

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Hymns Psalm 57 st Version verses 1-3, v9-11, 615, 404 Read: Philippians 1:1-5 Text Philippians 1:3-5

Series: Philippians (13) Title: What is Fellowship in The Gospel?

Paul having greeted, and given thanks to God for the believers at Philippi, then continues by considering their ***fellowship in the gospel.***

This term ***fellowship in the gospel*** is a wonderful term.

Therefore, we must search the scriptures to have a clear understanding what does Paul means by fellowship in the gospel.

I say that because the word **fellowship** is often misunderstood, misused, and misapplied.

To many, the word **fellowship**, is **limited, restricted**, to refreshments after church or at church, social activities, church outings, OR you may hear people say the church I attend there is no or little fellowship.

The church needs fellowship we need to organise more days out, more meetings, more programs.

Now in and of themselves those things just mentioned there is nothing wrong with that and to a certain extent they are part of fellowship, ***but they do not constitute what fellowship is, or the term fellowship in the gospel***, because this fellowship in the gospel goes beyond activities.

Therefore, though believers may not realise it, but when we assemble together to worship the Lord on Sunday or at a prayer meeting in the hearing and preaching of the word, and sing praise unto God, evangelise, we are actually engaged in fellowship in the gospel.

God willing next week I want to consider the expression or evidence of fellowship in the gospel, the practise and out working, but today with the Lord's help I want to look at **what is fellowship in the gospel, its very essence.**

### **I FIRST THE MEANING OF FELLOWSHIP.**

The word **fellowship** is the word **koinonia** which means **partnership, companion, communion, to share the same.**

The over all idea is to be the same mind as Christ when it comes to their gospel.

The Paul's fellowship with the Philippians was a fellowship in the gospel.

Their fellowship, **partnership, companion, communion** was **Christ centred. They shared the same gospel foundations, the same mind set when it came to the gospel.**

Notice on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2:41-41** **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."**

What was the apostles doctrine? it was the gospel of Jesus Christ, centring upon His death, burial and resurrection.

The 3000 souls who trusted Christ, believed the apostles doctrine to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they fellowship in it, they shared the same Biblical principles, there was agreement, and common ground.

**1 Corinthians 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

Called unto the communion, companionship of Christ, to have in common with Christ, to have the mind of Christ.

Therefore, . Fellowship is a partnership in the gospel, to share the same mind set in gospel, principles.

Such **Fellowship is preaching what Christ preached**, it is living the gospel Christ lived, there is partnership with Christ

This was the truth that believers at Philippi shared with Paul and to which he was thankful. **They were united in the work of God because they were united in Christ.**

Remember, Paul and the Philippians came from different backgrounds, cultures, routines, practices.

Paul was Jew there were Gentiles, Paul was religious Jew, those a Philippi, where Heathen Gentiles.

When it came to their gospel there was nothing in common, except both were guilty before God.

yet now Paul is thanking God for their **fellowship, partnership, communion** in the gospel.

How can this be? The answer is union with Christ, united to Christ.

They were one with each other because they were one with Christ.

Now children of God, bought by precious blood, adopted into the family of God, whether Jew or Gentile having received Christ as Lord and Saviour they were brought into the fellowship of the gospel.

There was a bond, companionship. Paul speaks of believers in the fellowship of the gospel in **Philippians 2:15** as **“the sons of God.”** **Gal 3:28** **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

Fellowship in the gospel is **in, through, by and because** of redemption accomplished and applied upon the work of Christ.

Believer, we too came from different backgrounds, cultures, languages, we have different personalities, yet it is Christ who unites us and removes any barriers.

It is Christ that unites us to sing praises unto Him who loved us and washed us from sin.

Due to our oneness with Christ we are one with each other, due to fellowship with Christ we fellowship with one another.

We are family. upon the redeeming blood I can all call you my brother, my sister, I can greet you in the grace and peace of the gospel, yeah we can fellowship in the gospel.

### **The meaning of fellowship.**

## **II SECOND, THE MESSAGE OF FELLOWSHIP**

The message of fellowship in the gospel, is the gospel, because Christ is the gospel.

This is what Paul states, over all as Paul thanks God for the Philippians he thanks God for ***their fellowship in the gospel.***

The word **gospel** literally means **glad or good tidings**, but also **good news.**

We read in **Luke 2:10-11** **“and the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,**

**which shall be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**

The word **good tidings** is the word **gospel**.

Therefore, Jesus Christ Himself is the gospel, He alone is the good tidings to a world of sinners lost, He alone is the good news for hopeless and helpless sinners.

It is only through Christ's perfect person, His death, burial and resurrection, that sinners can be saved.

**To reject any part of the gospel, is to reject a full Christ, full salvation, full atonement for sin.**

**The forgiveness of sins, the message of fellowship is trusting in all of Christ not taking and leaving what suits.**

Men and woman that is what is happening, among churches, today.

There is a great cry for fellowship, for partnership between churches, between religions, what they call multi-faiths.

They like the word **fellowship**, but will tamper with, take and leave what part of fellowship that suits their compromising and confusing agenda, when it comes to the message of fellowship in the gospel.

There are churches who call for fellowship, but reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, they reject the fellowship of the gospel.

They don't share in common the apostles doctrine, they do not accept the message that Christ preached.

Now I know among fundamental churches there are slight differences when it comes to Church names, church government, views on baptism, and end times.

But when it comes to the foundations of the Gospel, there is fellowship, agreement in what Christ preached to have sins forgiven.

I am free presbyterian and not ashamed, but my brother and sister in Christ, may call themselves a Baptist, Methodist, gospel hall, but as we preach the gospel as taught in the scripture, we can fellowship, because our fellowship is in the gospel.

We believe Christ is the message of the gospel, the glad tidings of great joy

***That's why it is interesting that Paul takes this same word fellowship and its meaning in the gospel, to instruct believers to Biblical separation from that which is unscriptural.***

**2 Corinthians 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?***

See what Paul is saying ***what fellowship, agreement, partnership, communion Biblical standards in common, hath righteousness with unrighteousness?***

***The point is there is none, the reason being Paul states in verse 15 "And what concord hath Christ with Belial?"***

The name **Belial** refers to **wickedness** and is in reference to Satan the wicked one.

The key word is **concord** which means **harmony of voice**.

Think of the orchestra everyone playing their instruments to the same note it is harmonious, but in this case some play different notes do their own thing, **there is no harmony, there is no oneness.**

Upon the grounds of scripture, we reject the **erring ecumenical church movement**.

The word **ecumenical** in itself its not a bad word, it means **one church**. In the truest sense there is only one church, the redeemed of the Lord. One church, one faith, one Lord.

But once again **the enemies of true fellowship** in the gospel have taken a good word, highjacked it and use it for corrupt purposes.

These compromising churches, call for one church of all faiths coming together for fellowship, its doesn't not matter what you believe or don't believe about Christ, the Bible, we can just come together and call ourselves the multi-faith religion we can all worship God whatever way we please.

**The Bible is against such error**, because there is no fellowship in the gospel, there is no common ground, there no agreement, there is no communion with Christ.

How could I as born again believer, a preacher of the fellowship in the gospel preach Christ as the only Saviour, and yet join a religious group or share a worship service with one who believes Christ is not the Only way but one of many ways.

How could I as born again believer, a preacher of the fellowship in the gospel preach redemption through Christ's blood and yet share a worship service with one who rejects the blood of Christ.

How could I as born again believer, a preacher of the fellowship in the gospel preach Christ the sinless Saviour in order to save sinners, and yet share a worship service with one who teaches Christ was not perfect and may have sinned.

We can extend this to Christ's virgin birth, Resurrection, Return, the Holy Spirit,

The Bible is the word of God, if the land marks are removed, and all such foundations are denied, rejected, by these churches who call for fellowship, ***then where is the fellowship in the gospel, there is none***, because there is no gospel.

**What does Paul say about such gatherings?** does he say hang in there! try your best to change things, keep at it and you may see some saved, just stay but let them know your point of view No.

Paul states in **verse 17** “***Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.***”

**Here is Biblical separation not Isolation, not shutting ourselves away, but separating from churches who reject the meaning and message of fellowship in the gospel, IN ORDER to separate UNTO the meaning and message of fellowship in the gospel.**

The common ground between Paul and the church at Philippi was the Gospel, the basis of his fellowship was the Gospel

John wrote in **1 John 1:3** “***...that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.***”

Fellowship in the gospel is a partnership, common ground, communion, in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

There is agreement, common ground, our fellowship is on redemption ground.

We partake, we are partners, Oh to leave the house of God saying ill fellowshiped today family, and my Saviour.

**III THIRD, THE MINISTRY IN FELLOWSHIP.**



Paul in writing to the Philippians gave thanks to God, “**For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;**”

From the time Paul preached by the riverside and Lydia was converted, even until the moment of his writing to them as a prisoner in Rome around 10 years later, Paul and the believers at Philippi had a ministry in the fellowship of the gospel.

Some read these words “**For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;**” to mean “**for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.**”

The apostle Paul longed to spread the gospel further, And so did the Philippians. He was zealous to carry it to area beyond Philippi, and so were they. If he preached, they would be there to encourage him.

They were enthusiastic for the furtherance of the gospel, they got involved in serving Jesus.

**Both Paul and the Philippians viewed serving God furthering the gospel as a ministry of fellowship in the gospel.**

It is clear from Paul’s words that their gospel ministry grew and preserved because Paul writes **from the first day until now;**”

Years later there is still the same zeal for gospel ministry in fellow of the gospel, the same desire to serve God in prayer, support and spread the glad tidings.

May we see London won for Christ. May the gospel flourish in this city, and may God uses this place as a spring board to see the gospel spread further a field.

Paul could not say this of the churches at Galatia. **Galatians 5:7** “***Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth***” Some run well for a time but that time is short.

Could that be said about you from 10 years ago until now, or from the time you came into fellowship in the gospel until now, you once where running well, on fire for God, but you have been hindered, your zeal has been dampened, your walk deflected, your Bible reading and prayer time derailed.

If so, here God’s word for you, **Hosea 14:1& 4** ***return unto the Lord, I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.***

Men and woman we have a ministry in the fellowship of the gospel in this place, from the first day the day of salvation until now, no believer is excluded but those who exclude themselves.

Fellowship in the gospel is partnership, communion, the same mind in serving and living for Christ as He has revealed Himself in the word of God.