

Theme: God forms and deepens His people's delight in Him through the Spirit-given gift of fellowship — binding them to Christ and to one another in unity, worship, generosity, and shared mission.

I. Intro - Cast Away - Chuck Noland and Wilson

- A. A photo of Tom Hanks and Wilson (Cast Away)
- B. He so longed for connection, he personalized 'Wilson.'
- C. Like Christopher McCandless/Alexander Supertramp, Tom Hanks character learned the crushing effects of isolation.
- D. Today - the spiritual discipline of fellowship

II. Understanding Fellowship

- A. Fellowship is κοινωνία - an important word!
And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42
 - 1. 'Fellowship' is κοινωνία - participation; sharing; communion; common
 - 2. Often used by Greek writers about the marriage relationship - a very close bond!
 - 3. We can see shades of meaning in various verses
 - a. Close personal relationship; friendship
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7
 - b. Financial gift; contribution
For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some **contribution** for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. Romans 15:26

- c. Participation or communion with something
The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a **participation** in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a **participation** in the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16

B. Luke intends all these shades of meaning!

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and **the fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

1. They were devoted to 'the fellowship.'
2. Not 'the local group of disciples' or even just 'one another' - they were devoted to the depth of fellowship that is part of the New Covenant.
3. They experienced and were devoted to the entire breadth and depth of fellowship they were brought into when they were born again and given the New Covenant gift of baptism and filling with the Spirit.

III. Devoted To the Fellowship

- A. We have been given fellowship with God!
God is faithful, by whom you were called into **the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord**. 1 Corinthians 1:9
 - 1. When we are called to Christ by the Father and regenerated by the Spirit, we come into the fellowship of God Himself!
 - 2. Remember that in the New Covenant, the Spirit now dwells in each of us, and we are given access to the Holy of Holies to enjoy fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit!
 - 3. John teaches the same thing
Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3

4. The fundamental fellowship for us as Christians is with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

5. Every other type of fellowship flows from this.

B. We have been given fellowship with the Church

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, **we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7

1. John notes that flowing from our fellowship with God (walking in the light; the blood of Jesus cleanses us), we also have fellowship with one another!

2. This is not just people with common interests or even friendship; this is people who have been united to one another by the Holy Spirit!

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For **in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

a. The Church is the Body of Christ - we are each members of the One Body of Jesus!

b. When we were baptized in the Spirit at our conversion, we were not only brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son, but we were also baptized into the Church, made members of the Body of Christ.

3. Our connection with the Body of Christ - both universal and local - is not just an external relationship; it is organic!

4. If a part of our body gets separated from organic, daily participation and sharing in the life of the body, it will wither and die; likewise, any Christian who cuts themselves off from ongoing participation and sharing in the life of the Church will wither and die.

5. This fellowship with the Church flows from God through the apostolic teaching we saw last week.

a. This is why Luke lists devotion to the apostles' teaching first - all else flows from that!

b. John teaches us the same thing.

That which was from the beginning, which **we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,** concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and **we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you** the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that **which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,** so that you too may have fellowship with us; and **indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.** 1 John 1:1-3

1. The **apostles heard, saw, and touched Jesus** - they have a unique role in the building of the Church.

2. They **proclaimed** Christ to us - the apostles' teaching (which we now have in the New Testament)

3. Through their testimony, we believe and are brought into fellowship with them (and the whole Church).

4. This brings us into **fellowship with God.**

6. Once again, there is no "me and Jesus" in the New Testament! To be in fellowship with Jesus is to be in fellowship with the Church founded by Jesus through the apostolic teaching!

C. The practical implications of fellowship with the Church

1. To be devoted to fellowship means we labor to walk in unity in our local church

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ **eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** ⁴ There is **one body and one Spirit**—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6

- a. The new covenant gift of the Spirit means there IS One Body - this is the reality that underlies fellowship.
- b. But we must labor to maintain that unity, walking in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another - the fruit of the Spirit's work in our lives!

2. Fellowship means we worship together and minister to one another.

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, Acts 2:46

- a. Their devotion to fellowship meant they gathered with one another for worship (Temple courts, description in Acts 2:42)
- b. But this also envisions real relationships and community outside of the worship gatherings (their homes, eating together).
- c. We also know that their devotion to the Word and the gift of the Spirit that brought unity meant that in their worship they instructed one another.

Let **the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom**, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be **filled with the Spirit,** ¹⁹**addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, Ephesians 5:18-19

3. Fellowship means we care for the practical needs of one another

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. Acts 2:44-45

- a. This is literally “sharing” with one another.
- b. When the Spirit unites us with one another, we immediately begin to care for one another - body and soul!

4. Fellowship means we are engaged in mission together!

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:47

- a. The beauty of real fellowship and community was attractive to the unbelievers around them!
- b. This is a HUGE need today - people feel isolated and lonely and are looking for real community!
- c. It also includes partnering together for the spreading of the Gospel around the world because of your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:5
 1. Partnership is κοινωνία
 2. The fellowship given by the Spirit flowed over into partnership for the Gospel going forth, not only in Philippi, but around the world!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Am I devoted to fellowship?

1. We are created and re-created for community! (After Hours)
2. This is no small thing! It is a key part of what God does when the Spirit is poured out upon us!
3. Once again, we see the Spirit-filled life can not be experienced in isolation!
4. But is this a priority for me - or an optional add-on?
5. Make no mistake - in our isolated, increasingly digital culture, it will take DEVOTION to experience true fellowship!
6. If I am honest, am I DEVOTED to fellowship?

B. Building a life devoted to fellowship

1. Faithfully gather with the Church for worship
 - a. This is the most basic level - but critical
 - b. Remember, Acts 2:42 describes the worship gathering!
2. To really experience fellowship, come early and stay late!
 - a. Most fellowship happens on the edges of the worship gathering!
 - b. Next Sunday, come early for the fellowship breakfast! MAKE THIS A PRIORITY!
3. Join a connect group
 - a. Acts 2:42-47 begins in gathered worship but spills over into other days!

- b. Connect groups are where you really experience fellowship and the building of deep relationships!
- c. No one can make a connect group every week - but become part of one and make it when you can!

4. Participate in serving and mission!

- a. A great way to build relationships is serving together - greeting, coffee, children's ministry, worship team, etc.
- b. You can also get to know others when we do outreach activities like Winter Relief or the Spring Festival!

C. The Table of Fellowship

1. A table is a place for fellowship
2. This led to a lot of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees - they would not share a table with 'sinners.'
3. But Jesus graciously invites us into fellowship at His Table!
4. Here we 'participate' with Him - and are reminded of our unity with one another.
5. Come to the Lord's Table of Fellowship!

Devoted - Fellowship

Acts 2:42-47

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Communion

2 Corinthians 13:14

Teaching keywords: Means of Grace; Word of God; Christian Life; Baptism and Filling with the Spirit

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14