

Speaker: Pastor Buster Brown

Today's Message: Waiting with Expectation to Receive Empowerment: Fellowship

Today's Text: Isaiah 40:31; I John 1: 1-10

“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” **Isaiah 40:31**

“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. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 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. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” **I John 1: 1-10**

“Christian fellowship is two-dimensional; it is first vertical and then horizontal. The horizontal plane of fellowship, which is our immediate concern, presupposes the vertical for its very existence. The vertical dimension of fellowship was described by John when he wrote: ‘Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (1John 1:3). This fellowship is what makes a Christian; indeed, John’s words afford a precise definition of a Christian. The man who is not in fellowship with the Father and the Son however upright and pious he may be, is no Christian at all. The horizontal dimensions of fellowship is the habitual sharing, the constant giving to and receiving from each other, which is the true and authentic pattern of life for the people of God.” **J.I. Packer**, *God’s Words*, p. 193

1. Fellowship with God is the source from which fellowship among Christians springs; and fellowship with God is the end to which Christian fellowship is a means.
2. God in trinitarian kindness has made us as relational people because we are made in his image.
3. The Father has given us the church as a means of building, encouraging, sustaining and equipping his people.
4. The above is accomplished (in large part) through relationships that share in the mutual life that flows from the trinitarian understanding of God.
5. Believers who do not diligently avail themselves of this sharing of the common life in Christ, severely limit a primary means of growth/grace in the knowledge of Christ. (Therefore, we should find ourselves in webs of relationships that are centered on the reality of Christ.)

The solid reality of Christ and him crucified is the basis of true fellowship. (I John 1:1-4)

Two Claims and Two Responses

CLAIM 1

Those who claim to have fellowship with the Lord, but walk in (non-obedient, unbiblical) darkness leads to l_____ and a non-p_____ the truth.

“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” **John 3:19-21**

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” **Matthew 6: 22-23**

RESPONSE 1

But, if we continually walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus CONTINUALLY cleanses us from all sin.

CLAIM 2

If we claim to be without sin, we live in a state of self-d_____ and the t_____ is not in us.

RESPONSE 2

But, if we continually confess our sins the Lord is faithful and just to forgive our sins and CONTINUALLY cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Article 5. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent. **Westminster Confession of Faith**, Ch. 15

Therefore, we walk in joyful obedience and (humbling) self-awareness.

“Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” **Proverbs 28:13**

ANSWER KEY: lies, practicing, deception, truth

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did the Lord mean when he said, in essence, “fig leaves will not do?” (Genesis 3:7) and then made “garments of skins and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21)?
2. What are some of the “fig leaves” that our culture uses for self-protection and isolation?
3. What does the trinitarian nature of God teach regarding relationships?
4. Are we ever done with sin this side of heaven? How does that impact the way we relate and care for other people?
5. Discuss Proverbs 28:13 in the confession of sin. How does a daily (?) confession of sin bring clarity to our thoughts and keep the free movement of the Holy Spirit flowing in our lives? (Note John 3:19-21)

Are you involved in a small group?