

Sunday, February 24, 2013—The Things Freely Given Us of God—In Fellowship

### **Introduction**

- During our most recent study in this series on total forgiveness we touched on some other things that were freely given us of God that we did not elaborate on because we did not have time.
- One of these topics of that of fellowship. What does it mean to have fellowship with God and with one another for that matter? Is fellowship just is having coffee and doughnuts with the saints or going out to eat after church?
- A few weeks back we touched on fellowship within the context of talking about the doctrine of parental forgives as it relates to the confession of sins and keeping shot account with God. This morning I want to study the subject of fellowship for its own merit.

### **What is Fellowship?**

- I Corinthians 1:9—when we trusted the work of Christ on our behalf God called us unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. Once again how do you know this apart from God’s Word? You don’t, it is one of the things freely given that can only be understood by the Spirit of God.
- The first things I want you to notice this morning is that our fellowship with Christ is based upon the faithfulness of God. Our fellowship is not based upon our ability to perform but upon the faithfulness of God.
- According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word faithful carries the following applicable meanings: 2) Firmly adhering to duty; of true fidelity; loyal; true to allegiance; as a faithful subject. 3) constant in the performance of duties or services; exact in attending to commands; as a faithful servant. 8) Constant; not fickle; as a faithful lover or friend.
- Matthew 25:14-23—the “good and faithful servant” increased what his master had given him. God is faithful and true, He always does what he says he will do.
  - II Corinthians 1:18—“God is true”
  - I Timothy 3:1—“true saying”
  - I Timothy 1:15—“faithful saying”
  - I Timothy 4:9—“faithful saying”
  - II Timothy 2:11—“faithful saying”
  - Titus 3:8—“faithful saying”
- I Corinthians 1:9—God is faithful so if he tells us that we have been called unto the fellowship of Christ then you can believe that it is true. So in summary this fellowship with Christ that we enjoy is based upon the faithfulness of God.

- The Greek word translated “fellowship” carries the following meanings according to *Strong’s Concordance*: 1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse a) the share which one has in anything, participation.
- In English fellowship means: 1) Companionship; society; consort; mutual association of persons on equal and friendly terms; familiar intercourse. 3) Partnership; joint interest; as fellowship in pain. 4) Company; a state of being together.
- Because of the faithfulness of God we have been called unto community, communion, joint participation, mutual association on equal and friendly terms with Jesus Christ. Since this fellowship with Christ is not based upon anything we have done, but the faithfulness of God there is nothing that can disturb it, upset it, or overthrow it.
- The first Lord of the Rings movie is titled *The Fellowship of the Ring*. All the characters in the story are charge with the task of destroying the one ring of power. They all share equally in the trials and tribulations that they face along the way. Fellowship is being mutually joined together for the accomplishment of a task. We have been called into the fellowship of Christ Jesus for a purpose.
- II Corinthians 5:18-20—we are the ambassadors, representatives, or agents of Christ that have been left here in Christ’s stead and on his behalf to carry forth his ministry of reconciliation. Our fellowship with Christ is united around a common purpose and function to carry out the ministry of reconciliation.

### **What Does Fellowship Look Like?**

- Acts 2:42—fellowship is more than just sharing a meal.
- II Corinthians 6:14—notice that this verse contains the words “fellowship” and “communion.” The word “fellowship” comes from a different but related Greek word from the one we have been considering. However, the word “communion” comes from the same word. Think about the word communion for a moment:
  - Common + Union = Communion.
- To have communion with someone is to enjoy a common union which is the same thing as having fellowship with them. Therefore, Paul does not encourage believers to be yoked in relationships with unbelievers with whom they have no fellowship, communion, or common purpose.
- Romans 15:26—the word “contribution” comes from the same Greek word that is translated “fellowship” and “communion.” Financially supporting the work of the ministry is another way we have fellowship with Christ.
  - II Corinthians 8:4—“fellowship”

- II Corinthians 9:13—“distribution”
- Ephesians 3:9—Paul wants all men to see the fellowship of the mystery. It is the will of God that all men understand what he is doing in this dispensation of Grace. There is fellowship in the mystery as endeavor to have mankind understand the secret purpose of God.
- Ephesians 5:7-11—we are not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The fellowship of Christ reproves these things.
- Philippians 1:5—there is fellowship in the gospel. From the time Paul preached that gospel in the city of Philippi in Acts 16 all the way until he address his epistles to the Philippians after the close of the book of Acts Paul speaks of their fellowship in the gospel. How often did Paul see them during that roughly 11 year time period? Yet he speaks of having had fellowship with them. I can have greater fellowship with someone whom I don't know or really see than I can with a colleague at work whom I see every day if we are united together in the fellowship of the gospel.
- Philippians 2:1-2—the fellowship of the Spirit is enjoyed we all function with the same mind. Paul's joy was when the saints were likeminded.
- Philippians 3:10—there is also fellowship in suffering for Christ.