

Sermon by Pastor Bob Brown on 11/9/03 Sun AM
Entitled: "Fulfilled Fellowship" from Scripture Philemon 1-7

Wow! Thanks for being here again! Did you ever stop to think about what it is that keeps bringing us back here week after week? I have; it starts with the deep personal relationship that I have with Jesus, but then it is more than that.

Some of us have a longing to know that the Word of God is true, so we come weekly to hear more of it. We come to be a part of a real family when we feel that we have failed, or have been failed in our own. We come because we desire to experience real fellowship, to actually be a part of a true community,

We come because we are looking for "koinonia", the Greek word that is often used to describe the sense of bonding and closeness which members of a church often share with each other. Fellowship is something that we all share, when we are living for Jesus.

Koinonia was the Apostle Paul's favorite word to describe a believer's relationship with the risen Lord and all the benefits of salvation, which come through Him. You see, on the basis of faith, believers have fellowship, a real bonding, with the Son of God (Read 1 Cor. 1:9).

We have a closeness with each other as we share the good news of Jesus (Read Phil. 1:5). Here Paul probably means that all believers share together in the saving power and message of the good news. Plus, all believers share together in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Read 2 Cor. 13:14), which Paul knew was the most important glue that would hold the church together.

Because we know that all of this is true, we come searching for all that we can get out of a day together. But life, even the Christian life, doesn't always go exactly as we have planned. We fail when people were counting on us. Other people let us down when we were counting on them. Some in the church run, hide, fail or even die (Read Luke 22:31-32).

Thanks be to God, some who have run and failed and hid, are resurrected! When that happens our faith is built up, we are renewed, and we are asked

by God to recommit ourselves, our families and even those we have turned loose, given up on, or thought were lost (Read Luke 15:24).

Each time we are gathered around the Lord's Table, a place of communion, as Paul calls it, a place of real community (Read 1 Cor. 10:16), we draw closer to Jesus and each other.

Here we can relate to each other all that we really do have in common. We gather because of Jesus, and He reminds us to forgive those who have hurt us or failed us, but He also reminds us that we need to seek out those we have failed and hurt and seek their forgiveness.

It is at this Table that we are reminded again what is expected of us, personally, as believers and followers of Jesus. Read 1 Cor. 11: 26-33.