



LESSON FOURTEEN - FELLOWSHIP IN THE BODY

Text: 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31

One of the most beautiful and important topics that can ever be taught in the church is the importance of relationship. Someone asked – “When we get to heaven will we still be related as husbands or wives, parent or child?” We can ask – how will we know one another? The Mormons believe in a doctrine called the “Doctrine of Celestial Marriage”, which teaches that if a couple is married in a Mormon temple, they are also married in the after life. However consider what Jesus said in Matthew 22: 23 – 30:

Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

In heaven the marriage relationship that will be known will be that of Jesus Christ (the husband) and the church (the bride of Christ). (Eph. 5: 23 – 27) (Rev. 19: 7 – 9)

We actually will know one another, but not as husband or wife or parent or children. We don't really know what we will look like, but the Bible declares this in 1 John 3: 1 – 2:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be

like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We may very well know one another as who we are. The Bible says we are going to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 8:11) in the kingdom of heaven – and I suspect we will meet Paul and Peter, James and John. Here is a truth that Brother Fisher in Erie PA preached that I have never forgotten – “The only thing we take to heaven with us our relationships”. No money, silver, or material goods will go with us. The old body, young body, sick body or healthy body will be left behind. No houses or lands will matter. We won't need anything for our journey. The treasures that we laid up there will be there – but when the resurrection comes – all you will see will be your brothers and sisters in the Lord being caught up together with Jesus Christ in the air.

When We Are Saved Our Relationships Change

Your wife is now your sister. Your husband is now your brother. Why? God is your father, and you now have a heavenly family. This is a very important fact and it is essential to understand it in light of some of the Lord's very hardest teachings. I call these the “Test of Discipleship”. In several passages of scripture, Jesus Christ instructs us that if we are going to be his disciples, what has been our natural family has got to be “hated”. Let us take a look at these very hard scriptures:

Luke 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Mark 3:31 There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling



him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, “Who is my mother, or my brethren?” And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

Matthew 8: 21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

The Strongest Natural Relationship Can Also Be the most difficult for your soul

The major reason why people reject the truth is because it effects how they must feel about family. It is the most natural thing in the world for someone to not want to believe that their parent or child would be lost. It is interesting to me what the Lord said in Matthew 10: 34 – 37 because he used the example of father or mother and children rather than even using an example of wife. Many

times – a spouse can even find it easier to accept that a spouse is wrong but certainly not my parents.

The Lord Must Replace Our Natural Relationship with one that must be even stronger

What could possibly be stronger than family relationships? Although church members and saints are called brothers, sisters, sheep, trees, stones – and we are the temple, and a building, the strongest picture of relationship is one that is depicted in the most powerful imagery of all – *The Body of Jesus Christ*. When we think of the physical body of Jesus Christ that suffered and died on Calvary – can we every grasp the truth that the whole body died together, and the whole body was resurrected together. A family can be divided, and of course that can create tremendous pain – but it is nothing to the idea that comes to mind when a body loses an arm, or leg, or eye. The “Body of Christ” as the church is really discussed in three verses that we want to look at. But let us first look at a couple of scriptures about “communion” and also “fellowship”:

Definitions of Communion and Fellowship

- Communion: the act of sharing, community, participation – unity, concourse, interchange of thought; joined together as one (intimacy, intercourse); partnership, communication
- Fellowship: it is the very same Greek word

The word really means a deep form of relationship where two or more become as one person in unity and in relationship. Most people think of communion when referring to partaking of the bread and wine (which is symbolic of the Lord’s body – his



flesh and his blood). That is because true communion is really becoming a partaker of one another's life. For that reason, we are warned about communion and fellowship with Satan and with those who are not a part of the body of Christ:

- 1 Corinthians 10:20 – 21
- 2 Corinthians 6: 14 – 18
- Ephesians 5:11

It cannot be stressed enough – that fellowship outside of the body of Christ is detrimental to your spiritual life. That is why even marriage to an unbeliever is considered dangerous to your spiritual condition. We are not talking about what to do if a person was married before they became a Christian – that doesn't mean they are to divorce the unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7) – but it is spiritually dangerous if you are in the faith to become unified emotionally or physically (i.e. fellowship) with people who are unsaved.

Jesus sitting with sinners (and we should to) is not fellowship or becoming as one. Fellowship and communion refer to the emotional and spiritual joining of the mind and heart – and that is exactly what should take place within the body – but not outside of the body of Christ.

Relationship (i.e. fellowship) – the church as a body

As I stated – what can be closer than the family? Paul in 1 Corinthians compares the church to the “Body of Christ” (12:27). Although this chapter helps us understand the gifts of the spirit – it is often the basis for teaching what called the ministry to the body. In other words, every gift of the spirit is like having different parts of the body that give service to the rest of the members of the body. Communion or fellowship or shall we say relationship needs to be understood, that we cannot survive as a body without one another any more than the body can function properly without each member adding to the body:

- V12 – ***the body is one having many members*** – it takes the whole body to make “one Jesus”
- V14 – ***the body is not ONE member but many***. Here is a very important principle. There is no such thing as the church being made up of one member. When you think about it – Jesus Christ by using this teaching helps us to understand that he without us is not the body – and we without him is not the body. He is our head – but we are his arms and feet, legs, mouth, voice, ears
- V15 – ***“If the foot say – because I am not the hand I am not of the body”***. There are many people who feel that they can only be a part of a church if they can function a certain way. It is true – if you were called to be an eye, but not allowed to see, that would be a problem. But in the same token – if God made you an eye, you should not try to be a mouth. Some folks think that unless they are the preacher, they are nothing – and sadly sometimes preachers make people feel that way.
 - The preacher (i.e. mouth) is not more important than the ear, or arm, or leg. He has a different function in the body – but he is not the head and in no respect is he more important than anyone else in the body. He just has a different function. We will study however, the proper respect that should be given to the ministry in another study
 - In developing relationship – it should be recognized that everyone has a function. God did not call us to be simply pew warmers
- V17 – ***“if the whole body were an eye where were the hearing”***. The most dangerous situation that can occur in any church is that it gets built around a single



ministry. It is true that it takes time to develop ministries. Home missions churches usually don't have the luxury of having a choir or drummer, or multiples of ministries. – one very important but difficult principle here however is that while the church members should be encouraged to seek to be used in the Lord – that must be balanced out with the need to keep harmony and proper placement in the church. In other words if the “ear” says I want to preach today – it doesn't mean that they should be allowed to preach.

- ***It is important that every member of the body search their heart and seek God and how they can be used and be a blessing to the church.***
 - Proverbs 18:16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.
 - Proverbs 25:14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.
 - Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
- V21 – ***And the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you*** – a very important principle of developing relationship is understanding that we need one another. One reason of course is because on any given day – you may be the one that brings faith to church, or the song, or the word. I have noticed time and time again that when it seemed like a service was not going well – or was perhaps flat – that somebody would give a testimony that turns it around – or ask a question that brings a change for the better.

- V24 – ***God gives more honor to those which lack.*** Often the ones who did get used are those that God chose because they were the weakest or the most humble, or the most meek. King David was the replacement for Saul. Sometimes God uses the weakest among us through a spiritual gift because when it is all said and done – only God should receive the glory