

The Fellowship With Jesus Christ, Part 2: Governing Principles

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fellowship in the Christian life, highlighting the principles that govern it and the basis of fellowship, which is life.

Duration: 59:23

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, John 1:4, Philippians 2:1-5, 1 John 1:1-7

Topics: "Fellowship With God", "Walking In Truth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of true fellowship among believers. He explains that while it is necessary to break the ice and have introductions when coming together, the focus should ultimately be on sharing Christ and increasing in knowledge of Him. The speaker highlights that as believers grow in their relationship with God, they have more to share with one another, such as the knowledge of the Father and the forgiveness of sins. He also emphasizes the need to walk in the light and practice the truth, as this leads to fellowship with one another and the cleansing of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. The sermon references verses from 1st John and encourages believers to have the mind of Christ.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1st John, 1st letter of John, chapter 1. We'll read the first seven verses. 1st John, chapter 1, begin with verse 1. That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning the word of life, and the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us, that which we have seen and heard, we report to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with the Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we to you, that your joy may be full.

And this is the message which we have heard from him, and declared to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Philippians, the letter to the Philippians, chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2, the first five verses. If then there be any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and compassions fulfill my joy, that ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing, let nothing be in the spirit of strife or vainglory, but in loneliness of mind, each esteeming the other as more excellent than themselves, regarding not each his own qualities, but each those of others also. For let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Let's have a further word of prayer. Dear Lord, we want to thank thee for gathering us together here in thy presence. We want to thank thee for thy precious word.

Now we do look to thy Holy Spirit to open thy word to us, and lead us into thy truth, that thy name may be glorified with us in thy precious name. Amen. Last Sunday we began to share together on this matter of fellowship.

Fellowship is sharing in common. Before we believe in the Lord Jesus, we did have something in common, and we did share with one another. But what we share was of ourselves, of the good, of sin, and of death.

But thank God, he saves us. And in saving us, he has delivered us out of the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love. In other words, he has delivered us out of one fellowship, the fellowship of the world, the fellowship of death.

He delivers us out of that kind of fellowship, and has called us, brought us into a new fellowship, a heavenly fellowship. It is called the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Now, brothers and sisters, we need to understand what is meant by the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

It is none other but that divine fellowship between the Father and the Son, in the Holy Spirit. No, before time began, in eternity past, there was a fellowship, and it was the fellowship of the Father and of the Son, in the Spirit. It was a very sweet, wonderful, harmonious, glorious fellowship.

The Father and the Son are completely in one. Their fellowship is a fellowship of life. They share life together, and they share everything together.

There was no reserve, reservation of any kind. There was perfect agreement. It was a fellowship of love, a fellowship in the Holy Spirit.

But that fellowship was divine. In other words, no one can join that fellowship. Only the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But God is love, and because of his love, he extends his fellowship to man. But for man to join in that fellowship, you have to have divine life. In other words, life is the condition for joining that fellowship.

And thank God, he gave us life. And because of that, we are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Now, what does it mean, the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ? Our Lord Jesus, the Son, has fellowship with his Father, and his Father has fellowship with his Son.

And now, this fellowship is extended to all who have his life in them. In other words, the Father is to share the Son with us. He does not withhold anything from us, since he has given us his Son, with him, all things.

And so is the Son. The Son shares his Father to us. All that he knows of the Father, he shares it with us.

He draws us into fellowship with him and with his Father. Brothers and sisters, if we only can see what a beautiful, wonderful, glorious, heavenly fellowship we are now in. That God is to share his Son to us.

Everything that is of God is in the Son, and he shares his Son with us. He reveals his Son to us. It is his good pleasure to reveal his Son in us, that we may know his Son.

And likewise, no one knows the Father but the Son. And whatever the Son may reveal, and thank God, the Son does not withhold anything of his Father to us. He shares his Father completely with us.

It is such a blessed fellowship we are in. And of course, we find this fellowship is also called the Fellowship of the Apostles. In Acts chapter 2, verse 42, they persevered in the teaching and the fellowship of the Apostles.

Now why is this fellowship called the Fellowship of the Apostles? Because in 1 John we find, John said, our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. That which we have seen and heard, and contemplated, handled, that we know personally, in personal experience, all that we know of the Father and of the Son, now we report it to you. We share it with you, that you may have fellowship with us, as our fellowship is indeed with the Father and with the Son.

The mystery of God has been revealed to the Apostles and the Prophets. And now, what they have received, they did not withhold anything from us. But the whole counsel of God, they have delivered to us.

So this is called the Fellowship of the Apostles. Not that the Apostles have their own teachings. They do not.

Not that the Apostles have their own fellowships. They do not. Their teaching is the teaching of Christ, that has been revealed to them and they receive and deliver to us.

And their fellowship is just what they have fellowship with the Father and the Son, they open to us, that we too may be in that fellowship. So the Apostles do not have their own fellowship. There is not the fellowship of Paul.

There is not the fellowship of Apollos. Paul said, it's Christ divided. We have only one fellowship.

It's the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And because all who have received the fellowship of the Apostles, all who have received the fellowship of the Father and of the Son, therefore we find that we are all in one fellowship. It is the fellowship of the body of Christ.

We are all members of that body and there we fellowship with one another as we fellowship with the Father and with the Son. So brothers and sisters, just remember that we are called now in that wonderful. Now this morning we would like to go a little bit further.

And that is we would like to see the principles that govern this fellowship. Now since this fellowship is so wonderful, it is so heavenly, it is so spiritual, it is so glorious, now we need to know what are the principles that govern that fellowship. In other words, how can we really be in that fellowship? You know brothers and sisters, the word church is so abused that when that word is mentioned, it does not give you the right impression.

When you mention the church, probably some people think of a building at the corner of the square. Probably you're thinking of a religious organization. It doesn't give you the right impression that it is the

called out ones, gathered together unto the name of the Lord.

So sometimes we try to avoid the use of the word church. Sometimes we try to use the word fellowship to substitute that word church. But unfortunately, fellowship, that word is also being so misused and misunderstood that it doesn't mean the right thing.

You know actually the word fellowship, sharing in common, is the church in action. In other words, it is an action word for the word church. When the church is in action, when the church is working, is living, you have fellowship.

Fellowship is that living word, that action word for the church. That is where the body of Christ is really living out, being lived in the body of Christ. It is fellowship.

Now often times, we say let's have fellowship. But what do you have? Well, you talk about yourselves, you talk about the weather, you talk about everything under the sun, and worse, you gossip about so and so and who and who. And we say fellowship.

Now if you want to call it a fellowship, it is the fellowship that we had before we believe in the Lord. That's the old fellowship. Fellowship of the world.

What is fellowship? What are the principles that govern this heavenly fellowship? Remember, our fellowship with one another is based upon our fellowship with the Father and with the Son. In other words, what we fellowship, what we share with one another, is what the Father and the Son has shared with us. If our fellowship with the Father and with the Son is rich, then our fellowship with one another is rich.

If our fellowship with the Father and the Son is poor, then when we try to fellowship with one another, our fellowship has to be poor. Because fellowship is not fellowshiping ourselves, it is fellowshiping what the Father has revealed to us of the Son, and what the Son has revealed to us of the Father. In other words, the contents, the substance of this divine fellowship is none other but God Himself, Christ.

He is the very content of the fellowship. When we are sharing Christ with one another, the Christ that has been revealed to us by the Father, the Christ that we have seen and heard, the Christ that we know in our spirit, we have experienced, that is what we share with one another. And that is called Christian fellowship.

Now, it doesn't mean that we have to be so formal, so legalized, that when we see each other, we cannot even greet each other, and cannot even have some patents raised, talking something, and become very rigid. We are human beings. When we come together, of course, we need to break the ice.

But remember, that is just an introduction. Do not make the introduction everything. Now, if you make the introduction everything, then after an hour, there is no fellowship.

Why? Because Christ is not being shared. There is no increase of Christ. The purpose of fellowship is that as we share with one another, because everyone has something of Christ that we know.

You know, from the very littlest one, when they first believe in the Lord Jesus, there is something there of Christ, of God, that they know. They know the Father. They know their sins are forgiven.

And these are the things that we should share with one another. Now, as we grow in the Lord, the Father has revealed more of the Son to us. We know more of the Son, our Lord Jesus, in our life.

What He means to us. What we have experienced of Him. And therefore, we have more to share with our brothers and sisters.

Now, why should we share? The reason is, no one has everything. So, as you share with one another, Christ is being increased in us. That's the purpose of fellowship.

Yes, when we share with one another, probably we have to share ourselves too. Why? Because Christ is in us. You cannot be so abstract.

You are involved. But remember, you are but a channel. What comes out of the channel is Christ.

It's not you. In other words, after you have fellowship with one another, of course we know each other much better than before, but in Christ. So, what is the first principle of fellowship? The first principle of fellowship is the fellowship of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

That's the first principle. Christ in you, Christ in me, we share with one another. So that the body of Christ may be enriched, and there will be the increase of Christ in the body.

You remember the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, in chapter 2. He said, when I come into your midst, I am determined not to know anything but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Paul is not going to share himself with the Corinthian believers. He is sharing Christ in him to the Corinthian believers.

He said, we do not proclaim ourselves, but we proclaim Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. This is the message. This is the content of our fellowship.

And also you'll find that when he is fellowshiping with them, of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he fellowshiped in such a manner that he says, I am in fear, and in trembling, in weakness. I do not try to share with high sounding words, with eloquence, but in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, and of power, that your faith may be in God, and not in man. So brothers and sisters, when we are fellowshiping Christ with one another, what should be our attitude? In other words, what is the manner, the way, that we share Christ with one another? It has to come out of us, that's true, but we are under.

In other words, after we fellowship with others, what is the impression that will be left with them? Is the impression, well, what a wonderful Christian you are, or what a wonderful Christ you have. It depends on how you share with your brothers and sisters. Even in sharing, you are under the cross.

A crucified man, preaching the crucified Christ. So, in other words, you find it is Christ that is being shared, that is left with the brothers and sisters, but it is such a personal Christ, such a living Christ. Now, that is the first principle that governs Christian fellowship.

And then secondly, fellowship is the fellowship of life. Now you know that the fellowship between the Father and the Son is not an external thing. The fellowship between the Father and the Son is in life.

It is something from within. It is something that comes out of the common life they have. It is deep.

Now, when do we begin to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son? Before we are saved, before we are born again. We may have lots of knowledge about God and about Jesus Christ, but was there fellowship? Communion with the Father and with the Son? None. You can be the best theologian in the world.

You know so much about God, about the Bible. And if you are not born again, you have no fellowship with the Father nor with the Son. But once you are born again, immediately you'll find you experience there was a contact with God.

Immediately God becomes so real to you, living to you. Christ is living person. It's no longer that vague idea.

I can remember very vividly, before I was born again, I knew the gospel so well. I preached the gospel. I prayed every day.

I read the Bible, but there was no communication. There was no fellowship. God was distant away.

I knew He was there, but I couldn't touch Him. It was a theory to me. But I can remember the moment I was saved, that contact.

God is no longer a distant God. He is my help. I have communication with Him.

So, brothers and sisters, that fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, is exclusively a fellowship of life. Life begins that fellowship. And life increases that fellowship.

Now, if our fellowship with the Father and with the Son is a matter of life, not knowledge, of course. To know Thee, the only true God, and to know Thy Son, Jesus Christ, this is eternal life. Now, it is true, there is knowledge, real knowledge, in life.

But it is living knowledge. It is not a dead, mental knowledge. It is living.

So, fellowship is a matter of life. The more life you have in Christ, the more you are able to share with your brothers and sisters. And that's why it's so important that we seek the Lord with our whole hearts.

Not only for ourselves, but for the sake of the Body of Christ. The basis of fellowship is life. That's why you'll find in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 7, we are told, Receive ye one another, as also Christ has received us.

In other words, our fellowship is a fellowship of life. So, whoever has life is in that fellowship. We do not choose our fellowship according to what we call light.

Because our fellowship is based on life. Now, what do you mean that the basis of fellowship is not light, but life? Now, the light there is our understanding of the Word of God. The light there is what we see in God's Word.

Or to put it in another way, our interpretation of God's Word. Now, that is not the basis of fellowship. The basis of fellowship is eternal life.

Because in 1 John, we find, in the first three verses, you'll find John mentioned several times about life. He said that we have seen and heard and contemplated and touched the Word of Life, the life. We share with you the eternal life.

So, here you'll find when they share what they have seen and heard, and report to us is nothing but life. It's a living Christ. It is not just a mental knowledge, a theology.

It is a real life, eternal life that they share with us. So, for this reason, we need to remember that the basis of our fellowship is life. Not so-called light.

But then, when you read 1 John 1, in verse 5, God is light. And in Him, there is no darkness. This is the first message that we receive from above.

Now, God is light. What does it mean? In this particular connection, let us remember, it does not refer to the Word of God. The Word of God is light.

In Psalm 119, 105, thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my way. God's Word is light. In other words, when God's Word is open to us, you see light.

That's very true. But here you'll find the light is not the Word. It is God Himself.

God is light. Now, what does it mean? You go to John chapter 1 and said, in Him was life. And the life was the light of man.

So, in other words, the light here is the light of life. God is life. And because He is life, there is a light that comes out of that life.

Now, that is the first message that we have heard. Now, why is it so important? Because the way life works is through light. But not the light from outside.

It's the light that comes from life within. That's the way that life works. Let me illustrate.

The moment you believe in the Lord Jesus, you receive life. Now, how do you know you have eternal life? How do you know? You know it. Why? Because after you have received that life in you, you'll find a light begins to shine into darkness.

It is not a light from outside. Nobody tells you anything. Suppose you are newly saved.

Nobody tells you anything. And you have never read a Bible. You know nothing.

And you live the way that you lived before. You talk the way you talked before. But strangely, when you talk, in the middle of your talk, a light comes up and says, Enough.

If you go on, you will see. Do you have such experience? Nobody tells you anything. The light just suddenly lights up within you.

When you are doing something, or going somewhere, seeing something, hearing something. Now, if you have that eternal life in you, you will find it lights up. It lights up.

Do you have that experience? Now, when you have that experience, you know you have life. Because otherwise, where does it come from? That's the way life works. Because God is light.

And that light of life begins to shine and enable you to walk in fellowship. So, here you find in verse 7, I believe. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

And the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all our sins. Now, remember, we are in total darkness. But now we are saved.

And when we were in darkness, of course, we couldn't see very clearly. There are many things that we take for granted. We think they are good, they are all right.

Because we are in darkness, we do not see our sins. Thank God our sins have all been forgiven. All the sins that we know have been forgiven.

But still, there is much darkness in us because we are born in darkness. But thank God, after you believe in the Lord Jesus, the light of life begins to shine in your way. In the beginning, it may be very small light, dim, one kind of light.

It may shine upon something you say. Or it may shine upon something you do. Or it may shine upon some habit you have.

You begin to see some light. You begin to see this is not something that is in agreement with God. And if you walk in that light.

That is to say, if you obey that light, and walk in that light, what happens? God is in the light. He is the hundredth candlelight. He is light itself.

He lives in an impenetrable light. He knows everything. There is no darkness in Him.

But you still have lots of darkness. But in that particular area where His light has shone, if you walk in the light, obey it, you have fellowship with God. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from your sins.

Brothers and sisters, see that? If you wait until you are in that hundredth candlelight, before you can have fellowship with God, you have no hope. Because God fellowships with us on the basis of life. Not on the basis of light, that is how much you understand.

You remember our Lord Jesus when He was on earth? He tried to share with His disciples. And He was so frustrated, they couldn't understand. When He talked of heavenly things, they thought of earthly things.

When He thought of spiritual principles, they talked of material things. So when the Lord said, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, they said, you see, oh, because we forgot to bring the bread. And yet our Lord did not refuse fellowship with His disciples.

Not because they are on the same light, but as long as the disciples walk in the life of life they have received, the Lord will have fellowship with them. And then gradually, by giving them more light of life, raise them up into deeper fellowship. So brothers and sisters, this is the way fellowship works.

Those that are more advanced in the Lord should not refuse fellowship with those who are young in the Lord. Why? Because you have the same life. The degree of light is different, but the life is the same.

So fellowship is based upon life, not upon light. But light does control, does govern the degree of fellowship. How deep or how shallow your fellowship is, able to fellowship with one another.

I think we need to remember this. Because today you'll find some people say, well, you do not see the same light as I do, so we have no fellowship. You have to see the same thing as we do, think the same way as we do, and then we will accept you and have fellowship with you.

Wrong. Because fellowship is based upon life. And only by willing to be fellowshiping in life, we are able to come into that unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

So number two, the principle is life. Okay, number three. Fellowship is the fellowship of spirit.

Now that is in Philippians chapter two. It's a fellowship of spirit. Now in Darby's translation, he put a parenthesis of thee before spirit.

In other words, in the original, you do not have that definite article. Why? Because when you have that definite article, it refers to the Holy Spirit. But when you do not have it, it refers to the nature of the Holy Spirit.

So there is a difference here. Now anyway, you'll find fellowship is the fellowship of spirit. God the Father and God the Son, they fellowship in the Holy Spirit.

It is not an external thing. It is all within the Spirit. And because it is within the Spirit, it is pure.

There is no mixture, not influence of any kind from our side. So brothers and sisters, our fellowship needs to be in the Spirit. That is to say, what the Holy Spirit has impressed upon our spirit.

You know, the Holy Spirit is the divine communicator. The communion of the Holy Spirit. He is the divine communicator.

And He is the Spirit of Truth. He is the one who reveals Christ to us, who teaches us in all things. He is the one that glorifies Christ, reveals Christ in us.

He is the divine communicator. So when we are fellowshiping with one another, it is more than just an external contact. But there is an inward flow, one to another.

What the Spirit of God has taught us in our spirit, we pour it out to our brothers and sisters. They too may receive that revelation. So it is a matter of in the Spirit.

You know, oftentimes when we are together, we find that we all have our different ideas. We all have our different opinions. We all have our different thoughts.

And in a sense, we are sincere. Everybody thinks that what he thinks is God's will. It's the best.

And therefore, we want everybody to conform. Now when you are doing that, you are not able to continue very long. We are so different.

And as a matter of fact, even what we have received of the Lord is so different. In other words, the light is in different degrees. And if we want to have everybody to do what we think, then probably you have to set up your own sect.

Now how can we really be of one mind, think one thing with one soul, love with one love, esteeming the others as more excellent than we are? Now how can we do that? Unless we are in the Spirit. Unless we deny ourselves, empty ourselves, take up the mind of Christ. You know, when we are willing to give up our own selves and all bow before the Lord, let the Holy Spirit be in control.

And the result is we have that in Acts chapter 15. They have a problem, a serious problem. And they are different opinions.

And I believe those who are of a Jewish background, they are very sincere. They said the Gentiles must be circumcised. They have to be told to keep the law of Moses.

And some say, no, we are not under law, we are under grace. And there was much discussion. How can you solve that problem? They bring it to the Lord, lay it on themselves, and they come to the place when they say the Holy Spirit, and we decide.

In other words, fellowship is in the Spirit. Let the Spirit of God flow and be in charge. Then the fellowship will be sweet.

And then finally, you'll find fellowship is in love. If any consolation, any consolation of love. Brothers and sisters, why did God open His fellowship to us? You know, when God opened that fellowship of His with us, He gets Himself into lots of problems.

If He just keep His fellowship within the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, how harmonious that will be. Eternally sweet. No problem.

But when He opened that fellowship to us, unceasing problems. Why did He do it? Love is the motivation. It is also the sustaining power of holy fellowship.

Because there is love, you are willing to suffer. You are willing to give. No matter how much you suffer, you still want to give.

That's love. And brothers and sisters, fellowship is in love. If you do not love your brothers and sisters, don't do anything.

Don't say anything. Keep a distance. No problem.

Welcome everywhere. But that's not fellowship. Fellowship is you are really knit together.

Joined together. United together. Built up together into one.

And in doing that, it requires lots of love. Love suffers long. That is the first quality of love.

Suffers long. Think of the long suffering of our Lord Jesus. So may the love of God fills our heart.

That we may love our brothers and sisters. Willing to open ourselves. Share with our brothers and sisters what the Lord has given to us.

Sometimes we may be misunderstood. We may be rejected. But still loving.

Still opening. Still fellowshiping. Still giving.

Brothers and sisters, these are the principles of fellowship. Let us pray. Dear Lord, we do praise and thank Thee.

Thou does love us so much as to open Thy fellowship to us unworthy as we are. And we praise and thank Thee for Thy long suffering patience with us. Thou bringing us closer, nearer, deeper into fellowship with Thyself.

And Thou also working this out in Thy body. So Lord, we just pray that Thou will show us these principles that Thou has given us in Thy word. That we may truly enter into the reality of the fellowship.

Of the saints. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

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