

Mid South Conference 1978-04 Fellowship in the Gospel

by Aldy Fam Fanous

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship in the gospel, complete surrender to God's will, and living a life that is surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 28:12

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, Isaiah 53:7, Acts 10:9-16, Philippians 1:19-20, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 2:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a personal experience of being in a dangerous situation during a time of intense fighting. Despite a rocket exploding near their apartment, the speaker and their family miraculously remained unharmed. The speaker attributes this protection to the presence of an angel and the power of prayer. The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity, humility, and living a life guided by the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages listeners to let their actions align with their words and to allow the Spirit of God to energize their lives.

Transcript

And I know that this shall turn to my salvation. I beg your pardon, we started verse 18. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached.

And I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, for I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The prayer of the saints is a phase of the fellowship in the gospel. As we pray for the elders and for the evangelist and for the missionary.

I was greatly encouraged the other day when one of the dear sisters here, I had never seen her before, she had never seen me. And she is using the missionary prayer handbook. She said, I pray for you often, and I have not seen you, but I pray for you.

And brethren and sisters, who knows, but it is the prayer of the saints that saw us through in the crisis of June 1975. Some of you probably have read the account in Mission Magazine. Others probably have not, for the benefit of those who have not read the Mission Magazine.

I tell you that on Sunday, June 29, 1975, at 4.30 in the afternoon to be precise, my wife, one of my two daughters, my son and I, four of us, were in the living room. Fighting was very intense in the streets, and

machine guns and rockets were flying everywhere. I was answering the mail in spite of all the noise.

We had accumulated mail from listeners. My wife and I were sitting at the table answering the mail all the time. When all of a sudden a deafening noise, I don't know what, it took us some time to come back to our, what should I say, senses.

And know what was happening. The whole front of the apartment was gone. A rocket exploded where we were, actually on the level of the adjoining building, level with the sixth floor where our apartment was.

And so the whole front of the apartment was gone. And I looked around. None of us was hurt, but all around us, and behind us in the wall.

We counted the pieces of shrapnel. 184 pieces of shrapnel. 184.

One of them would have been sufficient to kill any of us. But, wonder of wonders, not one of them, not one of them hit any of us. Right.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivers them. I can't find any other explanation. Those shrapnel should fly in a straight line, but how could they come and miss us, and bury themselves in the wall behind us, and not go through us? I can't understand it.

But I can. Because again, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivers them. The prayer of the saints, the fellowship in the gospel.

And I tell you friends, as you pray for each other, and as you pray for your missionaries on the field. Well, we have this wonderful, glorious fellowship in the gospel. Now what does he mean in verse 19? He says in verse 18, he rejoices, because of this fellowship in the gospel.

Because he says, I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ. What kind of salvation does he speak of? It is not salvation from sin. That's a past thing.

He has accepted Christ as his savior, and he knows he is born again. But salvation from difficult situation. Salvation from difficulty.

When he wrote this epistle, he was a prisoner in Rome. And he knew that because they were exercised in the fellowship in the gospel, they were going to pray for him. And he knew this would turn to his salvation through their prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Praise God for the unity that does exist among the believers. Now, this fellowship also produces confidence. Look at verses 21 to 26.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. This is wonderful Christian life in the fullest sense. What does he mean here? He means that all his goal in life.

We said that the theme of chapter one is Christ our life. This is a summary of this theme. To me to live is Christ.

I wonder what the businessman would say. He would say, to me to live is money. Right? The cardinal Christian would say, to me to live is self.

A statesman would say, to me to live is fame and power. But a Christian who knows Jesus Christ as his savior would say, to me to live is Christ. The spiritual Christian, the spiritually minded Christian, to me to live is Christ.

This is life in its full. What does he mean here? In order to be able to say this and mean it, this means complete surrender. Complete surrender to the will of God.

It may be contrary to what you have designed. But as the Lord reveals his will to you, your goal is to do his will. How to know God's will is another question.

I see God's will in God's words summarized in two aspects, in general terms. The scripture says, this is the will of God, even your sanctification. This is one aspect.

The will of God for every Christian, every child of his, is his sanctification. Is being set apart for the Lord Jesus Christ. Way back in the Middle East, it's our custom until today, to mark our sheep.

Sometimes you have a sheep, or two sheep, or three sheep, and you don't have the time to look after them. You hand them over to someone whose job is to look after the sheep he has a fold. But you do this, and John does this, and Smith does that, and so everybody turns in his sheep to this man to take care of.

All right. How would you know your sheep? You mark them. You separate them with a mark.

Maybe a color. It may be some kind of a mark to designate, to separate them, to know that these are yours. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them.

They have a mark. The Lord has given us a mark. We have been sealed with the Spirit of God.

And one of the fruits of the Spirit of God is complete surrender. The knowledge of his will, the will of God, even your sanctification. Secondly, in all things giving thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you in Christ Jesus.

In all things, and I mean all things. In the good things that you may call good. In the not so good things that you may not call so good.

In sickness, in poverty, in trouble, in difficulties. In all things giving thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you in Jesus Christ. Friends, your greatest enemy is worry.

Worry. Worry. Worry.

And let me say something. I say it with the full authority of the word of God. Ninety-nine and nine-tenths percent of all our worries are homemade.

And own-made. They don't exist. They are not founded.

On resurrection morning, Mary was weeping at the sepulcher. Why was she weeping? They have taken my Saviour. They have taken my Lord.

And I know not where they laid Him. Who would take your Saviour? Who could take your Lord? Your Lord is not dead. We don't serve a dead Saviour.

I serve a living Saviour. This is the difference, the great difference between Christianity and all other religions. Religion is man's search after God.

And very often he doesn't find Him. Christianity is God's search after man. So man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

I had religion before I found Christ. Praise God. I got rid of my religion and I have a living Christ.

I have a living Christ. He is not here. Why seek He the living among the dead? Why worry? I have a living Saviour who overcame death and the grave.

And who says all authority, all power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. All authority, all power is given unto me. Yes, in all things giving thanks.

For this is the will of God concerning you in Jesus Christ. All right, this is the will of God in general terms. What about the specific leading in specific circumstances? How do we know God's leading in a certain matter? I'm sure in your practical experience you're faced sometimes with situations when you have to make a decision.

Shall you change jobs? Shall you marry her or somebody else? Or she marries you or somebody else? What shall I do? Which school shall I go to? Which house shall I take? What shall I do? A number of situations. How can we know the mind of God, the leading of the Lord? I have from my experience jotted down a few things, a few steps, whereby we can be sure of the leading of the Lord in certain circumstances. First of all, God never leads contrary to His word.

God never leads contrary to His word. Don't pray whether you would tell lies or not. No.

Because it's very clear from God's word that you will not tell lies. God never leads contrary to His word. Secondly, God does not lead all His people in the same way.

There is a leading for you and a leading for her and a leading for Him. The main point is to keep in touch with the throne of God day by day in prayer and know the mind of the Lord. God does not lead all His people in the same way.

Thirdly, God does not lead an individual Christian in the same way all the time. There is a special leading for special circumstances. The main thing is to keep in touch with the Lord and know His mind.

There is a special leading for special occasions. Number four. Take the advice of a neutral Christian friend.

Sometimes the Lord speaks through His people. The Lord speaks through His people sometimes. So it would not hurt you.

Don't be proud, but take the advice of some neutral Christian friend. Number five. Don't trust your emotions.

Your emotions are subtle and deceptive. And sometimes you say, well, the Lord led me, or the Lord told me, when actually it is your emotions. Don't pray and say, Lord, just give me the wife you have chosen for me, but give me Jane.

Your emotions are deceptive. They are deceptive. Don't trust your emotions.

Number six. There will be a peace inside you when the leading is given. There will be peace in you.

This is God's promise to you when the leading is given. And number seven. When the peace is there, shut the door.

Don't doubt the leading. Shut the door. Act upon it.

To doubt is an insult to God. You have asked for His leading, and He has given His leading. Don't doubt it.

Shut the door. Yes, you would know the mind of God. This is the wonderful privilege of the child of God.

To me, to live is Christ. My goal in life is to glorify Christ and to do His will. And you are required to give perfect obedience and complete obedience to the will of God.

If you are to say with full assurance, to me to live is Christ. One day Philip was greatly used in Samaria. Hundreds were turning to the Lord in Samaria.

There was a great revival in Samaria. And Philip was instrumental in bringing about this revival. But in the midst of this great, wonderful, joyful experience, the voice of the Lord came to him.

Philip, arise. Go down to Gaza. And I warn you, the desert road, the way to Gaza is a desert road.

I don't know how many of you have seen a desert. I have. And what desert? My word.

You see nothing but the sky and the sand and stones and pebbles. No people. This is desert.

Well, if you were Philip, what would you say? If I were Philip, I would say, well, am I sure this is God's voice? I leave these hundreds of men and women, hundreds of people who are turning to the Lord, this great revival, and I go to a desert place? Whom shall I meet in a desert place? But Philip obeyed. He was sure it was God's voice. And he was living a surrendered life, a life that is committed entirely to Jesus Christ, his Lord and his Savior.

He arose, and we read that he overtook a chariot. He must have been running. A chariot goes at a faster pace than a man who was walking.

And he caught the man in the chariot. If this man was going from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, then he was going in the same direction as the way that goes down to Gaza. They were both going south.

And for Philip to catch that chariot, he must have been running at a faster pace, faster rate than the chariot was. He was sure, a hundred percent sure it was God's vision, God's word. Now, if that man, Philip, was a few minutes late, he would have caught the chariot at a different time.

He came exactly at the very time when the eunuch was reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. If he was faster, he would have come in chapter 52. If he was slower, he would have come in chapter 54.

But he was exact on the dot, and arrived at the very moment when he was reading. He was led as a lamb before his shearer. Of whom does the prophet speak? And then he started from that time to preach Jesus Christ to him.

Complete obedience. How different from you and me at many times. We obey, but not complete obedience.

Not complete surrender. Do you remember what happened in the case of Abraham? His name was Abraham before. And I'm not going to go into the meaning here.

But we read it in Genesis chapter 12. Please turn with me to Genesis chapter 12. It's a great lesson for us to learn there.

Genesis chapter 12. The first verse of Genesis 12 says, Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. Now what tense in the English grammar is had said? We have it the same in the Hebrew and the same in the Arabic too.

This is the past perfect tense. And it shows that there are two actions in the past. One happened before the other.

Both are past. But one happened before the other. Now this is the past perfect tense which happened before.

Another past tense. Where is that other past tense? Please turn to chapter 11, verse 31. Actually it should read like this.

We should read verse 1 of chapter 12 before verse 31 of chapter 11. The Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And Tara took Abraham his son, and Lot the son, etc., etc.

But they didn't go to the land of Canaan. They went to Haran and dwelt in Haran. There was obedience on the part of Abraham.

But partial obedience. Partial obedience. And I know we obey.

But very often it will be partial obedience. Not complete obedience. You cannot say to me to live is Christ when you give partial obedience.

Complete, full, surrender means complete obedience. Whatever the cost may be, whatever the consequences may be, you leave the consequences with the Lord. And so what was the result? The result was that Tara, the father of Abraham, had to die.

I don't say had to die voluntarily, but he was taken away from Abraham. Verse 32. And the days of Tara were 205 years, and Tara died in Haran.

And what happened when Tara died? Well, verse 4 of chapter 12. So Abraham departed. After his father was taken away from him, he departed.

Friend, let me tell you something. If there is something that stands between you and complete obedience to the Lord, that thing must go. If it will not go, it will be made to go.

It will be made to go. The thing that you hold on so dearly, which is contrary to God's will, may be disastrous to you. How did Absalom die? He was very proud of his hair.

He had a ceremony when they cut his hair year after year. It was a beautiful something to him. I think he had reason to be glorying in his hair anyway.

You know why. But how did he die? He was hanging from a bush with his hair. And this long hair that he had was the cause of his death.

What are you holding on to? Which is contrary to God's will. It must go if you want the blessing of the Lord. If you want the blessing, this thing must go.

I reminded you of what happened to Jacob. In Genesis 32, he needs the blessing. I will not leave thee except thou bless me.

I will not leave thee except thou bless me. You want the blessing? Yes. What is your name? What is your name? Jacob is not a good name.

Jacob means a planter. Cheater. It comes from the root Aqib.

In Hebrew, Yaqub. In Arabic, Ya'qub. Ya'qub comes from Aqib.

Aqib means heel. A person who takes people by the heel. Who twists the arms of people.

It's not a good name. We always choose good names for people. For our children.

She is called Iris. Violet. Margaret.

Rose. Forget me not. Beautiful name.

Beautiful names we choose for our children. Yes. But Jacob is not a good name.

Who would like to be called trickery? Tricking? The planter? No. But he said, what is your name? He knew his name. But he wanted to bring before Jacob his past history.

And Jacob knew exactly the impact of the name. My name is Jacob. Your names have been no more Jacob but Israel.

Prince with God. Prince with God. Maybe this man with a capital name is standing.

I know he is standing here with us today. Where two or three are gathered together with my name. There am I in the midst of them.

And maybe he is asking the same question of you. What is your name? You can hide it from people but not from God. You can hide it from me.

I can hide it from you. But not from God. Search me, O God.

And know my way. Know my heart. Oh, I pray that this will be the expression of each heart this morning.

In the presence of the hush of this hour. In the silence before the Lord. May we own up to it.

My name is liar. My name is lukewarm. My name is stingy.

My name is what? Cold hearted. You know it. If we confess our sins.

He is faithful and just. To forgive us our sins. And cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Complete surrender. To me, to live, is Christ. Look at verse 27 please.

Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ. That whether I come and see you. Or else be absent.

I may hear of your affairs. If you stand fast in one spirit. With one mind.

Striving together for the faith of the gospel. Now. My Arabic Bible.

Translates the word conversation as behavior. Perhaps conversation in English means speech or talk. But it means much more than that.

Let your behavior. Not only your talk, but your walk. You know in the old testament there were clean and unclean animals.

And the difference between a clean animal and an unclean animal was this. An animal that had a split cloven lip. And a split cloven hoof.

Was clean. Like a sheep. Have you seen a sheep? If you were not careful before, be careful this time and see how the sheep is.

The upper lip is split. And the hoof is split. That was a clean animal.

Have you seen a hare, a rabbit? He has an upper lip that is split. But no split hoof. It was unclean.

God was teaching the people with an object lesson. There are people who talk. But not walk.

According to their talk. That's unclean before the Lord. Not acceptable before the Lord.

Let your conversation. Be as becomes the gospel of Christ. What is the conversation which is according to the gospel of Christ? It's the conversation in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

This is the best way I can summarize it. A walk, a behavior in the energy of the Spirit of God. Let your life be energized by the Spirit of God who dwells in you.

You and I are temples for the Holy Spirit. He lives in us. This is the great difference between a believer today and a saint in the Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was given at occasions. Prophecy or leading or some kind of an occasion like this. But today He lives in us.

This is your privilege. This is the earnest given to you. He lives in you and lives in me.

And let your conversation be as becomes the Spirit of God. Energized by the Spirit of God. What is His name? He is the Holy Spirit.

Anything that is not holy, H-O-L-Y, is not according to the energy of the Spirit of God. Let your conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ. That whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that you may stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

Now we come here to a very important phase of the individual Christian life and also the assembly life. He says that he stands fast in one spirit with one mind. This fellowship in the Gospel produces unity among the believers.

Now when I say unity, I do not mean uniformity. Unity in the sense that we shall all be copies one of another. It is not so.

There are differences in education, background, environment, temperaments, culture. There are many differences. The only thing on which we all agree is the fact that we differ.

Right. But unity in mind. What does it mean? At one time the Apostle said, I also have the mind of Christ.

What is the mind of Christ? It is the lowly mind. Lowly mind. Learn of me, for I am a great preacher.

No. He did not say that. Learn of me, for I am a great physician.

No. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. And you shall find rest for yourself.

For you. Yes. There is a great cause of unrest in our assemblies.

Unrest in our families. Unrest in our friendly relationships. Why? Because there is no unity in mind.

No lowliness. There is pride. There is jealousy.

There is bickering. There is gossip. There is talk.

Vain talk. Vain glory. Self-seeking.

There are so many things that act contrary to the lowly mind. We have the mind of Christ. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

And you shall find rest unto your soul. Oh, I wish we learned this lesson today. I wish we learned this lesson today in our...

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