

Mid South Conference 1978-05 Fellowship in the Gospel

by Aldy Fam Fanous

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship in the gospel, living for others, and having a lowly mind, just like Christ.

Duration: 34:03

Scripture: Isaiah 2:1-4, Isaiah 42:1-8, Isaiah 49:1-13, Isaiah 50:4-11

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the determination and submission of Jesus Christ in fulfilling his purpose. He compares Jesus' unwavering commitment to going to Jerusalem and dying on the cross to a face set like a flint. The preacher highlights the importance of recognizing Jesus as a living Savior who poured himself out unto death for humanity. The sermon also focuses on the concept of fellowship in the Gospel, emphasizing the joy and unity that comes from sharing a common purpose and supporting one another in prayer, testimony, and providing resources for spreading the Gospel. The preacher references various chapters and verses from the Bible, particularly highlighting passages that depict Jesus as the saving servant and the submissive servant.

Transcript

You will remember that we said that the first chapter presents Christ as our life, the second chapter presents Christ as our example, the third chapter presents Christ as our object, and the fourth presents Christ as our strength. And we said that one of the most important words in Christian literature we find in the work of fellowship. Fellowship, we said, in the gospel.

It's a common joy in a common object shared with one another. Common joy in a common object shared with one another. And we said that this fellowship in the gospel can be expected in three ways.

We are all participating in it for the furtherance of the gospel, by prayer, by sharing in public testimony, and by furnishing the means to enable the labor to go forth with the gospel. Then we said that this fellowship produces joy. It also produces confidence.

As we said last time I was here, to me, to live, is Christ. To me, to live, is Christ. Your main goal in life is that Christ may be glorified, that in all things he might have the preeminence.

This means surrender, complete surrender on my part, means also complete obedience, and perfect obedience on my part. When you are able to say in actual truth, to me, to live, is Christ, you have to completely complete the verse, and to die is gain. To die is gain.

I like what Moody once said. He surprised his audience one day and said, one day you will read in the paper that D. L. Moody died. Nonsense.

Don't believe it. D. L. Moody would not die. He would change addresses.

That's right. Death to the believer is simply absent from the body, present with the Lord. It's not frightening.

In Cairo, Egypt, we have a big zoo, very big zoo. They say it is the second largest zoo in the world. I don't know how true this is.

I loved very much to visit the zoo, and I've been there a number of times, but one of the places I like most, hold your breath, it's the heart of the reptile. Right, I mean it. I just love to go there and watch the things inside.

One day I was there at feeding time, and I'm not going to tell you the things they fed the monster, but there was a big monster, and bless his heart, the keeper was not afraid at all. When he put his hand with that object inside, I just shuddered. Although I like very much to be there, but the cold chill ran through my spine.

When he finished his task, he came to me and he saw what happened to me. He said, were you afraid? I said, afraid? Petrified. I really sliced him up and down.

He said, are you mortal? And he said, don't be afraid. These things cannot harm me. I said, why? He said, each one of them had undergone a surgical operation.

The poison fangs have been removed, and they cannot bite me. I said, what a wonderful picture of death to the Christians. The fangs, the poison of death has been taken away.

No wonder, you know, I was very impressed by the singing tonight. Brother Schwartz will say amen, is that right? Yes, you sang beautifully. I took part, but I didn't sing so beautifully.

However, we will sing much more beautifully that day when Christ comes back. There will be those who are alive when Christ will come, and they will sing and say, oh death, where is my sting? I will not die. You will not sting me.

You cannot kill me. Oh death, where is my sting? There will be those who are asleep in Christ. They will rise and they will sing, oh grave, where is my victory? You can't hold us back.

This is a glorious song. It's a song of victory. To die is gain, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

Some time ago, when I was in Cairo, I got the news that my father, who was in Fayyub, 70 miles south of Cairo, passed away. And I hurried to Fayyub. I inquired how he passed away.

He was singing an Arabic hymn, which is the literal translation of the English hymn, Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly, period. Right, that's how he went. As if it was a prayer and a prayer was answered.

Let me to thy bosom fly. We praise God, we can say death is gain. Now this fellowship in the gospel, we said, also produces unity.

Look at verse 27. Chapter 1, verse 27. 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 that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And we said that the word conversation in Arabic is behavior, your behavior, not only the word of mouth, but also the way you live. And we said that in the Old Testament, there were clean animals and unclean animals. The clean animals had a split lip and a split hoof.

The unclean animal may have had a split lip, but not a split hoof. An object lesson. You must walk as you talk.

Your talk and your walk tally with each other. That's acceptable to God. And then he says, with one mind.

We differ. The only thing on which we agree is the fact that we differ. Some are tall.

Others are blessed to be short. Well, amen. Some are fair.

Some are not so fair. We differ in background, intelligence, education, spiritual attainment. We differ in many things.

But we can be of the same mind. We have to be of the same mind. What does this mean? When the apostle said, I think I have the mind of Christ, he meant that he had a lowly mind.

Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. And let me tell you something, friends. One of the most difficult lessons to learn is that lesson of meekness or lowliness.

I don't learn this in the university. On the contrary, when we put that cap and gown, my head is swollen. It is swollen.

I remember very well. I'm not going to tell you which degree it was. Someone goes to me and he said, which size hat do you have now? I had the same size hat anyway.

However, lowliness is something to learn of the Lord. The greatest testimony given by the Lord Jesus Christ of any man was given of John the Baptist. He was the shining light.

No one born of women was greater than John the Baptist. And John heard it. John, if this was said of you, what do you think you would have done? I would have framed it and hung it in my living room and probably blown it up to make it so big and very big characters.

Or probably I would have made copies of it and sent it to the newspapers. Right. What did John do about that? He was asked who he was.

And what did he say? Refer to the testimony of the Lord about me? No, he didn't say that. He said, I'm a voice crying in the wilderness, not of the greatest cathedral, or of the biggest pulpit, or the greatest podium. Crying in the wilderness.

About who? About Christ. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. He must increase and I must decrease.

This is a lesson for you and for me to learn. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. When we are of the same mind, there will be no jealousies.

Because jealousy springs up from the fact that you think that you really deserve it more than the other. He gets a promotion, you are jealous of him. Why? Because you think you are really worthy to have it.

You probably are more worthy than the other one. We stand in one mind in honor preferring one another. And this is actually the power that gives impact to our witness in the gospel.

The unity of purpose and the unity of mind. The Lord Jesus Christ will use an assembly that stands unitedly, the evangelist, the elder, and everybody, standing with one mind to the faith of the gospel. The gates of hell can never then prevail against it.

I think we misunderstand this verse. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We think of it as though the church is on the defensive, carrying on a defensive war, and the hell, the powers of hell, the powers of darkness coming on, carrying gates of hell.

That's not the picture. The church is carrying on the offensive, not the defensive. The offensive and the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

I was very impressed about means that we can use to bring the gospel of Christ to the masses. Well, this is actually a church, an assembly that is alive for the Lord Jesus Christ. This brings me actually to chapter two.

We're going to read just four verses of chapter two together. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bows and mercies, fulfilling my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

The last word here actually strikes the keynote of the whole epistle. Others. Others.

Christ, our example, he lived for others. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for what? Others. He died for others, and if you are to follow his example, if he is our example, we should really live for others.

This is the mind of Christ, the lowly mind. Then in the coming verses, verses five to eight, we come to the one of the probably the most sublime mysteries of all scriptures. We take off our shoes from off our feet as we behold this great mystery.

Let us read verses five to eight, please. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This is what the theologians call the kenosis, or the emptying.

I don't like the expression, made himself of no reputation. In my Arabic Bible, it is emptied himself, and this is actually what the Greek word kenosis means. He emptied himself.

He, the eternal son of the Father, equal with the Father and with the Spirit, very God of very God, emptied himself to become the savior of sinners. You ask, emptied himself of what? Of his deity? No, that could not be. When he was hanging on the cross, he was the son of God.

When he was born in a manger, he was the son of God. This is the greatest mystery. He, equal with the Father, he existed from eternity, the son of God, yet he emptied himself of what? To become your savior and my savior.

He emptied himself of his rights as God the Son, emptied himself of his rights as God the Son. He who created the rivers of the world, said I first. He who created the whole world and the earth and the fullness thereof had no place where to lay his head.

He suffered the death of the cross for you and for me. In the Garden of Gethsemane, I have been a number of times to the Garden of Gethsemane, and we see olive trees there, very, very old. As a matter of fact, an olive tree never dies.

When it becomes very, very old, another shoot comes up and you have another tree. And some people tell us that these are the original trees under which the Lord prayed. Could be, could not be, but that's not the point.

But in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Son of God, the Eternal Son of God, could pray and did pray, and his sweat came down as drops of blood. Father, if it be thy will that this cup should pass from me, nevertheless not my will, but thine be done. And I told you, I remember, that that cup for which he prayed was not the spear that pierces holy sides.

It was not the thorns that pierces holy brow. It was not the railings and the markings of the people that broke his heart. It was not the nails that pierce his holy hands and his holy feet.

These were all agony, agony, agony indeed. No, this was not the cup. But the cup was his separation from his Father.

Now, you representative of mine, on the cross of Calvary, God the Father, as it were, hid his face from his Son, hid his face from his Son, because his Son at that time was made sin for you and for me, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. So he could cry, he did cry, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Yes, and at this very moment, when he suffered separation from the Father, your salvation and mine was made complete, was made complete. That's why he cried, it is finished.

What was finished? All the prophecies of the Old Testament? Yes. The work of salvation finished? Yes, it is finished. And yours and mine now is a complete finished work of salvation on the cross of Christ.

And by, after he cried, it is finished, when salvation was made perfect, fellowship was restored with the Father, and he could say, in thy hands, I commend my spirit. We praise God for a finished salvation, because he made himself of no reputation, he emptied himself, and he took upon himself in the form of a servant. The word servant again in the Arabic, and I make no apology for referring to the Arabic, because it's my language, it's a bond slave.

He took upon himself the form of a bond slave, that you and I might be free. And the Father was delighted in the work of the bond slave. As I was studying the book of Isaiah, I was thrilled, I was thrilled to read of four songs for Jehovah.

This morning I was thrilled again to hear from Brother Schwartz about God's singing. God gave four songs that God sang about the complete work of the bond slave, my servant. Please turn with me to the book of Isaiah.

We're not going to read all the four songs for lack of time, but we just read a word here or there. Isaiah 42, the first song of Jehovah about his servant, is recorded to us in verses 1 to 8, at chapter 42, verses 1 to 8, and it portrays Christ as the satisfying servant, the satisfying servant. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.

I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

A bruised wreath shall he not break, and the smoking flask shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have said judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law until the end of the song.

Praise God, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up his voice in the street, be heard in the street. A bruised wreath shall he not break, and the smoking flask shall he not quench.

We praise God for the satisfying servant. He satisfies the heart of God, and he satisfies me. Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Yours is satisfaction, complete satisfaction, in all circumstances of life, because Jesus Christ fills my every longing, keeps me singing all the way.

A second song is recorded to us in chapter 49, Isaiah chapter 49, and it presents Christ to us as the saving servant. You have it recorded in chapter 49, verses 1 to 13. Listen, O eyes unto me, and hearken, ye people from far.

The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft in his quiver hath he hid me. And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain. Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And so on until the end of the song.

Verses 1 to 13. He is the saving servant. He is the one who laid down his life for you and for me.

The third song is in chapter 50, and verses 4 to 11. Here we see Christ as the submissive servant. Verses 4 to 11.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as I learned. The Lord God has opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back.

I gave my back to the smiters, my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame in speaking, for the Lord God will help me. Therefore shall I not be confounded, therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed until the end of the song.

When the time came, he went up to Jerusalem. Knowing exactly what was coming on him, he set his face like a flint to go to die on the cross for you and for me. Friends, we have a living Savior.

He was submissive unto death. He poured himself to death. The fourth song is recorded to us in chapter 52, verses 13 and 14.

52, verses 13 and 14. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. And we continue on through the end of the chapter, verse 53, but I'm not going to read the whole thing. Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Until he says he is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and was esteemed, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows away, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our faith was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

What a Saviour! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood, sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah! What a Saviour! We praise God for the Saviour that we have, Jesus Christ our Lord. In closing, I would like to point out to you verse 12, please.

Go back to Philippians chapter 2 and verse 12. This is a verse which is very often misunderstood. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

How can I work out my own salvation if I have just said that my salvation and yours is complete? If Christ said it is finished and your salvation is complete and mine is complete in Christ, if we have a complete salvation in Christ, how can I work out my own salvation with fear and with trembling, as though it is something that may be achieved or may not be achieved? I don't think that the reference here is salvation from sin. You know, in the assembly at Philippi, they had a particular difficulty. There were two women who had a quarrel between each other.

The names are difficult to pronounce. I can tell you the names in Arabic, but Aodea and Sintike, if this makes any sense to you, they were really in difficulty. And they were prominent women.

Apparently, they had a ministry. Now, now, be careful here. I think their ministry was among women.

I take my hat off to the ministry of women, but there's a place for the ministry of women. I was reading the other day in Exodus 38, and I read of a precious, precious ministry rendered by the women in Exodus 38. If you were to examine, I don't advise you, the handbag of a lady, what would you find there? Oh brother, I don't talk politics, but you may find a lot of money or not a lot of money.

You may find a comb or you may not find a comb, but there's one thing that you are sure to find, and rightly so, you will find a little less, a nerve. Right? Right. Okay.

Look please at chapter 38 of Exodus and verse 8. One of the items of furniture in the tabernacle was called the laver, l-a-v-e-r. And Moses made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Now, these glasses were not made of glass.

They were made of brass. It must have been a costly thing. And the word in Arabic, assembled or assembling, actually is enlisted, as though is a military word, a military word, enlisted.

These women contributed the most important thing they had. They stood in line, offering what they had for the service of the tabernacle. And the ministry of women cannot be underestimated.

As a matter of fact, I believe, indeed, that the ministry of women in the building up of the church, in its rightful place, cannot be overemphasized at all. But, we go back to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. These two women in the assembly at Philippi had a quarrel among themselves, or between themselves, to be precise in the English grammar.

And the situation was serious enough, threatening to create a split and a division in the assembly. When Paul was present there, they would refer to him, and he would solve the difficulties, and work out the salvation of the assembly of that difficulty. But, now that he's away, what can be done? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, in honor, preferring one another, looking unto yourself, because you might be taken in a similar situation.

And friends, if all our differences are worked out in the same way, with fear and trembling before the Lord, oh, I tell you how different the results would be. When someone has a difference of opinion with another, go to him. You, who have a difference with him, go to him, not to a third person, and see if it can be worked out in fear and trembling before the Lord.

Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling. I've been promised, or rather threatening, ruthless consequences if I overstep the time, and I do want to go to the nursery room. The Lord bless you indeed, and make you a blessing.

Thank you so much. Yes, I'm not going to take it over and go. Okay, I got it.

I got it now. Wait a minute, stick on your tie now, I got it.

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