think of Christ. Is he not the power of God? Is he not the wisdom of God? Is he not the wisdom? God has made him wisdom unto us. Righteousness.

Holiness. And redemption. In other words, everything comes from Christ.

And everything returns. Other than Christ, nobody is worthy. And therefore.

He said. So that no one boasts in man for all things are yours. Whether Paul or Apollo or Cephas or the world.

Or life or death or things present or things coming. All are yours. And you are Christ.

And Christ is God. That's the covenant. So, brothers and sisters.

May we look away from everything. And look only to Jesus. The author and finisher of our faith.

And it's only in that. We are able to. Be faithful.

To the fellowship. That God has called us into. Just think for a moment.

What a price. God paid. To bring us into that fellowship.

And to enjoy that fellowship. Yes. We also have a price to pay.

We have to. Deny ourselves. Take up the cross.

And follow him. That's the price to pay. The Corinthian believers.

The reason why they remain carnal. The reason why they have that divisive spirit. It is because.

They. Will not deny themselves. They do not allow the cross to work.

Deeply into their lives. And the result is. They follow man.

Not Christ. So brothers and sisters. Hopefully.

This will be an exaltation. From the Lord. We all need to humble ourselves.

Before the Lord. And realize. How sacred.

Is this fellowship. And be faithful. Thank God he is faithful.

And. By his grace. He's able to bring us.

Into the full fellowship. Of God's son. Jesus Christ.

Dear Lord. We humble ourselves before thee. Realizing.
What a high calling. Thou has called us. Even to share.
In common. With thee our Christ. Our God.
In life. Oh dear Lord. We pray that by thy grace.
We may follow thee. We may not in any way. Intrude.
Upon. That fellowship. And spoil it.
But we may be those. Who continue. In the fellowship.
Of God's son. Jesus Christ. We ask you in thy precious name.

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