

LIVING UNDER THE UNIQUE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST AND IN THE UNIQUE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

Called into the Fellowship of God's Son and Experiencing the Cross for the Deepening of the Divine Fellowship

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 30; 10:16-17; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24

- 1 Cor 1:2 To the ^{1a}church of God which is ²in ^bCorinth, ³to those who have been ^{4c}sanctified ⁵in Christ Jesus, the ^{6d}called saints, ⁷with all those who ^{8e}call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* ^{9f}theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor 1:30 But ^{1a}of Him you are ^bin Christ Jesus, who became ^cwisdom to us from God: both ^{2d}righteousness and ^esanctification and ^fredemption,
- 1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?
- 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
- Rom 6:6 ¹Knowing this, that our ²old man has been ^{3a}crucified with *Him* in order that the ^{4b}body of sin might be ⁵annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8e}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.

I. God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord—1 Cor. 1:9:

- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- A. The word *fellowship* implies communion, sharing something in common; such communion is a co-enjoyment of Christ and a co-participation in Christ—v. 2.
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the ^{1a}church of God which is ²in ^bCorinth, ³to those who have been ^{4c}sanctified ⁵in Christ Jesus, the ^{6d}called saints, ⁷with all those who ^{8e}call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* ^{9f}theirs and ours:
- B. This fellowship, this communion and co-participation in and the co-enjoyment of Christ, is the reality of the church life—v. 2; 10:3-4, 17, 21.
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the ^{1a}church of God which is ²in ^bCorinth, ³to those who have been ^{4c}sanctified ⁵in Christ Jesus, the ^{6d}called saints, ⁷with all those who ^{8e}call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* ^{9f}theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 10:3 And all ate the same ¹spiritual ^afood,
- 1 Cor 10:4 And all drank the same ¹spiritual ^adrink; for they drank of a ²spiritual rock which followed *them*, and the rock was Christ.
- 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
- 1 Cor 10:21 You cannot ¹drink the Lord's ^acup and the demons' cup; you cannot partake of the Lord's ^btable and of the ^cdemons' table.
- C. The Christ into whose fellowship God has called us is all-inclusive; thus, in 1:9 *fellowship* denotes the partaking of, the participation in, and the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ—vv. 24, 30; 2:8, 10; 3:11; 5:7-8; 10:3-4; 11:3; 12:12; 15:20, 23, 45, 47.
- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to ¹those who are ^acalled, both ^bJews and Greeks, Christ the ^{2c}power of God and the ^dwisdom of God.

- 1 Cor 1:30 But ^{1a}of Him you are ^bin Christ Jesus, who became ^cwisdom to us from God: both ^{2d}righteousness and ^esanctification and ^fredemption,
- 1 Cor 2:8 Which none of the ^arulers of this age have known; for if they had known, they would not have ^bcrucified the ^cLord of glory;
- 1 Cor 2:10 But to us God has ^{1a}revealed *them* through the ^bSpirit, for the Spirit ²searches all things, even the ^{3c}depths of God.
- 1 Cor 3:11 For ^{1a}another foundation no one is able to lay besides ^bthat which is laid, which is Jesus ^cChrist.
- 1 Cor 5:7 Purge out the old leaven that you may be a ¹new lump, even as you are unleavened; for our ^{2a}Passover, Christ, also has been sacrificed.
- 1 Cor 5:8 So then let us ^akeep the ¹feast, not with old ^bleaven, neither with the leaven of ^cmalice and evil, but with the ^dunleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
- 1 Cor 10:3 And all ate the same ¹spiritual ^afood,
- 1 Cor 10:4 And all drank the same ¹spiritual ^adrink; for they drank of a ²spiritual rock which followed *them*, and the rock was Christ.
- 1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that ¹Christ is the ^ahead of every ²man, and the man is the ^bhead of the woman, and ³God is the ^chead of Christ.
- 1 Cor 12:12 ¹For even as ²the body is ^aone and has many ^bmembers, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor 15:20 ¹But now Christ has been ^araised from the dead, the ^{2b}firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- 1 Cor 15:23 But each one in his own order: the ^{1a}firstfruits, Christ; then ^{2b}those who are Christ's at His ^ccoming;
- 1 Cor 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, ^aAdam, became a ^bliving ¹soul"; the last Adam *became* a ^clife-giving Spirit.
- 1 Cor 15:47 The first man is ¹out of the ^aearth, earthy; the ²second man *is* ³out of ^bheaven.

D. God has called us into the fellowship of His Son so that we may partake of Christ, participate in Him, and enjoy Him as our God-given portion—1:2, 9.

- 1 Cor 1:2 To the ^{1a}church of God which is ²in ^bCorinth, ³to those who have been ^{4c}sanctified ⁵in Christ Jesus, the ^{6d}called saints, ⁷with all those who ^{8e}call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* ^{9f}theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

E. Christ Himself is actually the fellowship into which God has called us—v. 30:

- 1 Cor 1:30 But ^{1a}of Him you are ^bin Christ Jesus, who became ^cwisdom to us from God: both ^{2d}righteousness and ^esanctification and ^fredemption,
- To say that we have been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ means that we have been called into Christ Himself as the unique fellowship; this is the fellowship of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ, the One who in resurrection is the life-giving Spirit—15:3-4, 45b.

1 Cor 15:3 For I delivered to you, first of all, that which also I ^areceived, that ¹Christ ^bdied for our ^csins according to the ^{2d}Scriptures;

1 Cor 15:4 And that He was ^aburied, and that He has been ^braised on the ^cthird day according to the ^dScriptures;

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam *became* a ^clife-giving Spirit.
 - God's intention is to make Christ His Son the center of His economy and to make Him everything to all the believers; this is why Paul says that we have been called into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord—1:9.

1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

F. Fellowship also means that we and Christ have become one and that we enjoy Him and He enjoys us—6:17:

- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is ^{1a}joined to the Lord is ^{2b}one spirit.
- We have been called into a mutuality in which all that Christ is becomes ours and all that we are in Christ becomes His; in fellowship we are one with Him, and He is one with us—12:12-13; 6:17; John 14:20.

1 Cor 12:12 ¹For even as ²the body is ^aone and has many ^bmembers, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

- 1 Cor 12:13 For also in ^{1a}one Spirit we were all ^bbaptized into ^{2c}one Body, whether ^{3d}Jews or Greeks, whether ⁴slaves or free, and were all given to ^{5e}drink one ^fSpirit.
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is ^{1a}joined to the Lord is ^{2b}one spirit.
- John 14:20 In that ^{1a}day you will know that I am ^bin My Father, and you ^cin Me, and I ^din you.
2. Such a fellowship is a matter of enjoyment—our enjoyment of the Triune God, the Triune God’s enjoyment of us, and also the enjoyment which the believers have with one another; this is a wonderful, universal, mutual enjoyment—1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3-4, 7.
- 1 Cor 5:8 So then let us ^akeep the ¹feast, not with old ^bleaven, neither with the leaven of ^cmalice and evil, but with the ^dunleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
- 2 Cor 13:14 The ^{1a}grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ^blove of God and the ^cfellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have ¹seen and heard we report ²also to you that you also may have ^{3a}fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the ⁴Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:4 And these things we write that ¹our ^{2a}joy may be made full.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we ^awalk in the light as He ¹is in the light, we ²have fellowship with one another, and the ^{3b}blood of ⁴Jesus His Son ⁵cleanses us from every ⁶sin.
- G. The fellowship of God’s Son is carried out by the Spirit, for in our experience the fellowship of the Son becomes the fellowship of the Spirit and our regenerated spirit—2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:22:
- 2 Cor 13:14 The ^{1a}grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ^blove of God and the ^cfellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Phil 2:1 ¹If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any ^{2a}consolation of love, if any ^bfellowship of spirit, if any ^{3c}tenderheartedness and ^dcompassions,
- 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your ^{1a}spirit. ^{2b}Grace be with you.
1. Experientially, our being one spirit with the Lord follows our being called by God into the fellowship of His Son—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam *became* a ^clife-giving Spirit.
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is ^{1a}joined to the Lord is ^{2b}one spirit.
2. The word *joined* in 6:17 is a synonym for *fellowship* in 1:9, for the joining is the fellowship; whenever we are one spirit with the Lord, we participate in the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor 6:17 But he who is ^{1a}joined to the Lord is ^{2b}one spirit.
- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- H. The fellowship of God’s Son has become the fellowship that the apostles shared with the believers in His Body, the church, and should be the fellowship that we enjoy in the partaking of His blood and body at His table; such a fellowship is unique because the all-inclusive Christ is unique; it forbids any division among the members of His unique Body—Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:10-13a; 12:13.
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the ¹teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the ^abreaking of bread and the ^bprayers.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have ¹seen and heard we report ²also to you that you also may have ^{3a}fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the ⁴Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brothers, through the ^{1a}name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all ^{2b}speak the same thing and *that* there be no ^{3c}divisions among you, but *that* you be ⁴attuned in the ^dsame mind and in the same ^{5e}opinion.
- 1 Cor 1:11 For it has been made clear to me concerning you, my brothers, by those of *the household of* ¹Chloe, that there are ^astrifes among you.
- 1 Cor 1:12 Now ^{1a}I mean this, that each of you says, I am of ^bPaul, and I of ^cApollos, and I of ^dCephas, and I of ²Christ.
- 1 Cor 1:13a Is ¹Christ ^adivided? ...
- 1 Cor 12:13 For also in ^{1a}one Spirit we were all ^bbaptized into ^{2c}one Body, whether ^{3d}Jews or Greeks, whether ⁴slaves or free, and were all given to ^{5e}drink one ^fSpirit.

- I. In 1:9 the fellowship is of the Son of God, but in 10:16 this fellowship becomes the fellowship of the Lord's body and blood:

1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?

1. This indicates that Christ has passed through death and resurrection for our participation and enjoyment—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 45b.

John 1:14 And the ¹Word became ^{2a}flesh and ^{3b}tabernacled among us (and ^{4c}we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten ⁵from the Father), full of ^{6d}grace and ^ereality.

1 Cor 15:3 For I delivered to you, first of all, that which also I ^areceived, that ¹Christ ^bdied for our ^csins according to the ^{2d}Scriptures;

1 Cor 15:4 And that He was ^aburied, and that He has been ^braised on the ^cthird day according to the ^dScriptures;

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam *became* a ^clife-giving Spirit.

2. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has been processed, “cooked,” to become the body and blood on the table; now “the cup of blessing which we bless” is “the fellowship of the blood of Christ,” and “the bread which we break” is “the fellowship of the body of Christ”—10:16.

1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?

II. The experience of the cross deepens both the vertical and the horizontal fellowship and enables us to know the life of the Body and live in the fellowship of the Body—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24; 1 Cor. 12:27:

Rom 6:6 ¹Knowing this, that our ²old man has been ^{3a}crucified with *Him* in order that the ^{4b}body of sin might be ⁵annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8c}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and ^amembers individually.

- A. We need the experience of the cross to deepen our experience of the divine fellowship—1:9, 24; 2:2:

1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:24 But to ¹those who are ^acalled, both ^bJews and Greeks, Christ the ^{2c}power of God and the ^dwisdom of God.

1 Cor 2:2 For I did ¹not determine to know anything among you except ²Jesus ^aChrist, and this One ^bcrucified.

1. Without the cross, our fellowship is superficial; only the cross can remove the many obstacles to the divine fellowship and deepen our fellowship with the Lord and with one another—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24.

Rom 6:6 ¹Knowing this, that our ²old man has been ^{3a}crucified with *Him* in order that the ^{4b}body of sin might be ⁵annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;

Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8c}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.

2. Fellowship frees us from our sinful self through the cross; without the cross, there is no release, freedom, or liberty from the self and no genuine fellowship—1 Cor. 1:9, 24; 2:2; Gal. 2:20.

1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- 1 Cor 1:24 But to ¹those who are ^acalled, both ^bJews and Greeks, Christ the ^{2c}power of God and the ^dwisdom of God.
- 1 Cor 2:2 For I did ¹not determine to know anything among you except ²Jesus ^aChrist, and this One ^bcrucified.
- Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8c}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.
3. In Matthew 16:24 the Lord used the term *his cross*, indicating that there is a particular portion of the cross for each one of us in order to cross each one of us out:
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.
- a. To bear the cross is to deny the self, to put the self to death, to apply the cross of Christ to the self all the time—Luke 9:23-25.
- Luke 9:23 And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his ^across ^bdaily and follow Me.
- Luke 9:24 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall ¹lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake, this one shall save it.
- Luke 9:25 For what is a man profited if he ¹gains the whole world but loses or forfeits himself?
- b. We are easily offended by others because we are so sensitive about ourselves; if we did not have such a strong self, we would not be offended by others.
- c. If we have a strong self and are offended by everything and everyone, we cannot have real fellowship; in order for us to have horizontal fellowship, we need to deny ourselves—Matt. 16:24.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.
- B. The experience of the cross brings us into the fellowship of the Body of Christ—Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24; 2:2; 12:12-14, 27:
- Rom 6:6 ¹Knowing this, that our ²old man has been ^{3a}crucified with *Him* in order that the ^{4b}body of sin might be ⁵annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh, you must ¹die, but if by the Spirit you ^{2a}put to death the ³practices of the body, you will live.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in ^aone body we have ^bmany members, and all the members do not have the ^csame ¹function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body ¹in Christ, and individually ^{2a}members one of another.
- 1 Cor 1:18 For the ^{1a}word of the cross is to those who are ^bperishing ^cfoolishness, but to us who are being ^dsaved it is the ^epower of God.
- 1 Cor 1:23 But we ^apreach ¹Christ ^bcrucified, to Jews a ^cstumbling block, and to Gentiles ^dfoolishness,
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to ¹those who are ^acalled, both ^bJews and Greeks, Christ the ^{2c}power of God and the ^dwisdom of God.
- 1 Cor 2:2 For I did ¹not determine to know anything among you except ²Jesus ^aChrist, and this One ^bcrucified.
- 1 Cor 12:12 ¹For even as ²the body is ^aone and has many ^bmembers, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- 1 Cor 12:13 For also in ^{1a}one Spirit we were all ^bbaptized into ^{2c}one Body, whether ^{3d}Jews or Greeks, whether ⁴slaves or free, and were all given to ^{5c}drink one ^fSpirit.
- 1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but ^amany.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and ^amembers individually.
1. The cross deals with our flesh, self, and natural life so that we may know the life of the Body in reality—Matt. 16:24-26.
- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him ¹deny ²himself and take up his ^{3a}cross and ⁴follow Me.
- Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his ^asoul-life shall ¹lose it; but whoever ²loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it.
- Matt 16:26 For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his ¹soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?

2. If our flesh, self, and natural life are dealt with by the cross and if we submit to the headship of Christ and live the Body life, we will enjoy the fellowship of the Body—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:3; Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 10:16.

Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8e}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.

Gal 5:24 ¹But they who are ^aof Christ Jesus ²have ^{3b}crucified the ^cflesh with its passions and its lusts.

Phil 3:3 For we are the ^{1a}circumcision, the ones who ²serve by the Spirit of God and ^bboast in Christ Jesus and ³have no confidence in the ^{4c}flesh,

Col 1:18 And He is the ^aHead of the ^bBody, the church; He is the ^cbeginning, the ^{1d}Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?

3. Our relationship with the Head is that of obedience, whereas our relationship with the Body is that of fellowship—Col. 2:19; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 10:16-17:

Col 2:19 And ¹not ^aholding the Head, ^{2b}out from whom all the ³Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the ⁴joints and ⁵sinews, ⁶grows with the ⁷growth of God.

1 John 1:3 That which we have ¹seen and heard we report ²also to you that you also may have ^{3a}fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the ⁴Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?

1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.

- a. Fellowship implies the fact that we are limited and inadequate and that we are willing to accept what comes from others and take it as our own.

- b. Fellowship is to acknowledge that we need the Body—Rom. 12:4-5.

Rom 12:4 For just as in ^aone body we have ^bmany members, and all the members do not have the ^csame ¹function,

Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body ¹in Christ, and individually ^{2a}members one of another.

- c. We can live in the Body and have fellowship in the Body only when our flesh, self, and natural life have been dealt with; otherwise, we will not see the importance of fellowship—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Phil. 3:3.

Gal 2:20 I am ^{1a}crucified with Christ; and *it is* ²no longer I *who* live, but *it is* ^{3b}Christ *who* lives in me; and the ⁴life which I now live in the flesh I ^clive in ⁵faith, the ^dfaith ⁶of the ⁷Son of God, who ^{8e}loved me and ^fgave Himself up for me.

Gal 5:24 ¹But they who are ^aof Christ Jesus ²have ^{3b}crucified the ^cflesh with its passions and its lusts.

Phil 3:3 For we are the ^{1a}circumcision, the ones who ²serve by the Spirit of God and ^bboast in Christ Jesus and ³have no confidence in the ^{4c}flesh,

- d. God must bring us to the point where we cannot go on without fellowship—1 Cor. 12:14-27; John 15:4-6; 1 Thes. 3:8.

1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but ^amany.

1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.

1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?

1 Cor 12:18 But now God has ^aplaced the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He ^bwilled.

1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?

1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body ^aone.

- 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 1 Cor 12:23 And those *members* of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely *members come to* have more abundant comeliness,
- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has ¹blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,
- 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no ^adivision in the body, but *that* the members would have the ¹same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member ^asuffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or one member is glorified, all the members ^brejoice with *it*.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and ^amembers individually.
- John 15:4 ^aAbide ^bin Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit ¹of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me.
- John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears ^amuch fruit; for apart from Me you can do ^bnothing.
- John 15:6 If one does not abide in Me, he is ^{1a}cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast *them* into the ^bfire, and they are ^cburned.
- 1 Thes 3:8 Because now we ¹live if you ^{2a}stand firm in the Lord.
4. Once the flesh, the self, and the natural life have been dealt with by the cross, we will know the life of the Body, we will see the importance of fellowship, and we will not be able to live apart from this fellowship—Rom. 6:6; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2:2; 10:16-17; 12:14-27; 1 John 1:3, 7.
- Rom 6:6 ¹Knowing this, that our ²old man has been ^{3a}crucified with *Him* in order that the ^{4b}body of sin might be ⁵annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 12:4 For just as in ^aone body we have ^bmany members, and all the members do not have the ^csame ¹function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one Body ¹in Christ, and individually ^{2a}members one of another.
- 1 Cor 1:9 ¹God is ^afaithful, through whom you were ^bcalled ²into the ^cfellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor 2:2 For I did ¹not determine to know anything among you except ²Jesus ^aChrist, and this One ^bcrucified.
- 1 Cor 10:16 The ^acup of blessing which we ^bbless, is it not the ¹fellowship of the ^cblood of Christ? The ^dbread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the ^ebody of Christ?
- 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is ^{1a}one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all ²partake of the one bread.
- 1 Cor 12:14 For the body is not one member but ^amany.
- 1 Cor 12:15 If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:16 And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, *it is not that* because of this it is not of the body.
- 1 Cor 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be?
- 1 Cor 12:18 But now God has ^aplaced the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He ^bwilled.
- 1 Cor 12:19 And if all were one member, where would the body be?
- 1 Cor 12:20 But now the members are many, but the body ^aone.
- 1 Cor 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
- 1 Cor 12:22 But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.
- 1 Cor 12:23 And those *members* of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely *members come to* have more abundant comeliness,
- 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has ¹blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,

- 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no ^adivision in the body, but *that* the members would have the ¹same care for one another.
- 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member ^asuffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or one member is glorified, all the members ^brejoice with *it*.
- 1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and ^amembers individually.
- 1 John 1:3 That which we have ¹seen and heard we report ²also to you that you also may have ^{3a}fellowship with us, and indeed our fellowship is with the ⁴Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- 1 John 1:7 But if we ^awalk in the light as He ¹is in the light, we ²have fellowship with one another, and the ^{3b}blood of ⁴Jesus His Son ⁵cleanses us from every ⁶sin.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE MEANING OF FELLOWSHIP

In 1 Corinthians 1:9 Paul says that God has called us into the fellowship of His Son. The meaning of the word fellowship is deep and profound. The New Testament illustrates this fellowship by a feast. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus said that a feast had been prepared and that people were invited to it (Matt. 22:1-3; Luke 14:16-17). We all have been invited to a marvelous feast. Here at the feast we are enjoying course after course. This enjoyment of the feast is a mutual participation, a co-participation. Thus, in the fellowship of God's Son we have enjoyment. This enjoyment, however, is corporate, not individualistic. As we enjoy this feast together, we have fellowship, communion.

Some versions translate the Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, as communion. Fellowship definitely implies communion. To have communion is to share something in common. When you eat breakfast alone, you do not enjoy communion. But when you come to a feast attended by a large number of people and enjoy the feast with them, you have communion. This communion is a co-enjoyment, a co-participation.

Fellowship also includes communication. Whenever we feast together with others, there is communication. You communicate with others, and they communicate with you.

The fellowship into which God has called us is the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. This fellowship includes the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It is the fellowship of the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ, the One who in resurrection is the life-giving Spirit. This all-inclusive One is our feast, and this feast is the fellowship. As those who have been called into this fellowship, we are now enjoying Christ by feasting on Him. Furthermore, we have communion and we are in communication with one another. This fellowship, this communion, is the church life.

The church life is the resurrection life in which we all participate. Furthermore, this resurrection is the life-giving Spirit, the life-giving Spirit is Christ, and Christ is the incarnated God. Christ, an all-inclusive Person, also implies justification, sanctification, and redemption. Christ is God, even the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. As the incarnated, crucified, and resurrected One, He is both resurrection and the life-giving Spirit. He is even our feast. Furthermore, Christ Himself is actually the fellowship into which God has called us. To say that we have been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ means that we have been called into Him. Christ is the life, the resurrection, the sanctification, the justification, the redemption, and everything to us. Therefore, He Himself is the fellowship.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SON OF GOD

In 1:9 Paul says, "God is faithful, through Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Do not make the mistake of thinking that the expression "the fellowship of His Son" is insignificant. Many Christians today use the word fellowship in a very

common way. But in the Bible fellowship denotes a matter of great significance. In the Old Testament there was not such a thing as fellowship. At most, there was the unity of the brothers spoken of in Psalm 133. Verse 1 of this psalm declares, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" This unity, however, is outward, whereas fellowship is inward. It is possible to have a certain kind of unity without life. For example, those who are members of a labor union may have a particular kind of unity. But such a unity is absolutely devoid of life. Fellowship requires life. Without life, we cannot have fellowship. Fellowship is an inward matter which we may describe as the intercommunication of life.

The word fellowship is used for the first time in Acts 2:42, where we are told that those who were saved and added to the church on the day of Pentecost continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles. The apostles had preached the gospel to them, and this gospel preaching brought them into something which the Bible calls fellowship.

I doubt that there is in any language an equivalent of the Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*. This word implies oneness and also a mutual flowing among the believers. When we enjoy fellowship with one another, there is a flow among us. Although electrical current is not living, it can be used to illustrate what we mean by a flow in fellowship. The flowing of electricity produces oneness. The flow, the current, we have in our spiritual fellowship involves both oneness and life. Our fellowship is a flow in oneness; it is an intercommunication among us as believers in Christ.

In the New Testament, fellowship describes both the flowing between us and the Lord and between us and one another. First John 1:3 says, "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." In 1 John we have life (1:1-2) and then fellowship. There is a flow, a current, vertically between us and the Father and the Son and horizontally between us and other believers. Praise the Lord that on earth today there is something called fellowship, a fellowship among the children of God and a fellowship of the children of God with the Triune God!

Since the day of Pentecost a current has been flowing horizontally among the believers. This flow crosses space and time. As far as time is concerned, this fellowship has been flowing from generation to generation. As far as space is concerned, this fellowship is worldwide; it flows among believers throughout the globe. Because we are in this one flow, we cannot be separated by space. No matter where we may be, we are all in the flow; that is, we are all in the one fellowship.

According to Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 1:9, we all have been called by God into this fellowship. Perhaps the best illustration of fellowship is the circulation of blood in the human body. Right now the blood is circulating throughout your body. In a very short period of time the blood makes one complete circuit. Life depends on this circulation. Just as there is the circulation of blood in the human body, so there is a spiritual circulation, called the fellowship, in the Body of Christ. It is a very sad thing that among a great many of today's Christians, this circulation is either neglected or is altogether lacking. Thus, it is crucial for us to realize that in the Lord's recovery we are being brought back into this flow, into this fellowship.

From 1:9 we see that through the faithful God we have been called into the fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This indicates clearly that we have not been called into the fellowship of any denomination, practice, or theological doctrine. The unique fellowship into which God has called us is the fellowship of His Son. This means that He alone must be our fellowship. (*Life-study of 1 Corinthians*, pp. 100-101, 123-125)

OUR FELLOWSHIP BEING DEEPENED THROUGH THE CROSS

In our experience, however, there are always frustrations and obstacles between us and God. There are many obstacles to the divine fellowship in its vertical and horizontal aspects. What is needed to deal with these obstacles? In the whole universe, there is only one thing which takes away all the obstacles between us and God—the cross. Verse 6 of hymn #737 in *Hymns* says:

Fellowship is deepened
Thru the cross of death;
Fellowship is lifted
By the Spirit's breath.

This verse says that our fellowship is deepened through the cross. Without the cross, our fellowship is superficial. The cross of death deepens our fellowship, and the Spirit's breath as the resurrection uplifts our fellowship. Fellowship frees us from our sinful self through the cross. Without the cross, there is no release, freedom, or liberty from the self. In the previous message, we pointed out that hymn #737 speaks of the divine fellowship and its relationship with the Spirit and the cross. Without the Spirit and the cross, we cannot have real fellowship.

THE ONENESS BEING THE FELLOWSHIP

The divine fellowship is the dispensing of the Triune God into us, the tripartite men, making us and God one. Actually, this oneness is the fellowship. The Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, means joint participation, and this joint participation issues in oneness. When a husband participates in his wife and his wife participates in him, they are one. Actually, fellowship is just oneness. When God is fellowshiping with us, and when we are fellowshiping with God, that makes God and us one. In the whole universe, there is a big oneness, and this big oneness is the divine fellowship. We, the tripartite men, are one with the Triune God. In John 17 the Lord prayed, "That they may be one, even as We are one" (v. 22b). The Lord's desire is to make us all one like the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one. The church's oneness is a part of the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity. Eventually, the church and the Divine Trinity are one in fellowship.

THE SPIRIT BEING THE FELLOWSHIP

For this fellowship there is the desperate need of the Spirit. Actually, the Spirit Himself is the fellowship. *The grace of Christ* means that Christ is grace, *the love of God* means that God is love, and *the fellowship of the Spirit* means that the Spirit is the fellowship. We need the fellowship, the Spirit, but there are obstacles between us and God and between us and one another.

EXPERIENCING THE CROSS IN ORDER TO BE THOROUGHLY IN THE DIVINE FELLOWSHIP

I am concerned that some among us are not thoroughly in this divine fellowship. In the training, I may have to speak a frank, faithful word to the trainees, but my frank speaking may bother them. That bothering may become an obstacle within them. If I were to always speak highly of the trainees, there would surely be no obstacle among us, but if I speak frankly to them, that may create an obstacle within them. Because there is an obstacle within you toward another brother, your fellowship with him is not that thorough. We may avoid contact with certain saints because of the obstacles within us to the divine fellowship. Our fellowship is not thorough and obstacles remain within us because we do not have the cross in our experience.

We may feel that we should exercise our patience and endurance with the saints to bear with them, but this kind of exercise is according to the teaching of Confucius. This is not the Bible's teaching. The Bible tells us to take the cross. Paul said in Galatians 2:20a, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This is the way of the cross. Because "it is no longer I," I do not have any feeling about someone's criticism of me. This does not mean I exercise my patience, my endurance, and my longsuffering. This kind of exercise is in the ethical field, the field of the teaching of Confucius.

The cross brings Christ to us. I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live but Christ lives in me. This is the cross. Christ lives in me as patience. He lives in me as all the human virtues which are considered by others as ethics. We need Christ, but without the experience of the cross,

we cannot experience Christ. Hymn #631 says, “If no death, no life.” This means, “If no cross, no Christ.” Furthermore, “If no Christ, no Spirit, and if no Spirit, no fellowship.” This is why the cross is needed. In Matthew 16:24 the Lord said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” The Lord used the words *his cross*. There is a particular portion of the cross for each one of us to cross each one of us out.

A number of the young Chinese sisters among us are in the self in another way. Generally speaking, the Chinese educate their daughters to be somewhat quiet and hidden, and this has molded many of the young sisters. As a result, they are not so frank or open in their speaking. Whenever they speak, they speak in a way that is begging for pity from others. They always want the sympathy of others. A person who is begging for sympathy will eventually be offended. A person who does not expect anyone to regard him, to respect him, or to give him sympathy cannot be easily offended. An object like a chair cannot be offended no matter how I treat it because it is senseless. We are so easily offended by others because we are so sensitive to ourselves.

Much of our criticism of others is because we are too sensitive to ourselves and too conscious of ourselves. If we did not have such a strong self, we would not be offended by others. Many times we criticize others because we have been offended. We are offended because we are so sensitive to ourselves. We expect everyone to treat us right according to our opinion. If someone does not treat us right according to our opinion, we are offended. Then, sooner or later, criticism will come out of our mouth.

I would like to mention another point in helping us to be useful in the hand of the Lord. If we expect the Lord to use us more, we have to learn to speak for the Lord in the meeting with a proper tone, a proper sound. Some do not speak in such a proper way because they are so sensitive to themselves. Such ones cannot be used by the Lord in their speaking. They speak in the meetings in a self-pitying way. They love themselves, uplift themselves, and preserve themselves. In their speaking, they display that they are full of self-pity.

The cross is mainly for dealing with ourselves. The Lord said that if we desire to follow Him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. Actually, to bear the cross is to deny the self, to put the self to death, to apply the cross of Christ to the self all the time. If we have a strong self and are offended by everything and by everyone, we cannot have real fellowship. In order for us to have the horizontal fellowship, we need to deny ourselves. To deny ourselves means to be senseless about ourselves. Then we can never be offended. We need the experience of the cross to deepen our experience of the divine fellowship. (*The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man*, pp. 158-163)