

# Baptism - Holy Spirit and Water

by John Hunter

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*The sermon explores the significance of the day of Pentecost, the normal reception of the Holy Spirit, and the importance of baptism as an act of renunciation and a public confession of faith.*

**Duration:** 1:05:52

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, Romans 6:14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Hebrews 10:25, James 4:11, 1 Peter 1:16

**Topics:** "Baptism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of understanding and teaching the word of God in order to maintain fellowship within the church. He emphasizes the need for individuals to be taught and not just engage in discussions without knowledge. The speaker also highlights the order of priorities in the early church, where teaching came before breaking of bread. He urges responsible leaders to reevaluate their ministry and ensure that they are covering a wide range of biblical topics and not repeating the same teachings.

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## Transcript

Turning please to Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2, verse 1 please. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Verse 37.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. The same day they were added unto them about three thousand souls, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. That will suffice for the moment.

The day of Pentecost is one of the great salvation events in the New Testament. Now I know that when we talk about salvation events, we think just usually of Calvary. But there are certain events that are intimately associated with salvation and cannot be separated.

I refer to such as the virgin birth, the death of the Lord Jesus, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. These are all intimate events that cannot be separated, what I call salvation events. Now I want today to talk to you about some of the doctrinal implications and the practical outcome of the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down to form the body of Christ.

Pentecost, the day of Pentecost, what happened is history. Now I want you to get that, for history is not experience. And what happened here was the inauguration of a new dispensation that was marked by the movement of divine persons and by sounds, just as the dispensation will close again with the movement of the same divine persons and with sounds.

The Holy Spirit only came down once. Now please, very large-heartedly, very generously, I want to say this. The Holy Spirit only came down once.

That will save you from Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal error. Now it's essential that these things be said. The Holy Spirit came down on a certain day in a certain place.

He came down on the day of Pentecost and the city was Jerusalem. He came down in answer to the promise of Christ given in the upper room. And it was a memorable day when he came down.

Now I want you to note that his coming was marked by certain phenomena. For instance, you would read this. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like of fire, and it sat upon each of them. Now please, take particular note, will you, that the coming of the Spirit with this phenomena was unique and it was final. It was unique because it had never happened in this way before.

It was final in that it never happened in this way again. Never again has there been a scene like this. Now I want to impress that upon you.

And I want now to deal with one of the first doctrinal implications. There is a fast-growing movement known popularly as the charismatic movement. I have very deep objections to the title.

I never approve of any company taking to themselves exclusively titles that are used in the New Testament that are there for all. For charismatic means a gift given by grace, and they have no right to take to themselves and name their movement as if all gift was associated with them. Again, the teachers in the charismatic movement will tell you that being born again is not enough, that you must have something subsequent to conversion.

They put it like this. They say that when you are converted you've got life but not power. So that what was accomplished in you the night you were converted by the Spirit is not enough.

They say no, you must have a subsequent baptism of the Spirit in order to receive power. And, and this might amaze some of you, especially the younger folks, when you come to the acts of the apostles to your amazement, you find this, that speaking with tongues is only mentioned three times, and each of the

occasions it's mentioned in relation to the gift of the Holy Spirit. And these people will say to you, there you are, isn't that what we've been trying to tell you? Well now, what they are saying is true.

The conclusions they are drawing are wrong. It is true that the three occasions, is as they say, but the three occasions in which the Spirit was given and they spoke with tongues were unique occasions that cannot and could not happen today. Now this is the first of them.

This couldn't happen today because this coming of the Spirit with the phenomena was to introduce the dispensation, to show that it was marked by the present activity of the Spirit of God given from heaven. So now, near the close of the dispensation, you wouldn't expect this. It's unique and it's final and it was to do with the inauguration of the day of grace.

Now that deals with that one. Now let's turn now please, will you, to chapter 10. And we'll notice now the second occasion.

Do turn please, will you, because after all you may be getting asked lots of questions and it's well that you read the passage and get the truth home. Peter has received an invitation to go to the house of a man called Cornelius. He goes, but very wisely he takes with him a number of witnesses.

These witnesses will prove helpful when in chapter 11 he's carpentered for what he did. Now notice please at the close of Acts 10. That's 44.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word and they of the circumcision, that's the Jews, which believed were astonished as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. Now notice please, will you, that when Peter was preaching, suddenly, sovereignly, the Holy Spirit came upon all who were gathered. There was the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now, on this occasion, Gentiles are being introduced to the church, something which the Jew and his exclusiveness would never have accepted. And they were astonished that the Holy Spirit should be received. But how would Peter know that they had received the Holy Spirit? It says that as he spake, that the Spirit fell on them.

How would he know? Well, now, he knew because they speak with tongues, because that is what had happened when the Spirit came to the Jews on the day of Pentecost. And you'll notice in the reading, please, that the reception of the Spirit does not set aside water baptism, for the household of Cornelius were baptized in water. But you couldn't get this situation today, for the church is far more Gentile today than Jewish.

So therefore, Acts 10 is unique. And the reception of the Spirit given associated with speaking in tongues was a unique occasion that couldn't happen today. So that deals with the second one.

Now turn to Acts 19. Now this is the great scripture that they use. They'll come and say to you, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? So we'll need to deal carefully with Acts 19.

That's one, please. And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus. And finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? A little rendering would be, did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they speak with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. Now, notice please, when Paul arrived at Ephesus, he met these men.

He wasn't very long conversing with them until he realized that there was something wrong. The thing, the situation wasn't normal. Now, in order to get to the root of the matter, he asked two test questions.

Have you got that? Two test questions. Notice now please, verse two, question number one. Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed? They said, we have not so much as heard of any Holy Spirit.

Now, that's interesting, because if they had been baptized, they would have been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. How come they didn't know about the Holy Spirit? Test question number two, verse three. Unto what then would ye baptize? If you've never heard of this Holy Spirit, what then would you baptize to? They said, to John's baptism.

So now you have a company of people who have heard the message of the Baptist, who have received John's baptism after Pentecost, so that they belong in sole experience to a dispensation. They've heard a message that's outdated. They have submitted to a baptism that's outdated.

You couldn't find people like that today, who have only heard the message of the Baptist and submitted to John's baptism. The situation is quite unique. And so Paul says in his explanation that John has been superseded.

John spoke of the one that was to come. And in verse five, when they heard that, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. By the way, brethren, there's always a great talk, or used to be, about two baptisms.

When the expression, baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, it's always in connection with people who had a previous knowledge of God, but had to be brought up to date with the knowledge of God in Christ and in the gospel. That is, they had to be baptized, acknowledging the authority of Christ. He must now come into their experience.

And so they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The only mention of re-baptism in your New Testament. Well now, why should these men be baptized and not the twelve apostles? They weren't re-baptized.

The reason for that is this, that when the apostles were baptized, the baptism was valid in that day. But these men had received the message of John and the baptism of John after Pentecost, when the baptism

was no longer valid. Therefore, they had to be re-baptized.

Then you'll notice verse six, that Paul laid his hands upon them, he bridged the dispensations, and they received the Holy Spirit. But how would Paul know that they had received it? They spake with tongues. So that the speaking with tongues is introduced in the Acts in relation to the reception of the Spirit in circumstances which were quite unique and could not be experienced today.

Back to Acts 2. I hope you've been interested in the doctrine. Too many folks are beginning to switch off when we begin to teach doctrine. But after all, if you're not clear in the doctrine, then you won't be clear in a lot of other things, especially the practice.

Now, Peter stood up that day to preach. Now follow me carefully. And to that audience, many of whom had been guilty and represented the nation that was guilty of putting to death the Lord Jesus, he presented Christ as a city of refuge.

Now, maybe I better explain what that means. In your Old Testament, you had cities of refuge set up so that if a man killed another person unwittingly, he didn't intend to do it, he didn't realize it, then he could flee to the city of refuge and find a sanctuary. Now, God in his mercy reduced the charge in relation to Christ from murder to manslaughter, and he presented Christ as a city of refuge.

Flee to Christ and you'll be safe. And that day, 3,000 souls believed the message and accepted the Lord Jesus to find in him a refuge. Peter says, I know that through ignorance you did it.

It wasn't willful or there would have been no forgiveness. Now, let me come now, please, right down to the closing verses that we read. First of all, now this is very important.

Listen carefully now to this. When Peter preached to these people and they started to ask questions, he told them now, you repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, this is interesting.

Now, careful, careful now. These 3,000 people received the Holy Spirit upon believing. Isn't that right? But they received him without phenomena of any kind.

No rushing mighty wind, no cloven tongues as of fire. That goes to prove that the reception of the Spirit by the 3,000 at the close of Acts 2 is the normal. The abnormal is at the beginning.

Clear? Now, you see, at the beginning, a rushing mighty wind filled the room. Supposing it happened in this room, it means that they were literally baptized in the element. It was a literal baptism in the Spirit.

And then Peter looked at John and saw a cloven tongue of fire. And John looked at Matthew and saw a cloven tongue of fire. Matthew looked at Thomas and saw a cloven tongue as of fire.

That has never happened since. The dispensation was being inaugurated. The Spirit had come to form the body of Christ.

But when you come to the close of the chapter, 3,000 received the Spirit upon believing. That's exactly how we received it. Galatians chapter 4 says this, Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart.

Notice, please, God gives the Spirit. The moment that you believe God sends it, that's revelation. You might not even be aware of it, but it's true.

You know, the night I got converted, I received the Holy Spirit, but I didn't know it. See, nobody told me. Why don't we teach the young converts these things? Now, listen carefully.

Never in the New Testament at any time are you asked to go through an experience to claim a blessing. Never. What you're taught is this, that at conversion you get every blessing.

And God says, I've made you that, now you be that. You're never asked to go through an experience to claim a blessing. Now, these are important things.

Now, please, let me come now to verse 41, shall we? Upon the reception of the message, they were baptized. I want to talk to you a little about baptism. Now, as I talk to you, please, will you, would you turn over just for a moment to Romans 6? Now, it's always been a matter of regret that baptism is looked upon, many of us, as being an elementary subject.

And as long as you look upon it as being elementary, it will never be big with you. I want you also to notice that in those early days in the Acts, they baptized the converts upon their confession of faith. Baptism is linked with the gospel and not with reception.

Now, the Lord Jesus was perfectly clear about this, while maybe some of you are not. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 16, verse 16, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. Now, when he said he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he doesn't mean that you've got to be saved to be baptized, but it means this, that the Lord never envisaged a person who would claim to be a believer who wasn't baptized.

Baptism is closely linked with believing and salvation, so closely in the Bible that they're looked upon as one. And you can go through your New Testament, and you'll find consistently that those who believed were baptized upon their confession of faith. Let me say this, when you go through your New Testament, there is no such thing envisaged as an unbaptized believer.

In your New Testament, you would not have been recognized as a Christian if you weren't baptized. Even today in Jewish and Muslim circles, you can say, I believe, accept the gospel, no problems. But as soon as you get baptized, and you have now committed yourself to a person and a cause, then the persecution begins.

There has risen up amongst us a certain idea, now listen carefully, and I don't know who introduced it, and I don't know where it came from, but I want to nail it. There is an idea amongst young people that you can be saved but not baptized, and you can carry on with certain things as long as you're not baptized. But after you're baptized, that'll need to stop.

That's wrong, utterly and totally wrong. If a thing is wrong after baptism, it's wrong before baptism. You are a Christian from the moment that you're believed, and as a Christian, God expects you to walk the Christian way.

Now is that clear? You see, baptism but illustrates what took place at conversion, and the longer it's put off, so much does it lose its validity. It has to do with the beginning of a person's experience. And if you go through your New Testament, you will notice that the eunuch has to be baptized, but you'll notice that

Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, arise and be baptized, and told them, we are here to tell converts what to do, not to wait till they come to inquire about it.

Go and preach and baptize the converts. It's high time we recognize this, brethren, we're failing in our responsibility. We should say to them, this is the way, walk ye in it.

Clear? That's what it was here. Now, there are many things associated with baptism that we don't hear, and because baptismal services take place within certain meetings, there's not time to expound the thing. So we're missing out on the depth of teaching in relation to it.

For instance, you take this, because there are things associated with baptism we would seldom hear about. Said Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. But baptism doesn't wash away sins.

Ah, but it illustrates what does. It symbolizes the purification that takes place when you're converted. And so therefore, his public baptism was a confession that he was finished with the old life and he was going on with the new.

And we'll need to recognize this, that baptism amongst other things is an act of renunciation. You're finished with the old, you're going on with the new. I asked you to turn to Romans 6 to draw your attention to verse 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Now, just a minute. This is found in a context of baptism. According to the writer, you're supposed to know this.

Now, we'll see how well you're taught. Knowing what? Knowing that our old man is crucified with him. All right then, who or what is the old man? What does crucifixion mean? What's the body of sin? What does it mean when it says the body of sin is destroyed? We're supposed to know these things.

We're supposed to have been taught them. Now, let me come again. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.

Now, I'll tell you what old man is in a moment, just have a little patience. But the old man has been crucified with Christ, so it took place at Calvary. Now, here is revelation.

You would never have known if God hadn't told you this, that at Calvary the old man is crucified. You see, when you read the Gospels about the cross, you're only reading what's outward. If you want the doctrine of the cross, you've got to go to the epistles.

And God's telling us about something that took place at the cross. He says the old man was crucified with Christ. Now, that's clear.

He's talking about what took place at the cross. Now, who or what is our old man? You'll notice in this connection, he puts it collectively, our old man. It's good when we can talk about our old man.

It's not your father. Come again. Our old man.

Now, let me lay low certain things now, please. First of all, the old man is not the old nature. I hope you're clear on that.

The old man is not the old nature. Ah, somebody says now, just a minute now, before you go any further, just stop. The old man's not the old nature.

That's right. Then what is the old man? The old man is the order of man that you stood connected with before you were converted. The order of the old man is the order that linked you with Adam.

It was your standing and standing. What is crucifixion? Crucifixion is a public act. Crucifixion is an act of judgment.

It's a judicial act. So, what you're being told is this, that that old order of man linked with Adam, that was a grief to God continually. God terminated it at the cross by an act of judgment when Christ bore its curse.

All our standing in Adam has gone and gone at Calvary. Clear. You're now linked with another man, Christ.

So, the old order has been terminated by an act of judgment at the cross. Now, that's, listen again, doctrine. You see, once you get a hold of this, you'll understand baptism.

Now, listen now, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, in order that we should not serve sin as a master. It's all to clear you in your mind and thinking that no longer does sin dominate as a master. Now, we'll need to get this clear in our minds, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed.

What does the word destroyed mean? Listen carefully. It means to be rendered inactive, rendered inoperative, so that now we see the gods finish with the old order, our standing in Adam has gone forever, in order that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative, inactive. Good.

Now, what's the body of sin? Now, again, you come to the commentators, the scholars, etc., and they say, the body of sin, well now, the body is the seat of sin. The body is not the seat of sin. The seat of sin is in your will.

The seat of sin is in your heart. The body is only the medium through which sin operates as a principle. Have you got that? So God says now, I've cut you off in the old order.

Clear? You see, listen. When Christ died at the cross, he not only died to remove my sins, he died to remove the order of man that committed them. Not only have my sins gone, but I've gone.

Now, are you clear on these things? In order that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative, in order, yes, you see that this body through which sin operates won't operate anymore, so that sin will no longer have dominion over you. It's broken. It's broken by Christ and his cross.

Ah, this is interesting. You know, brethren, there are some doctrines that we've decided not to teach. There are certain things that we never hear, and this is one of them.

Now listen carefully. Is all this true, this doctrine about the cross? That the old order is gone? And it's to be seen that if God has removed my sins and removed the man that committed them, then no longer does sin operate in this body. Is that right? Is that what the passage teaches? All right, then that means this, that Christianity is lived out by men and women who do not sin.

Now, don't you jump to wrong conclusions, because if you're not too deep a thinker, that's just what you're doing. I'm not saying that you're sinless, for you're not, but you're not expected to sin. That the body of sin might be rendered inoperative, is that not the difference between a Christian and a sinner? That they'll go out every day of the week.

They don't care whether they sin. They maybe want to sin, but Christians don't. You don't go out to sin.

You're not expected to sin. I'll give you chapter and verse. 1 John 2, verse 1. I write unto you little children that you sin not.

That's the normal. If anyone do sin, that's the abnormal. He's an advocate with the Father.

Do you believe these things, brethren? Come on now. Because others have gone to extreme in holiness, we've retracted. You belong to a people that have been severed from the power of sin.

The link has been broken with Adam. New links have been forged with Christ. And this body that once was defiled by sin operating in it, it operates no more.

Have you noticed, please, that three times in Romans 6 you get the expression, dead unto sin? Isn't that right? For instance, in verse 2, how shall we that have died to sin continue in it? Listen again. Verse 10, in that Christ died, he died unto sin once for all. In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise, you reckon that you too have died unto sin and live unto God. Is that right? Now watch. He's telling us that Christ died unto sin and lives unto God.

Now he says, you reckon that when Christ died, you died. When Christ rose, you rose. He died unto sin.

You reckon or count it as true that you too have died unto sin but live unto God. Now this is not dying for sin. Dying for sin's atonement.

You can't die for sin, but you can die unto sin. Dying unto sin is dying unto this fear where sin reigns. There came a day when Christ died unto sin and has moved through to live unto God.

Therefore, I reckon or count it as true in identification with my glorious Lord that I too have died unto sin to live unto God. Have you got that? Now if you can see this, that baptism gives you a new position, then you'll stop sinning and begin to live a life of holiness. These are the things I meant, brethren, that we should be constantly teaching.

That's why nobody looks for increase in holiness in each other believers. Isn't that right? You're not looking at it, are you? Looking for an increase in holiness, an increase in likeness to Christ? Brethren, we're losing grip of the fundamentals that we are a holy people consecrated unto God, stripped of the old, is gone in the death of Christ and have emerged a new creation linked with the man in the glory. Sin shall no longer have dominion.

Good. Back now to Acts 2, shall we? We'll move now from verse 41 to verse 42. Now, you will notice, please, that conversion, baptism, and the setting up of the assembly was all one movement.

Couldn't be otherwise. The new day had been inaugurated. The sooner this thing was set up, the better, scripturally.

So the 3,000 got converted, were baptized, and they gathered together. Now, it says in verse 42 now, keep your eye on it now, please, that they continued steadfastly in four things. Is that right? They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Now, isn't it interesting the way it's put? Do you notice anything in it? For instance, are you not startled to note that teaching comes first, and breaking of bread is third? Why, that makes you think, doesn't it? Ah, now, just a minute. Just a minute now. Now, I know that when even the Spirit of God is going to put down four things, he can't put them all down at once.

He's got to make choice. But isn't it amazing that when he decided that the penman should write this, he directed that teaching is first, and breaking of bread is third. Now, on that--listen carefully now--on that, I would judge that the apostle's doctrine formed the fellowship, and the fellowship was expressed in the breaking of bread and prayers.

Got that? The apostle's teaching formed the fellowship. The fellowship was expressed in the breaking of bread and in prayers. Now, that's interesting.

You see, the fellowship here, because it's the word fellowship I want to lift up today, that's really for the close of the meeting, I'm going to talk in this word fellowship. But I want you to notice here that the fellowship is not the people, for the people continued in fellowship. So, I take it here that the fellowship is the things of God that they enjoyed together.

And they got the knowledge of these things from the apostle's doctrine. Now, what would be the apostle's teaching? Well, I take it that the apostles taught the things that the Lord taught them, and they taught the things that the Spirit would instruct them in. And so that here were people, and they were continuing in the apostle's doctrine, and the fellowship.

And while you could read it the apostle's doctrine and fellowship with the apostles, the fellowship with the apostles was the result of the teaching of the apostles. Brethren, it's high time that we put foremost this question of teaching. You know, I don't see the point.

Now, especially at large meetings, listen, I don't see the point of having teaching meetings if they don't come to be taught. Now, we'll need to rear a generation that knows God's truth. Isn't that right? And I would say to all of you responsible brethren, start to go over again, will you? For the ministerial system is weak.

It's very weak. Did you ever sit down at the end of a year and take account of the ministry that you've heard? To be amazed at how little ground has been covered, how much repetition has been in it, and that amongst our assemblies there are vast tracts of the Bible of which we're totally ignorant. Isn't that right? Brethren, you know me well enough that I believe that the scriptures don't teach a one-man ministry.

But you see, you have men today exercising a one-man ministry and taking their congregation week by week through the scriptures. And we'll need to be careful. We know a one-man ministry won't do.

But brethren, brethren, we'll need to see that the ministerial system is such as is calculated to bring to us the whole of the truth of God. For if you've only a partial diet, your health will be impaired. And if we're not getting all the word of God, we're out of balance.

Now, this is a challenge to us all, I know. But there it is. Again, I noticed a tendency in young people that they want to discuss the things and not come and listen and be taught.

But tell me, how can you discuss things you don't know anything about? Listen to this. When I was five years of age, mother took me to school. I remember it well.

For when they let me out at 11 o'clock to play, I decided to go home. I'd had enough. I went home and got a clip in the ear and was sent back.

That's how they did it in those days. But never mind. What I want to draw your attention to is this.

When mother handed me over to the teacher, she didn't take me over to the corner and sit me down and say to me, now listen, Jack, we're going to discuss the curriculum. What would I know about a curriculum? What do you know about your Bible? You're needing to commander men that can teach you the word of God. I don't know whoever gave us this idea that as long as you break bread from time to time, you're in fellowship.

I don't know where we got that. They continued in fellowship. Now, I'm passing by the breaking of bread and prayers just down in this word fellowship.

I wonder who taught us this. I remember a big man in Lancashire, yonder. In England, you would likely know him, Jim, I suppose, Jim Britton.

Big, you know, outspoken, gruff sort of man, wasn't he? He had a big library yonder. I don't think he ever looked at it, but it was a great library. Big Jim says to me one day, he says, you know, Jack, he said, we've some folks with us and they only break bread about every six weeks or two months.

Then before I had time to say anything, he says, ah, well, he says, I suppose they do that to keep themselves in benefit. So you see that you'll understand, won't you? That there is such a thing as fellowship, enjoying the things of God. I remember once being in Toronto.

My brother Maxwell was there, but he won't know the incident. A young brother, after one of the Bible readings, approached me going down the corridor. He said, I'd like to ask you a question.

I said, what is it? He said, when I ask the question, you'll have an idea why I didn't ask it in the meeting. He says, do you remember the brother that rose in the meeting and asked, was it possible to be in fellowship, but not in the assembly? I said, yes, I do. He said, you know, I'm converted.

He says, I was baptized so long ago and I'm due to be received in a couple of weeks time. Nevermind so much the details. He said, sorry, the question was asked, was it possible to be in the assembly and not in fellowship? And of course the answer was given, well, of course, yes, they don't enjoy the things of God if they don't come together.

He said, is it possible to be in fellowship and not in the assembly? And that was good. Because as soon as he told me his experience, I knew what he was meaning. He had attended every gathering since he got converted.

He was enjoying the things of God. He was in fellowship, but he wasn't technically in the assembly. He was enjoying the fellowship of the things of God far more than a lot of them that were in.

My, that's good, brethren, isn't it? Now, you remember in the close of the old dispensation, you read this. Now you know it well. Then they that feared the Lord speak often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, pricked up his ears and heard.

Did you get that? They that feared the Lord speak often one to another, that's fellowship. One is an individual, another is fellowship. And they speak often one to another about the things of God, and the Lord hearkened and heard.

That's good. Now, I want to lift up these two words, one and another. Is that right? They speak one to another, fellowship.

Now, once you notice this, if you're not speaking to each other, you're not in fellowship. Come on now, brethren. They that feared the Lord speak often one to another.

There's no fear of God in your heart, or you've been maintaining fellowship, not breaking it. They speak often one to another, the fear of God, and the enjoyment of the things of God, and they communicate it. If a man is filled with the Spirit, speaking, that's it.

You're not speaking to each other, you're not filled with the Spirit either. But notice one and another. Now, I'll tell you what I want to do very quickly now.

I want to bring before you, using this formula one and another, I want to bring before you, first of all, things that can damage the fellowship. And then I want to bring before you things that can enrich the fellowship. Now, I won't exhaust the subject.

As I talk to you about one and another, you'll be able to think of many other scriptures that you could use, and you can use them. It's not copyright. Got it? One to another.

Things that can damage the fellowship. James chapter 4. James chapter 4. Using the formula one to another, that can damage the fellowship. Verse 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy, who art thou that judgest another. Now, back now to verse 11, please. Now, notice.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Blanket statement. To speak evil, to speak against each other is incompatible with the brotherhood.

Speak not evil one of another. You don't do it. Is that right? Is that what it says? Oh, somebody says, but just a minute.

Hold. Hold now. Hold.

Supposing it's true. You don't say it. If it's true, you go and see the brother or sister.

Don't you talk to other people about it. You've not to do it. Isn't this what's destroying the fellowship? Speak not evil one of another, brethren, brothers.

If I was walking down the street and you met me and started to run down your family, told me all about it, once you left, the first thing I would think was this, thank God I don't belong to that family. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Read on.

He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law. What law? The royal law of chapter 2, verse 8. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Oh, that's tremendous, isn't it? Listen.

Verse 12. There is one lawgiver, and it's not you. It's God.

You're not above this law. There is only one lawgiver. Listen to it.

Oh, it's devastating. Who art thou that judgest another? Who do you think you are? And he's talking about the people that stand in little cliques. Do you use that word over here, cliques? Little groups.

Pulling down somebody, often to exalt themselves. You don't do it. These are the things that are destroying us.

These are the things that are destroying the brotherhood, that are killing your assembly. I want to tell you, there's a day of account coming for brethren and sisters who will insist on the right to speak their mind, no matter the damage and injury that's done. You'll answer to God for it.

It's wrong. It's not done. Galatians chapter 5, verse 15.

If you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another. Well, well, did you get that? If you bite and devour one another, you'll consume one another. Watch now.

To bite is characteristic of the dog. To devour is characteristic of the lion. You don't act like animals to each other.

Don't you realize that if you're going to fight the bit out, you'll destroy yourselves? I can't talk about this area. I can talk about my own area. I could take you to places where they had a large meeting and there's none now.

Well, they fought it out and enjoyed it. They destroyed it. And I can take you to others that are very, very low and have never recovered for years just due to this.

Brother Maxwell, you'll know this. I'm not naming the place. Not so long ago, I was there to learn to my amazement that they were at one time about 200 in fellowship and it's down to about a couple of dozen and they're still fighting, ruining the place.

Oh, to think that we're among you to be helped. Here to be encouraged and not devoured. Be careful, brethren, won't you? In God's name.

Turn back quickly to 1 Timothy 5. Just a different slant on it here. The trouble with this sort of thing is that you've got to be selective. You've got to decide the scriptures are going to leave out and what you're going to use.

Verse 21, 1 Timothy 5, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Now, I know he's

talking about an elder and about judgment passed upon a fellow elder. I know he's saying that you don't receive an accusation against an elder unless there's two witnesses.

One, only one that falls to the ground. And I know he's trying to protect good men against the attacks of others. But he says, listen, now I want just to enlarge the thing.

He said, listen, you don't, you don't, you don't have partiality in your judgment and in your evaluation. That right? You don't prefer one to another. That right? You like the brother.

So you, you minimize his weaknesses and magnify strength and qualities. Isn't that right? And if you don't like him, you magnify his weaknesses and minimize his strength. Oh, there's nothing worse than this preferential treatment by elders and by ourselves, not preferring one before another.

That destroys fellowship. We're all the same. I know if your uncle and aunt go to Elam Hall and ask them, I wouldn't dare to stand up here and not practice the thing yonder.

I'll tell you more. I wouldn't minister up here. What I haven't ministered yonder.

I've ministered this from our own platform. Oh yes. They're all the same.

No partiality, no preferring. These are things that can damage, destroy the fellowship. Now quickly, things that can enrich the fellowship.

First Peter four. That's nine. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

Well, you say that's a strange scripture to read. Use hospitality one to another. Well now, brethren, listen.

If there's one thing above another that can eliminate the variances that arise, it's hospitality. Oh yes. An opened home.

The saints coming together. Hospitality can work for the enrichment of an assembly. You see, very often when you come to prefer one to another, you don't ask them anymore at your house.

Come on now. Say, possibly in the Lords there elsewhere you invite folks up, but very often, I've never been in a small meeting. Very often it's difficult not just to form into little groups, but say, what about the next time you're inviting up? What about inviting up some of the saints that have never been over your doorstep? Oh, you see, just a minute, they'll get the shock of their life.

Well, that'll just go to prove that they've just been acting the same as you, only you're becoming a wee bit more spiritual now, and you're going to ask them. Oh yes. Hospitality.

Communication can do a great thing to enrich. Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3, verse 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

So now he's saying there are lots of things, not vital, fundamental, although mind you there are some things that Brennan would like to tell you are vital and fundamental and they're not really. He tells you here that it's possible to bear with each other and forgive each other, even as God did the same for you. You see, there are lots of things about us that don't appeal to each other, isn't that right? What I would call idiosyncrasies.

Now that's a big word, but it just means this, all these things about you that annoy the brethren. I want to say this to you, you never come to the conclusion, there are lots of things that we can just bear with and forgive, they never need mentioned. Say, did you ever read about the year of Jubilee in the old book, Leviticus? Do you remember at the end of the 50 years, if you had anything that you were holding that belonged to your brother, you gave him it back.

Come on, let's tonight today in Vancouver declare a year of Jubilee. We'll release our brethren of all the things that we have built up in our minds against them. It does build up, doesn't it, over the years.

And my would just say, banish it from your mind. Don't let it embitter you. Don't let it soil you.

Don't let it defile you. Don't let it break the fellowship. Brethren, isn't that right? And fellowship is being broken that you've had with some brethren.

Isn't that right? Instead of just being big enough to forbear and forgive and all these things that you're building up against them in your mind, forgive them and let it go. Finally, you'll be glad, won't you? Ephesians four. Ephesians four, verse 31.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. Don't allow the thing to get beneath your skin to embitter you. Wrath, don't allow the thing to spring up.

Your temper that rises suddenly, it'll go down suddenly, but that's the time not to speak. And anger is the settled thing. It's settling in now and you're wanting revenge.

Clamor is raising your voice, the tumult of controversy. Evil speaking, he says, put it away. Not do you any good and do a lot of people a lot of harm.

And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, forgave you. Be kind. Ah, brethren, listen.

Long after intelligence and capability and cleverness and oratory is forgotten, kindness will live on. People will never forget the kindly word and the kindly action, especially if you don't get on too well with them. Oh yes, kindness, kindness.

It's good just to get a kind word, isn't it? It means a lot. Tenderhearted. Tenderhearted.

Oh, brethren, keep soft. And it's right way. Keep soft.

Oh, some brethren, they're hard, aren't they? Do you remember what David said about certain men? You sons of Zeruah, you're too hard for me. Oh, brethren, keep tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. You'll never, you'll never offend.

No one will ever offend you the way you offended God and God forgave you. This is godliness. It's not something mysterious.

Godliness is acting like God. See, is it big enough? It's not too spiritual for you, is it? It's not too big that you'll begin to act like God. The kindness and love of God our Savior has appeared.

Be kind, tenderhearted, forgive, brethren. As God forgave you, so do you. But if you don't forgive your brother, how can you expect God to forgive you? Isn't that right? By this shall all men know that you are

my disciples, if you have love one to another.

Agape love, the love of God for sinners. Oh, a sinner will blaspheme God, speak against God, but you'll just go on loving him. And when they, yes, when they begin to speak about you and they begin to do things to you, just you go on loving them.

Don't, don't, don't refuse to forgive. Don't build up revenge in your soul. They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.

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