

Series: 1 John
Title: Fellowship with God
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1 John 1: 3: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Our subject: Fellowship with God.

Fellowship means God's saints have all things common with one another. We have communion--all things in common union--with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

We see an example of fellowship--communion--in the early believers. Acts 4:32 says they were "of one heart and of one soul; neither said any that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common."

Having fellowship with God our Father and with his Son Jesus Christ is to be one with God in Christ. None of the things we possess are our own. We have all things in common with the Father and with the Son. We are one with God our Father in his Son. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have fellowship. We have common union--communion.

Proposition: It is an amazing blessing of grace--a blessing of grace--that sinful worms like us have fellowship with our Holy Father and his holy Son.

Divisions: 1) Why we cherish communion 2) Where it is found 3) How it is given 4) Some things it is

WHY WE CHERISH COMMUNION?

Having fellowship with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ means we have communion with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

The reason we cherish this fellowship--this communion--is because we lost it in Adam. Due to Adam's one transgression sin entered and death by sin. Therefore, all communion between God and Adam was cut off. All fellowship was severed between the Father and all Adam's children.

Scripture says, "Can two walk together except they be agreed." (Amos 3: 3) God is light (1 Jn 1:5); but by the fall we come into this world darkness. "What communion hath light with darkness?" God is life; but by the fall we come into this world dead. God is love; but due to Adam's one transgression we come into this world with carnal minds enmity against God. While dead in sin we are "without Christ, without hope and without God in the world." (Eph 2:12). We were "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in [us.]" (Eph 4:18) God said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Is 59: 2)

We cherish fellowship and communion with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ because by Adam we lost it. We cherish it because by our first birth we were separated from God.

WHERE IS COMMUNION FOUND?

Where is this fellowship with God found? Where is communion with his Son Jesus Christ found? It is not to be had by going to Mt Sinai. It is not found by going to the law and trying to work ourselves into fellowship with God. This blessing is all of grace. Therefore, it is found at Mt Zion. It is found only in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace.

Consider the contrast between the two. In Hebrews 12 verses 18-21, we hear what Mt Sinai declares. It declares separation from God due to our sin.

Hebrews 12: 18; For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19: And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20: (For THEY COULD NOT ENDURE THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart. 21: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Mt Zion speaks better things through the blood of Christ. His blood speaks better things. It declares fellowship in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant.

Hebrews 12: 22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: AND TO JESUS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, AND TO THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING, THAT SPEAKETH BETTER THINGS THAN THAT OF ABEL.

In Mt Sinai we see the distance and darkness and death which the law declares between us and God when the law gives us a knowledge of our sin. But in Mt Zion we have fellowship and communion by Christ our Righteousness. The believers oneness and fellowship and communion with God the Father is by the blood of Christ the Mediator alone.

At Sinai we hear the thundering wrath of God toward us because we sinned and died in Adam. At Mt Zion we hear unchanging love by the blood of sprinkling speaking better things than Abel. Those better things include fellowship and communion God's saints have with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. This fellowship is by the blood of Christ. He is the Mediator of the everlasting covenant of grace. He reconciled God's elect to God our Father. He brought us into fellowship with the Father.

At Sinai we are condemned for the slightest deviation from the law which means no fellowship with holy, just God. But at Mt Zion we hear the blessed blood of Christ speak declaring, "Ye are complete in Christ!" which means fellowship with our merciful Father.

At Sinai, the sinner's law-keeping and morality, his righteousnesses before God, along with all his fleshly confidences are burned up. He is left naked, trembling before the Judge of heaven and earth. At Mt Zion blessings abound from Christ to the poor in spirit, to those who mourn, to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The precious blood of Christ the Mediator has given his redeemed, regenerated people fellowship and communion with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Do you see the contrast? This communion does not come through Mt Sinai. It does not come by our works or anything in us. Left to ourselves, we cannot bring ourselves back into communion with God. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4) Only in Mt Zion, only in Christ the Mediator, can a sinner have fellowship with God.

HOW IS COMMUNION GIVEN?

God the Father gives his child communion with him through Christ his Son through the Holy Spirit.

God brings his elect into unity through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. John says this is why we declare the gospel of Christ unto you, "*that you also may have fellowship with us.*" Listen to our Lord in his highly priestly prayer in John 17. He is praying to the Father. He said,

John 17: 22: And the glory...

The glory is the gospel that God gave to Christ to work out. It is the gospel we preach. He calls it the glory because the gospel is all about the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. How do we get the glory? How do we get this gospel in our hearts?

John 17: 22: The glory which thou gavest me I have given them;

Christ Jesus gives us the incorruptible seed of the word through the preaching of the gospel. That is when we are born of incorruptible seed. That is when a new man is conceived in Christ's righteousness and holiness within these bodies of death. What is the result?

John 17: 22: The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world [the elect throughout the world] may know that thou hast sent me, and HAST LOVE THEM, AS THOU HAST LOVED ME.

Now, let's hear Paul declare the same. This is why Christ gave his preachers and what Christ does through the preaching of the gospel through the Spirit of God regenerating us and giving us faith in Christ. Christ gave preachers to preach the glory of Christ for the purpose of making us one.

Ephesians 4: 11: And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12: For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the BODY OF CHRIST:13: TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF THE FAITH, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, UNTO A PERFECT MAN, UNTO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST.

What does that mean "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?" Back in Ephesians 1: 22 and 23 we read that Christ is "the HEAD over all things to the CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE FULNESS OF HIM that filleth all in all." When every elect, redeemed child is called by this gospel into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, Christ's body will be complete--a perfect Man--the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. In other words, we all will be one. We will have perfect fellowship and communion in perfect oneness in Christ. He gives us this oneness, making us one, through the preaching of the gospel, through the new birth, by this incorruptible seed.

So as we go through this life together with fellow saints what we are to do?

Ephesians 4: 3: Endeavouring to KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE. There is ONE body, and ONE Spirit, even as ye are called in ONE hope of your calling; ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all....

Do you see what John means when he writes that we have fellowship with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ? Do you see this unity is why John said he declares this to us, that we may have this fellowship.

What will happen when we Christ, at last, brings all his elect into the unity of the faith? Back in Ephesian 1 he speaks of the "dispensation of the fulness of times". That means when Christ calls the last one. When time reaches its end. Then what happens?

Ephesians 1: 10: in the dispensation of the fulness of times HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST [all things means all his elect], both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even IN HIM.

Be sure to get this. Through the preaching of gospel, when we are born of one Holy Spirit, Christ cements us together with our brethren in UNFEIGNED LOVE so that we cannot leave his people. We cannot cease having fellowship with God our Father nor with his Son Christ Jesus nor with one another. God's people have all things in common in Christ. This is the love of God that God gives in the heart. It is true love. The love of God that never fails.

1 Peter 1: 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever...25:...And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

That is the reason God's saints, true believers, cannot leave Christ, nor the gospel, nor our brethren. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, [if he is truly born of God] he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (Joh 14:23) That's why Brother Henry used to say of men that leave the gospel, it is absolutely no loss to the body of Christ. It proves they never were in the body. Christ's people abide together under the gospel because Christ makes us one with him and with one another!

Brother Darvin preached a message in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Afterward, a man came up and said, "If God only saves through the preaching of the gospel how then do you justify my profession?" Darvin said, "I am not sent to justify your profession. I am sent to preach the word. And if our profession does not line up with the scriptures then it was a false profession."

God must bring his child into agreement with God, concerning our total ignorance, our sinfulness and our inability. Jude speaks of the final judgment. But he declares what Christ does for his elect when Christ comes in grace to his redeemed. He "convinceth all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 1: 15). This is how we know we are the sinner. This is how we know we must be found in Christ's righteousness alone. Christ speaks in power in the heart saying, "Thou art the man!...Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." (2 Sam 12: 7; 1Sa 2:3).

Believer, when God first did this work in your heart, that is when you found out Christ knew all about you, even all your secret sin. If you had made profession under a false gospel that is when you found out Christ knew your profession and love was feigned. We were astonished like the woman at the well. She said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (Joh 4:29) That is when we found ourselves in agreement with God and we confessed to God,

Psalm 51: 3: I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. 4: Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest

Then God brings us into agreement with him that all fulness is in his Son. He says to us, "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Mk 9: 7). God makes Christ Wisdom unto us so that Christ becomes the revelation of God in our hearts. Paul described it this way, "For God,...hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4: 6).

Christ is the Key of knowledge. Read the title of the book of Revelation. Verse 1 says it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Christ is the Revelation of God's holy character. Christ is the Revelation of God's Word—it is all concerning his Son. Christ is the Revelation of the Righteousness of God—Christ is the Righteousness of God. He saves sinners only by Christ crucified to declare his own glory, to declare his righteousness, how God is just and the Justifier of every sinner that truly believes on the Lord Jesus.

That is when the doctrine of God ceases to be a system of points we learned in a catechism when we were in will-works religion. Then the gospel begins to get its light from Christ and reflect back to glorify Christ.

Concerning the doctrine of depravity by the first Adam—now we see that God made Adam the representative head of all his people to glorify Christ the last Adam; as Adam made his people sin by his disobedience, Christ made his people righteous by his obedience.

Concerning the doctrine of election—we cease using it to button-hole visitors and argue with men; we see God first chose his Son to be his Servant to bring him all the glory in saving those God chose in Christ.

Concerning the doctrine of limited atonement—we begin beholding limited atonement is for the glory of the Father and his Son. Christ knew who he came to redeem. He laid down his life for the sheep alone. We rejoice in it because Christ

succeeded. In Christ, we see God our Father is a Just God and a Savior who actually made all his elect righteous on the cross.

Concerning the doctrine of irresistible grace—it ceases to be about us defending our false gospel and our false profession and how we saved ourselves by our own searching. It begins to be about the glory of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. Christ our Prophet speaks together with the voice of his Watchman into our hearts. Christ our High Priest sprinkles his blood within and succors us and brings us into reconciliation with God our Father. Christ our King sovereignly, irresistibly sent us the gospel and irresistibly brought us to believe on him. Therefore, God in Christ gets all the glory for us being born-again and believing on Christ.

Concerning the doctrine of perseverance of the saints—it becomes about Christ's glory in keeping those the Father entrusted to him. It is no longer just that none shall be lost. It is that Christ shall not lose one.

The doctrine stops being an intellectual system and Christ becomes All! God gives us communion with him by God sending us the gospel, by the Spirit entering us and giving us what God requires--Christ his Son. That is when we really come to Christ with nothing else. That is when we come to God our Father by faith in his Son.

Notice our text, John's desire was for us to have fellowship with him and the other apostles with God the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE APOSTLES

1 John 1: 3: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Chiefly, John speaks of the fellowship each apostle had personally with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. But when God has brought us to faith in Christ, we experience the same fellowship as the apostle John and all the other apostles. Each believer has personal fellowship, communion, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

One, we have the fellowship of free forgiveness before our Father in Christ just like the apostles had. They had the same need of forgiveness from sin as we do. Every believer shares in Christ's justification. We have the same free forgiveness as the apostles. Robert McCheyne made a remarkable statement that is true. He said, "*Once Jesus was unjustified—because he was made sin and bore the sins of many. It was this that occasioned his agony in the garden and on the cross. His only comfort was, "He is near that justifieth me."*" *And God did! Scripture says he shall return without sin.*" Brethren, when God justified his Son and raised him, God justified each of us who have been given faith in Christ.

Colossians 2: 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Two, all who rest in Christ have fellowship in God's holiness the same as the apostles had. We come into this world with only a God-hating nature. Many object that they are not as bad as other men. To other men you may be kind, pleasant, and agreeable. They may consider you to be full of integrity since you do not steal or lie. But in your unregenerate state your nature is sin and you are an abomination to God. You love sin and hate righteousness. You love the idol god of your imagination but hate the God of the bible. Your every motive is for self rather than the glory of God. But when a sinner believes on Christ, confessing his sin, it is because the Holy Spirit has created in him a new man in holiness by making him a partaker of God's holy, divine nature. God dwells in him and he dwells in God. Christ in you is the Holiness of those sanctified by God. That is why Paul said Christ in you is the hope of glory. Christ is the Holiness without which no man shall see God.

Three, believers today have fellowship with Christ as his sons and daughters. God is our loving Father the same as all the apostles. God's love is everlasting. He freely loved his people in Christ from before the foundation of the world. Nothing can separate his people from the love of God in Christ Jesus, not even our fall in Adam. The love of God is the reason Christ came and put away the sin of his people and reconciled us to God.

1 John 4: 9: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Christ said to his disciples, John 20: 17: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God and to your God." Brethren, God is as much your Father as he is Christ's Father, your God as Christ's God. The reason we do not hang around in will-works religion when God calls us to faith in Christ but come out, is because God declares effectually in our heart,

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness...17: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, 18: And will be A FATHER UNTO YOU, and YE SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAITH THE LORD ALMIGHTY.

When God speaks that into your heart then you come out right then. You do not loiter and keep listening to doctrine that belittles God because now he is your Father. He sanctifies us bringing us to his banqueting house where the gospel is

preached in spirit and in truth. "He BROUGHT ME TO THE BANQUETING HOUSE, and HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE" (So 2: 4).

Sinner, drop that false profession you made before you ever heard the gospel in truth! God sees to it that his people no longer can have fellowship with our former idols or companions or in our former confidences. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (1Jo 3:1)

This is why men will set for years under the gospel but then one day they hear what we are preaching. They do not hear it by the grace of God. But they begin to understand we are giving God all the glory. Then their countenance changes. They stare at you like a calf staring at a new gate. They get angry at you. Why? "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

By no means have I exhausted all that we have in fellowship with God. But one last thing I will give you. We have this the same as the apostles had. Scripture says and "if children then heirs of God." Brethren, we have fellowship with God our Father and with his Son "as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom 8: 17)

Romans 8: 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?

1 Corinthians 3: 21: Therefore let no man glory in men. For ALL THINGS ARE YOURS; 22: Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; ALL ARE YOURS; 23: AND YE ARE CHRIST'S; AND CHRIST IS GOD'S.

The next verse after our text, the apostle John said, "*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full*" (v4). Do you see why every believer rejoice evermore? John calls communion with God and his Son true joy. Believe on Christ and this fellowship and this joy is yours, too!

Amen!