

Fellowship With Christ

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[0:00] 1 Corinthians chapter 1, and we'll read just the first nine verses. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, and we'll read just the first nine verses.

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With her, we worry about who our children make friends with, and well, we should. Bad company corrupts good character.

That's the word of God. So it's right that we should care about who our children make friends with. Miguel Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, said, Tell me what company you keep, and I'll tell you what you are.

[2:03] And that is true to a great extent. Tell me the company you keep, and I'll tell you what you are. But thankfully, praise God, it's not absolutely true, or we wouldn't have a Savior like Jesus.

God the Father sent His Son to be the friend of sinners. So while we say, be careful who your friends are, God sent His Son to be the friends of the likes of us.

And so Jesus wasn't at all careful about the friends He made. It was the good people, the religious people, who said, Oh, we know what you are. You're a glutton.

You're a drunk. Show me the friends, the company that you keep, and we'll tell you what you are. You're a sinner. Well, bless His name, it wasn't true.

Jesus was the friend of sinners, and yet He was not a sinner Himself. And so God, in His infinite grace towards us who believe, has called us into fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord.

[3:14] We read that in verse 9 of 1 Corinthians chapter 1. We've been thinking about our union with Christ. How we're connected to Him.

And tonight I want to explore what it means to have fellowship with Him. Fellowship with Him. So look with me again at verse 9, and I want to just read the verse.

God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. Well, we need to notice that the main idea here is that God is faithful.

That's the main idea. The bit about the fellowship with Jesus Christ is not the main idea. But rather, Paul is summing up all of salvation, all that we experience in knowing Christ, in living with Him, in this idea of fellowship with Jesus.

So in verse 4, if you back up a few verses, Paul thanks God for them because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus. You hear the language of union.

[4:22] For in Him you have been enriched in every way, in your speaking and in your knowledge. Verse 7 says you lack no spiritual gift. Verse 8 talks about how God will keep you strong to the end.

And then he says God, who has called you into fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. He will do it. And so Paul sums up all of God's grace to the Corinthians, all of God's grace to you as a believer, in this idea of fellowship with Jesus.

We live in it. And that means on the day of Jesus Christ, on the day of His coming, we will be blameless. So your fellowship with Christ, Christian, dear brother, dear sister, is the very stuff of your salvation.

It is your salvation, past, present, and future. So what is this fellowship about that we enjoy? Well, it's obviously impossible to talk about everything because it's a very broad topic.

But let's look at least at three areas where we experience fellowship with our Lord. And as we look at these things, we need to rejoice in them.

[5:46] We need to work hard to believe them and to appreciate them again with fresh faith, because this is good news. God didn't have to call us into fellowship with His Son.

We were sinners. And that word is so overdone that we forget how bad it is. I mean, we're evil, rebellious, self-righteous, strong-headed.

We're ignorant. We're arrogant. We're going our own way. We're not the kind of friends that we as parents would want our children to play with. But this is grace.

And so if you're parched tonight, if you're weary, you're tired, you're struggling to go on, if you've had a hard week, if you're looking forward to a very hard week, don't miss this.

There is grace here, and God's grace to make the woeful heart sing. God has called you into fellowship with His Son, and that is mercy.

[6:50] And so believe it. Don't miss it. And rejoice again as we talk about it. So how do we have fellowship with Jesus? Three ways. First, we have fellowship with Jesus in friendship.

In friendship. The word fellowship is an important word in the Bible. The New Testament, the Greek word is *koinonia*. It means partnership.

So if you are going into business and you have a business partner, you share the expense of the business, and then you share the profit of the business. So you have this fellowship in the business. You have a common participation. *Koinonia* was used for the marriage relationship. When a man and a wife came together, they enjoyed the *koinonia*, the fellowship of life.

You know if you're married that you live all of life together with your spouse. It's this common participation in life. But the most common way, the most frequently used way of the way fellowship was used, was to describe friendship.

[8:05] And people of all kinds could have the fellowship of friendship. So, in a sense, Paul in 1 Corinthians is saying that God has called us into friendship with Jesus Christ.

Christ is our brother. He's our Lord, as this verse says. He's our Savior. He's our King. And in many ways, this could be the best thing, that He's our friend.

Because, you know, in this world, you don't choose your brothers and sisters, do you? You just sort of arrive in this situation. But you do have the choice of your friends.

And this is amazing grace that Jesus would say, These are my friends. He's befriended us. And so now we share life with Him.

We share every day with Him. Because He's our friend. Well, what does it mean to be friends with Jesus? C.S. Lewis has a wonderful chapter in his book called *Four Loves* on what friendship is all about.

[9:18] And he goes down deep into what the heart of being a friend and experiencing real friendship is all about. He says, friendship isn't necessarily doing things together.

We do all sorts of things with people that we might call friends. But at best, they're sort of acquaintances. You know, we go to work with a certain group of people.

And so we enjoy certain things with them. And we laugh. And we go through trials and difficulties with them. And we might call them friends. I don't want to get all caught up in what we call things. But at the deepest level, they're really no more than acquaintances. When you leave them, your life goes on. You sort of don't miss them in a major way.

But true friendship is more than doing things together. He says it's seeing the same truth.

[10:18] It's seeing the world in a certain way. And when you understand that, you know what, that person and I, we share more than things that we do together. We share a similar outlook.

We share a similar way of thinking and feeling about this world. So friendship happens when out of the warp and the woof of life, we run into a person who's like our kindred soul, who sees the same truth as we do.

So think about it like this. Imagine a primitive society. And you're a man. And if you're a man, your job is to hunt.

Now, you don't hunt by yourself. You go out with a hunting party. And as the hunting party, you have a lot of common experiences together. You have victory. And you have defeat.

And you laugh together. And you whoop. And you holler together. But then one day, you realize that one of those other people in your hunting party sees the world in the same way as you do.

[11:23] He feels the same way that you do. You see the same truth. So not only, this is just an example, do you see the same deer. You say, wow, that deer is beautiful.

And somehow you see something of the tragedy and the beauty of the deer. But now, out of the wider group of all these people that you do all these things with, you draw a side.

You come together. You draw together. And on a deeper level, you have friendship. You have fellowship. You share something together that you don't share with the rest of the people. The truth has brought you close. So that's the meaning of friendship. At the heart of true friendship is when you see something the same.

You experience the same truth. You love the same truth. And really, that isn't all that common in this world. So I worked at a lumberyard.

[12 : 26] And I had lots of friends there, I guess you would call them. But we just did things together. We had experiences together. We had hardships together. We laughed and we whooped and we hollered together.

But really, all that we shared was this common experience of working together. We didn't see the same truth. We didn't see the world the same way. We didn't love the same things.

There wasn't this deeper harmony of friendship. And so when I talk to them now, you guys probably know what I'm talking about. When you talk to a friend from long ago and acquaintance, like a schoolmate from long ago, we talk about the things that we did then.

We laugh at the same old jokes that we laughed at then. There wasn't a deeper harmony.

And so there's not a present reality to our friendship. It's sort of all in the past of what we did together back then. But I have a couple of friends, and you probably do too, from long ago.

[13 : 32] So I have a couple of friends from college who I haven't seen in years. But if we were to sit down together, it would be like nothing changed. I mean, our worlds have gone far apart.

We have jobs. We have wives. We have kids. We have all those things. But the things that drew us together, that same love, that same truth, is the same.

And so we can sit down together, and it will be like we haven't missed a day. Even though all these things around us have changed. And yeah, we have some catching up to do, but the relationship hasn't really missed a day.

Because friendship is lived and experienced at the heart level. So Jonathan and David, they didn't live together a lot. They didn't have a lot of common experiences together.

But there was this instant rapport. There was this instant friendship. They saw the same things.

They felt the same way about the same things. They were friends. They had this deep harmony at the heart level.

[14 : 32] And all that is to say, Jesus is our friend like that. We have this fellowship of friendship. He won us to his way of thinking.

He's opened up our eyes to see the world in the same way that he does. He's opened up our hearts so that we feel about the same way that he feels about these things.

So when we were born again, we were given the mind of Christ. We were given his affections. He's written the law on our heart. And the law is a reflection of the lawgiver. And so now we walk with him.

We live together. We see the same truth. We enjoy the same things. And our hearts hum in harmony with our Lord. And so Jesus has invited us in into the ebb and the flow of his life, of living with him.

He's our friend. And that means he does, it means more than he just does friendly things for us.

We're more than allies with Jesus.

[15 : 40] You know, allies can quickly become enemies. So in World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States were allies. We had a common goal. We had a common enemy.

And for a time, we were friends. But by 1947, after the war was ended and after the common enemy was gone, we were at each other's throats. And see, we're more than allies with Jesus.

We're going more than, it's more than going the same direction. It's more than trying to accomplish the same thing. No, our heart beats with his and his heart beats with us.

And that's why the last night on earth, his last night on earth, Jesus prayed, Father, I want them to be with me where I am. I want them to be with me where I am.

Do you hear what Jesus is asking? He's saying, Father, I want my friends to come and stay with me. Amen. And that's more, that isn't childish.

[16 : 45] That's friendship. Life with friends is always better than life without them. And Jesus wanted us to be, wants us to be with him. And we want to be with him as well.

And so this is the grace of our Lord Jesus. He didn't have to be our friends. We were the worst candidates for this sort of thing. But he won our friendship. He set out to save us, to change our

minds.

And now we walk together with him. And every day we experience life with him. His companionship. So we're united with him in fellowship, in the fellowship of friendship.

Now, secondly, we share the fellowship in, we have fellowship in sufferings. The Bible talks about not only just this general idea of companionship, but we have fellowship in sufferings.

Hebrews 2.14. Listen to what it says. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared. That's the verb form of koinonia. He too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death.

[17:54] That is the devil. He shares. He has fellowship with our humanity. He's one with us. He is God and he is man.

And that humanity exposed him to death. So Jesus came sharing our humanity. He came sharing our sorrows and carrying our sickness.

He was weak. He was tired. Jesus knows your sufferings because he's a human just like you. And life wasn't a walk in the park for our Lord.

He knew physical pain. He knew emotional pain. He knew spiritual oppression and attack. You know, Satan has lots of demons to do his work.

But Satan himself went to our Lord. And Jesus knew the pain, the agony of apparently unanswered prayer. On his last night, he wants the cup to pass from him.

[19:00] And the answer is no. And so in the garden with tears of blood, he's seeking something. And it's denied him.

And Jesus knew that pain. And Jesus knew what it was to labor. So first he supported his mother and his brothers and his family in the hard work of physical labor, of carpentry or masonry or some sort of physical labor like that.

And so his hands had calluses and his muscles knew fatigue. And he knew what it was like to have a cut finger and a smashed thumb. And he knew the labor of people, of constant demands, of people constantly coming and asking and pressing him.

And then they don't thank him. And he knew the labor of teaching people who didn't want to hear. He shared in our sufferings and he still does.

So turn over to Colossians chapter 1. Turn over to Colossians chapter 1 verse 24. And here we go deeper.

[20:14] It's not only that Jesus knows these things because in his human body he experienced them. But presently he enters into our sufferings and he experiences them as his own.

Colossians 1.24. Look at what Paul says. And this verse has caused no end of questions and problems.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you. And I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Paul says, I experience suffering. I experience the suffering. Sufferings for the church. And Christ isn't separated from these things.

He hasn't distanced himself from these sufferings. I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body. So who is suffering here?

[21:22] Paul is. Paul is experiencing this. But it's Christ's afflictions. The pain that Paul endured for the church. He could say those were Christ's afflictions.

That's Christ's pain. You see, while Jesus' substitutionary suffering, while his suffering in the place of sinners is done, and that is completely over, that work is complete, and in that sense it lacks nothing.

Jesus isn't presently experiencing pain to redeem his people. But the church is not home free yet. We're still experiencing this pain until we're completely redeemed out of this world.

And so Jesus' disciples have to suffer still. And Paul is saying, Jesus knows these things. And he feels them. He experiences them.

Remember, on the road to Damascus, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? So do you see what this is saying? You share in his suffering.

[22:28] And he shares in your sufferings. You have fellowship together. A common participation together. And there's nothing like pain.

And this is one reason that God allows these things into our life. There's nothing like pain to draw people together. It's not in the heights. It's not in the good days where we experience closeness.

It's in the low days where we experience the deepest connection to Christ. Where we really draw together. There's something about boot camp that draws soldiers together.

And there's something about those two weeks of two-a-day practices in the heat of summer that draws a team together, that binds them together. And so it's with Christ in you.

You aren't alone in your pain. He's with you. And you are with him. And so I don't know what pain you're feeling right now.

[23:27] But Christ does. Christian. Not far away from these things. He's separated. Or separated from these things. He's close to you. So take that pain and use it to draw close to Christ.

Remind yourself in those hours, in those minutes, in that trial, that Satan wants to isolate you. He wants you to feel alone. But don't let your pain do that.

Instead, draw closer. Rejoice in this truth. Jesus knows. And he shares it with you. He doesn't just know it cognitively. He knows it experientially.

And so he's with you in the yoke of physical pain. He's with you in the yoke of spiritual oppression. So when you're physically wiped out, when you're emotionally wiped out, when you're spiritually wiped out, look over in the yoke.

Look who's next to you. Look who's pulling with you. Are you longing for heaven and for home?

Jesus said, I want them to be with me where I am.

[24:36] He knows. He knows. He knows. And he shares with you in all your suffering. And so I say, look to him. Look full in his wonderful face.

And in the light of his glory and his grace, this world and this pain, it will grow strangely dim. In the light of who he is. So he calls you friend.

And he's walking with you. And when the going gets tough and the road gets muddy, he doesn't leave you. He's right there with his arm around you, pulling with you.

He's with you. You have fellowship of friendship, fellowship in suffering. And now thirdly, you have fellowship in sharing.

And this is sort of like the grab bag, the bucket that I'm pouring in, a lot of different things. What does it mean that we have this fellowship of sharing? What do we share with Jesus?

[25:37] What does Jesus share with us? Well, Jesus is glad to share everything that he has with you. So he shared his life with you.

And his life and his resurrection, we die and we're raised again. And so his own resurrection life has come into our lives. The life of God is in the soul of man.

And Christ's life and his grace is overflowed to you, giving you new life. And so he shares that with you. And he shares everything else he has with you. He shares his authority with you.

Ephesians 2.6 says, We are seated with him in heavenly places. Not we will be seated with him in heavenly places at some day in the future, like when we're in heaven.

But presently, now we are seated with him in heavenly places. And so Jesus Christ shares his kingdom, his authority with us. And so under him, we have authority over this world.

[26:41] And under him, we have authority over all the forces of hell. So he's given us the right, the authority to be called the children of God. And so what does that mean? It means that we have the right to rule in our own sphere of influence.

So you don't have to ask moms. You don't have to ask dads. You don't have to wonder. You have the right to rule under him, to crush sin, to set up a kingdom of love and grace in your family and in your work, at your job.

You have that right and you have that power because presently you are seated with him in heavenly places. And so you can extend God's kingdom to the ends of your life.

You have that right. You have that authority because Jesus shares it with us. So we share in his authority. We share in his inheritance. Romans 8.

We're called heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. So what is Christ's inheritance? What is Christ's reward from the father?

[27:49] Well, the whole new creation, the new heavens and the new earth. That's his inheritance. And we are co-heirs with Christ.

He will share it all with us. That's waiting for us. And so what have you done to deserve that?

Nothing. Nothing at all.

There's been a lot of hoopla this week over the mega millions lottery. People lining up to win 640 million. And that's a lot of money.

But the chances of winning are infinitesimal. Something like 1 in 170 million. And so people hoped. You know people were thinking about this and hoping for this. And they bought lots of tickets in order to have the chance of winning. But God's grace is better than that. We don't have to go hunting after those things because he's not giving us a chance to win some money.

[28:52] He's made you co-heirs with Christ. And so there is not a 1 in 170 million chance of winning this great prize. It is guaranteed.

We are co-heirs with Christ. And so Jesus died to have it this way. He's not like some family members who are fighting over the inheritance who wants more than all for themselves. He died to make you an heir. He died in order to share it with you. To give you the ends of the earth. And so do you see his heart? Do you see his friendship?

Do you see his love? For ages to come, you will be sharing in Christ's reward, his inheritance. He loves you. He calls you friend. And he calls you brother.

And right next to his name on the will is your name. Co-heirs with Christ. So we share in his authority and his inheritance. And finally, we share in his, we will share in his glory.

[29:57] What does it mean to be glorified? Ephesians 2.7 says, we've been predestined to be conformed to his image. So what's our hope?

What's your hope? What is glory? What are you waiting for? Paul says it's to be like Jesus. To have so much of Jesus filling our life.

To be so sharing in that common life that I am conformed to his image. And so we share in his sufferings now and in the hope that we'll share in his glory to come.

And so on that day of his coming, just like his sufferings have overflowed into your life. And just as he was persecuted, you are persecuted. In that day, his glory will overflow in your life.

And like a river breaking out of a dam, his glory is going to break into your life and overwhelm you. And so when you look in the mirror on that day, you will see you.

[30:59] And when you look in the mirror on that day, you will see Christ. So Jesus already shares his life with you now. And he's going to share his glory with you then.

He'll share it completely with you. And so his glory will drive away all of our sin. And his glory will drive away all of our sadness and our tears. And his riches will drive away all of our poverty. And on that day, you will judge angels. And on that day, you will shine with his glory, just as you have borne the likeness of the first man.

And dust and in death, so you shall bear the likeness of the second man. So Jesus will share everything with us, his authority, his inheritance, his glory.

And that is our glorious hope. And that's why Paul says in Colossians, I've been commissioned to make known to the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery that is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[32:10] What is all your hope for glory hinging on? Paul says it's all in Christ. It's all there. It's all in this mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory.

And so how valuable is Jesus? What does it mean to be united with him? What does it mean to have Christ in you, to have fellowship with him? It means everlasting splendor.

And words are too weak to describe and say what that is going to be like. It's everlasting splendor, everlasting riches. It means everlasting joy will be yours.

So then how shall we live? How shall we live in light of these things? How do you apply this? Well, we should live like Paul who said, I want to know Christ.

I want to know Christ. The passion of my life is to know him, to experience him. I want to live with him.

[33:09] I want to know him on deeper and deeper levels. And brothers and sisters, that's my longing for you. And that's my longing for myself. I long for me, for you to know the riches of this glory, which is Christ in you.

I want to know him. I need to know him. He's everything. He's everything. And if we have him, we have everything. And so let's strive to know him.

Let's live with him. He's our friend. He's sharing his life with you. He's sharing his inheritance with you. He's going to share his glory with you. He's sharing your sufferings with you.

And so live with him. Don't let a day go by where Jesus is far away from your mind. When all the time he's knocking on the door of your heart, ready to have fellowship with you, ready to meet with

you.

So constantly think of him. Constantly think about all that he is for you. So wake up with him.
[34:14] For you put your feet on the floor. Get your heart. Fellowshiping. Speaking. Talking.
Being a friend with Jesus. And eat with him.

Put up markers in your life. Where when you see those things, you say, I need to remember that Christ is with me. And that I am with him. That we're living life together.

And so maybe it's on the road to work. You pass a sign. And so say, every time I see that sign, I'm going to remember that Jesus is with me. What he's done for me.

Maybe it's every time you're cooking at the stove. Or at the refrigerator. Maybe it's every time you go to the bathroom. Every time you walk past a picture. Set up those monuments in your life.

Where when you see them, you remember that Christ is with you. He is with me. And Jesus has all the grace I need.

[35:13] He has all the grace I need for the next five minutes. He has all the grace I need to go through this day. He has all the grace I need to be patient in this situation. He has grace for me. So on the day of his coming, I will be blameless.

God in his grace has called you into fellowship with Christ Jesus, our Lord. So live in it. Live in it. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, these things are truths that many of us know.

And yet we need to know them on a deeper level. We need to know Christ. To experience him. To live with him. To remember who he is for us.

To be casting aside our idols. And trusting again and loving again Jesus Christ. I pray for those who are lost. Who don't know you.

They have no idea of the treasure that they are missing. Open their eyes. To see these glorious riches in Jesus. Show them the poverty of who they are.

[36:23] And the poverty of what they can do. And show them the riches of Jesus. Show them the poverty of this world. And the poverty of other people. In comparison to knowing Christ.

And being a friend of Jesus. I pray that you would give us eyes. That would see these things. Eyes that would pierce.

The veil of this world. And see. And focus on. Him who is seated on the throne. Our Lord. Our Savior.

Our friend. Our friend. Pray that you would forgive us. For living for such small things. Forgive us for living. So forgetfully. So independently.

So arrogantly. Will you please. Forgive us. Give us faith. And help our unbelief. In Jesus name I pray.

[37:22] For his glory I pray. Amen. Amen.