

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday morning 6/20/04 Joyful Fellowship Text: 1 John 1: 5-10

As we look at this passage of Scripture, dealing with the character of God, we must notice that real fellowship, or true fellowship with God and each other begins with an understanding of truth. If we are going to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, then we absolutely have to know the character of God. Because, as believers, or followers of Jesus, we are called into fellowship, or to be of one heart with Him.

We start out seeing that "God is light." Remember that back in the beginning, in Genesis, which means "beginnings," God created light. (Genesis 1:3) In Psalm 27:1 we read, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

I find this to be very interesting in the way that this sentence is put together. The psalmist asks, "whom shall I fear?" The obvious answer to me is the dark! But in God, there is no darkness at all! So, when we are in a personal relationship with the God of the universe, there is no fear. This is from John, who spent a quantity of quality time with Jesus. So he saw firsthand that there was no need to fear.

If we are going to have fellowship with God and His Son Jesus, we must understand what it is and what makes it possible. Fellowship has in its Greek stem the meaning "common" (koin). We, as believers have certain beliefs that we hold in common. In its broadest sense, fellowship or our commonness is that sense of bonding and closeness that we share with one another.

The New Testament uses the term Koinonia, to speak of the believer's relationship with Christ and the mutual fellowship or closeness among Christians.

Koinonia, for the Apostle Paul, was the most appropriate term to describe the unity and bonding that exists between Christians by virtue of the fact that they share together in the grace of the gospel, or "good news" of Jesus Christ.

So, if we take the message that John heard from Jesus, that "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all" then all of our fellowship with Jesus and each other will be exposed to the light of His truth. Truth, like life, in the Scriptures has a moral content. We are not just to know the truth, but we are also to do it, or live it. Just as we are not just to see the light, we are to walk in it.

But, I have to tell you, not everyone is truthful about their relationships with God or each other! One of the things that outsiders don't like is being

outside. If there is a group, others want in, even if they don't understand what really makes the group a group. So, they say the right things and even act like everyone else, but they are missing something, the truth of why they are there. They want to fit, but don't have all the right stuff.

Fathers, we have a major responsibility to be truthful in all of our relationships with our kids. They can really spot a fake. And let's be careful to train them to outshine us, not be afraid that they will.

So, God, in His great mercy designed a sort of litmus test for us to take. We don't sit down and take it—we don't answer verbally—it's actually by living that we take the test. John learned from Jesus and from the Holy Spirit a very simple truth.

"If we claim to have fellowship [be of one heart with Jesus] with Him, yet continue to walk not in the light of His love, but in darkness, we are lying through our teeth!" (MSG)!

No one likes being exposed as a liar, but light does that to us. We can't slink around in the light; we have to see ourselves as everyone else does. But the opposite is also true, "If we walk in the light", the light of God and His word and witness, we will not only have fellowship with one another, but our light will be seen by others as well.

Our real fellowship with one another comes because of Jesus Christ dying on the cross, willingly, in our place, shedding His blood, which purifies from all sin.

If you get nothing else, get this. The light of God, which is Jesus, gave His life, to purify us, from ALL sin. What sin that you have committed do you think is not covered by the death and resurrection of Jesus? You're covered, if you walk in His light and life out His life.

We can't just bask in his light, just hoping to get that "glow" or tan from hanging around Him and others who live in His light; we actually have to walk in His light and love.

Let's pray. Lord, in a few minutes we as fathers and men in this congregation are going to be honored and even receive gifts. But our prayer is that none of us would neglect the greatest gift of all, Your Son, and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I pray that each one of us would take seriously the fact that we need to walk in Your light and really have a love for each other. Change our hearts, minds, lives, ears and eyes to really live in You. Thank You Lord.