

Fellowship with the Father and the Son

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Will you turn with me to very well-known scriptures, commencing in John chapter 4. Several scriptures I'll just ask you to turn to. John chapter 4, verse 13. Jesus answered and said unto her, whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Verse 23, but the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father [00:01:14] in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John chapter 14, verse 1, 14 verse 1. Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to [00:02:10] prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. The 15th chapter of Luke. 15th chapter of Luke, verse 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing, and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, [00:03:07] Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Verse 9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the peace which I had lost. Move down a little bit. Verse 16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my Father's have bread enough and to spare, [00:04:04] and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when it was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, [00:05:02] and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found, and they began to be merry. Now his eldest son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. First chapter of Ephesians. First chapter of Ephesians. Verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [00:06:05] who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. And finally, in the first epistle of John, chapter 1. First epistle of John, chapter 1, verse 3. That which we have seen and heard, [00:07:09] declare we

unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. I want to speak, dear brethren, tonight about fellowship. I do declare that whenever that word is mentioned, that the vast majority of us immediately think of the matter of our fellowship with one another, involving our relationships and [00:08:03] associations with saints of God, whoever and wherever they be. I do also declare, sadly, that I do not believe that there has been another subject which has so caused sorrow amongst the saints of God. I do not want to speak about that fellowship tonight. I want to speak about the first, most important, most excellent, most exalted aspect of fellowship. That is, fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. I truly believe, dear brethren, [00:09:07] that if we knew more of the experience of the inestimable privilege that is open to every believer, the very youngest in Christ, that is of fellowship with divine persons. And if that fellowship came more readily to our minds when we think of fellowship, I am convinced, beloved brethren, the matter of our relationships with one another and the practical issues that are involved with fellowship with members of the body of Christ, whoever and where they are, I believe [00:10:04] perhaps we would not have so miserably have failed. I speak these things, beloved brethren, with a good measure of conviction and feeling. I confess to you that I was brought up and I am thankful to God to it, but nonetheless looking back upon it and I'm sure that there are many in this room that perhaps have passed through these similar exercises and have realized that I was brought up as a young believer in a particular way that almost automatically pushed me down a legal avenue. There comes a moment, I believe, if we are genuine in our desires to be here for Christ [00:11:06] and to be true to him in a most difficult day, when perhaps you have to sit down in the presence of God and examine what you are, how you've been taught, how you are now living in relation to the truth of God and how that what you have been taught is relevant to the present state of the testimony. It may be that you have to do some readjusting, not giving up, reassessing of what really is involved when we talk about fellowship with one another. I'll leave that. I only mention [00:12:03] it to you, beloved brethren, as an issue and an exercise that I believe is vital today. But I tonight want to talk about fellowship with divine persons. I confess to you that I almost hesitate to do so. I truly believe that you can only take your fellow believer as far in the truth of God as you have experimentally moved yourself. If we seek to go beyond this, what we say is likely to be theory, doctrine, which separated from the vitality of affection for Christ can become a [00:13:01] very dangerous thing. Remember the words of the Apostle when he said, the letter killeth, the Spirit maketh alive. Unless we can take up the doctrines of God and the truth of God in the power of the Spirit and in the Spirit of Christ, then we are very, very liable to exercise our appreciation of doctrine in a way that may destroy the very thing that we're trying to secure. However, the Lord has laid this upon my heart and I'm going to try and speak of fellowship with the divine persons, the Father and the Son, and one can only do so in the measure in which fleetingly one has enjoyed [00:14:09] it myself. There is nothing higher. It is the very topstone of Christian privilege. You cannot go beyond God but the astonishing truth is that because of the work of Christ and because of that which divine persons purposed in eternity, you and I can attain, not of ourselves. We're talking tonight about pure grace, nothing to do with responsibility. There's a responsibility [00:15:01] attached to those who claim it but the position that we have been brought into is only the result of the working out of divine love. Divine persons would have us there at home with them and that's what eternity is going to be like. I'm sure we won't be bored. God will fill my heart with the knowledge of himself and my heart, because of the life that I have in Christ, will respond to that love and that knowledge adequately, perfectly and there will be communion and there will be unalloyed [00:16:09] joy. Nothing will ever mar it. It will never diminish and it will go on and on and on. Can't imagine it, can you? You see when we speak of these things, we've moved out of the realm of the associations that we know so much about of down here. Life as we know it here and what a weariness it is often, but there, in the presence of the Father. Does it not thrill your heart? Did it not thrill the heart of Christ? We say these things reverently when in addressing his disciples

[00:17:03] in John 14, he said in my father's house, my father's house, I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there ye also may be. You know, it's very, very difficult to find an illustration of fellowship with the Father and with the Son in the scriptures. I can only find one. I don't know what the reason is that that which one has said is the very top stone of Christian privilege and yet scarce can you find an illustration of it. Perhaps the reason is similar to that for [00:18:11] which Paul was forbidden to speak of those things that he saw when he was caught up into the third heaven. But you know, I believe that that oh so well-known chapter that we have read from Luke 15, I believe that in that chapter there is a perfect, of course, an illustration using terms that we understand. And therein, of course, despite the fact that they are words that the Holy Spirit useth and teacheth, and yet words and illustrations and similes are used that we in a measure will [00:19:07] understand because they're part of our natural life down here. I do not say that they fully illustrate that which is spiritual and that which is eternal. But nonetheless, I believe in this little picture in Luke 15. We have some of the elements, some of the joys of my Father's house.

You know, when we speak of my Father's house and of communion and fellowship with divine persons, we must of necessity include in that the matter of worship. And you know, that's why I read chapter 4, those words, that the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship [00:20:13] the Father. The Father seeketh such to worship him. I thought a good deal about that little word such.

Of course, primarily in its explanation, it refers to the matter of worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. That is the character of the worship. You know, it's small s. Of course, we can only worship the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, but it's a spiritual thing concerning [00:21:02] my spirit and God, who is a spirit, though revealed by the Son as the Father.

Isn't it wonderful that that subject is brought out in that conversation with that sinful woman?

But you know, equally, isn't it wonderful that the prodigal in his rags and in his wretchedness was the very one that found himself in the Father's house? You know, there's a wonderful little message for our hearts tonight in this. Doesn't this in itself illustrate that it's [00:22:05] pure grace that we're talking about? I believe whenever you read about the Father, it's grace. Whatever the Father does, he does in grace. There was nothing in that woman at the well of herself that could bring her forward as suitable for a worshipper of the Father, and there was nothing in the prodigal in all his wretchedness and his rags. Even after his confession of, Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called thy son. When he got to his father, he didn't say, [00:23:04] make me as one of thy hired servants. Why? Because there was nothing in him at all that could warrant any entrance into that Father's house. But greater, and above all this, was the wealth of his Father that would invest him with sonship. I wonder, beloved brethren, whether we've learned this lesson, that there is nothing in ourselves, whatever it might be, that can make us suitable and warrant divine favour to rest upon us. The Father seeketh such to worship him. Those who have come to the [00:24:14] Son and have asked of him, and he has given them that living water that is in them, a fountain of water that can spring up to its source in the power of eternal life. They are the ones that can worship the Father in spirit and in truth. We may attribute and attach, you know, a great many things to the matter of worship. I find the most difficult one the matter of singing of hymns. I'll be honest [00:25:05] with you. I don't know to what extent music is a spiritual thing. I speak freely and I don't want to be contentious and I don't want to upset anybody and I speak of one who is, well, a little bit musical and one whom I will confess can be moved to tears by music. You know I was astonished once to hear dear old George Davison tell me that listening to a brass band had the same effect upon him. You see music can affect our spirits or

perhaps I should say our souls but nonetheless [00:26:04] dear brethren we use these things in order that we might be harmonious together and that there be unity in what we say and that there thus there might be a corporate expression to what the Spirit of God is drawing out of our hearts in response to Christ and to the Father. Let's leave it there beloved brethren. Let's not take it any further. Let us realize that in the sphere of response to the Father and to the Son there should be perfect liberty. There should be perfect freedom that the heart might flow out unhindered and unencumbered by anything that our legal minds might use to [00:27:08] restrict it. This is very challenging beloved brethren and I feel it very keenly about our meetings. If you read again the verses that we have read to you, you cannot miss the oft-repeated mention of joy, rejoicing, merriment, music and dancing but those words don't mean exactly what they do in modern language. We'll come to that in a minute but you can't miss beloved brethren that when we speak about communion and fellowship and worship and response to divine persons it must be [00:28:05] something that is enjoyed. If it isn't, there's something wrong. And you know dear brethren one of the things that concerns me as I move a little amongst the saints of God, yeah in one's own local setting, how rarely do you hear a brother pouring out his heart in affectionate joy and response to divine persons. How rarely do we experience those moments when everything down here is lost sight of completely. When I am lost sight of, we sing a hymn which has the words and [00:29:01] lost in thee, adoring, knows its part, you've sung it hundreds of times. When did you last experience it? When did you last in a morning meeting find your heart and your mind lost in the beauty of Christ?

When did you last bubble over spontaneously, not sitting there working out what you can say and scriptures that you can quote and how perfectly you can express yourself? I don't want to upset anybody. It's a wonderful thing when you hear a young freshly converted brother perhaps get on his feet for the first time and in faltering language probably using expressions that you [00:30:06] and I may not like, that doesn't matter. But in his heart he's bubbling over in response to his Saviour and perhaps there's moving in his soul in company with his Saviour into an understanding and an experience of the Father's love. Beloved brethren, if we lose the reality of joy in divine persons and in response to them, we might as well shut the door and all go home. I say that with utmost conviction. We have available to us, and it's open to every one of [00:31:04] us, the wonder and the joy of in communion with the Lord, of being led with him into the sharing of his position in the presence of his Father. Beloved brethren, the cross was a means to an end. It was not the end in regard to what divine persons were doing. It was a divine necessity for God and for me. But it was with a view to the pleasure of divine persons in having me with them in their home. We need to get there, beloved brethren. The Spirit of God longs to bring us [00:32:03] to where Christ is. The heart of Christ, how often of necessity we share with him a little bit in his sorrows as we think of that path that his love took him into, the closing hours of that life, where he trod alone, those corridors. Where were we amassed, all the powers of evil, all the havoc that sin had wrought in the heart of men, alienated from God, and that expressing itself in wicked works that they, in divine wisdom, were permitted to exert upon him. Do [00:33:04] you ever wonder why the Saviour had to go thus? Have you ever sat down and pondered why was it necessary? The beating, the buffeting, the scourging, the cruel nails, the thorns, the spitting, the abuse. Why was it necessary? It was necessary, beloved brethren, that sin in all its wretchedness and what it had affected in the hearts of men and women should be given free reign to express itself to the full. And it was, and it was expressed against one perfect lowly man. But why? In order [00:34:04] that it might be demonstrated that divine love was greater than it all. That was why Calvary's weakness and its woe, its shame and its suffering was necessary. All the outward humiliation, the agony and the shame, it was necessary in order that the love of God and the love of Christ, in all its magnificence, in all its superabounding power, should be clearly seen to be greater than all that sin had done. And that's the glory of the cross. That's the glory of Calvary, because there

it was displayed. Flowing out over that place where Jesus died, in shining letters we can read, [00:35:10] God is love. But it was not the end. It was in order that those upon whom divine love had set itself, you and me, he came down here to make known what was up there and did a work at Calvary that enabled me to be made fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, in order that I might share his joys in his Father's house. Oh beloved brethren, we muse upon his sufferings. Do [00:36:03] we ever think of his joys? Do you ever think again of those words, in my Father's house? What a thrill. Passed through his soul, when he could look upon that little company that were gathered around him. Oh yes, he knew it all. He knew what they were, according to the flesh. But he could speak of them as to his Father. Thine they were. Thou gavest them me, the men. And he could look upon them as those with whom he would share his deepest joys. He waits still, beloved brethren, to conduct you and I, when we'll meet him on the cloud, into those courts of heavenly, holy, [00:37:06] eternal joy, my Father's house. But beloved, such is the work of God. Such is the work of Christ. Such is the work of the Holy Spirit, that you and I, in spirit, can tread those courts with him, even now. Let me ask you again, dear brother. When did you last walk the courts of the Father's house, in company with the Son of his love? Doesn't happen very often, does it? Doesn't happen very often, does it? When did you last commune with the Father, over his thoughts of [00:38:02] his beloved Son? When did you, dear brother, last, like the psalmist, know the reality of your heart indicting a good matter, and your lips speaking of the things that you have composed, touching him? When was it last true of you, my cup runneth over? Oh yes, the young people sing it as a chorus. Oh, that they and I might know the reality of being beside oneself to God. I don't want to go into the realms of modern ecstasy, and all that sadly we read of, that is characteristic of those [00:39:03] who perhaps are being carried away in their emotions, and are giving expression to their feelings, in a way that sadly, I say this humbly, I believe is only soulish and fleshly. But nonetheless, beloved brethren, let us not be lacking in our response to the Father, and to the Son, in expressing those deep holy emotions that the Spirit of God can produce, when the heart is liberated, and set free in the presence of divine love. Just a few words on Luke 15. A beautiful picture of the three persons of the Godhead, moving to bring about that which is for [00:40:08] their own joy. You can't miss it, can you? The shepherd, when he finds the sheep which he had lost, he bringeth it home upon his shoulders, in the plural. The government of the universe, one shoulder is competent for that. When it's a matter of bringing home to his father a lost one, he puts on his shoulders. Do you know, isn't it astonishing how that sometimes in one of the simplest things in scripture, and yet you have revealed to you, the wonder that the matter of the universe, with [00:41:05] all its complexity, its mass, its composition, its distance, its wisdom, is one thing. He spoke it into being. But when it's a matter of bringing me to his father, therein is involved not only the power, but all the wonder of divine love and compassion. I think it's one of the psalms, isn't it, that in the course of about half a dozen words, says he made the stars also. But I think I'm right in saying almost immediately, we have the words that he healeth a broken-in-heart. We can't imagine these things, can we? The stars, he made them, but such in one, he healed a [00:42:10] broken-in-heart. When it was a matter of bringing me home to the father, all the energy of divine love, all the competence of those shoulders of inestimable power were at work. All calvary, its weakness, its woe, but its love was involved to bring me home to the father. When he got home, he called together his friends and his neighbors. You ever wondered who they were? We very readily, you know, and correctly say that the shepherd is the son. Very well then, who are the friends and neighbors? [00:43:10] A neighbor in the scripture is one who lives in the same country. A friend, fellow, is one whom you're close, intimate with, in love. I just want to suggest to you, very, very simply, that when the son brought home the sheep, divine persons, the father and the Holy Spirit were united in perfect harmony, enjoying and rejoicing together. The woman, when she found the peace that she had lost, she called together again her friends and her neighbors. When the Spirit of God brings to light that which is the result of divine work, and such a one, likewise, is brought home to God,

[00:44:17] there is joy in the presence of the Spirit of God, and the son, and the father. There is that perfect harmony. There is that perfect joy in their rejoicing together in the work that they are doing for their own pleasure. And you know, both those things are put together in the third part of the parable. We read that moment in his life, the son, I don't know why it's called the prodigal son, should be the prodigal father, actually. [00:45:02] Whenever we think of Luke chapter 15, we think of this young man. I wish we didn't. I wish we first of all thought of the prodigal father. But we commence this little story when in his wretchedness, having turned his back on his father's house, he went out and he wasted it, disgracefully. Dropped into the depths of sin and shame. But he was no greater sinner, you know, in that distant country than what he was when he turned his back upon his father's house. There's no difference with God. He went away. He rejected his father's love and his father's wealth, and he wasted it. But there came a moment in his life when it says he came to himself. What did that? Was it within himself to come to himself? Never. [00:46:13] Because there had been typically a woman sweeping, searching until she found. It was the work of the Holy Spirit of God which brought him to himself and changed his way of thinking. My father's house. But he not only thought thereon, there was something that motivated him. A few verses down it says, he came to his father. What was it that got him to his father? You'll tell me, his legs. No, it wasn't. It was the work of Christ that brought him to his father. [00:47:05] Because he was that sheep that had gone astray. And there was one that was seeking. And there was one that found him and brought him to his father. The work of the Spirit of God imparting a new nature. The work of Christ bringing such-and-one back to his father. And then there is this magnificent picture. The father saw him when he was a great wear off. And he was moved. Brethren, what there is in that expression. The father was moved in compassion in his bowels. That's what the word means. A very, very strong word is compassion. It's connected with the movement of the bowels. [00:48:03] The most inward feelings were motivated in the father when he saw that speck on the horizon. And he said, it's my son. And it says he ran. And he fell on his neck. And he kissed him. In his rags. In his filth. In his dirt. The father kissed him in that condition. Oh, what a story that is.

Think of Romans 5. When we were without strength, Christ died for us. When we were enemies, God commendeth his love towards us. So when we were in that condition, divine love moved out in all its strength and gave Jesus to die at Calvary. His father fell on his neck. [00:49:14] And I think it should be covered him with kisses. It wasn't just a peck on the cheek. He embraced him. There was warmth there. There was feeling. There was an outgoing welcome. But he was still in his rags. And he wasn't in the father's house. Are you still there, dear brother or sister? In your soul experience, have you moved beyond that point? I don't want to belittle the wonder of that point. Far be the thought that one's heart should ever grow cold in regard to what the father gave when he gave his son to die for me at Calvary.

[00:50:18] To deal with the matter of my obnoxious wretchedness, my filthy state, my sin and my degradation. Because that's what took place at Calvary. But the father doesn't want me to stay there. That son at that moment may have been quite content to have sat down there on the grass verge with his father, enjoying the wonder of the realization that his father still loved him. That may have serviced his heart. That may have been the answer to all his need. But it wasn't sufficient for the father. [00:51:10] I have sinned, he said. And there is the basis whereby the relationship could be re-established practically. And you know, from that moment onward, have you noticed? There's nothing said about the son and his feelings. There's no record that he ever says another word. Everything from that moment onward in that story is the father's things. And the father said, bring hither the best robe and put it on him. Put shoes on his feet and a ring on his hand. [00:52:01] And let us, here it is, make merry. For this my son was lost and his found was dead and is alive again. And they began to

be merry.

What has happened? What have we got a picture of? The father's house. The work of the Spirit of God. The work of the Son. Yea, the work of the Father. Divine grace in all its fullness having flowed out and brought back one such as he, arrayed and garbed in all the glory that is suitable to his father's house. House, shoes, a ring, clothes, holy and without blame before him in love says Ephesians chapter 1.

[00:53:04] That one little expression gathers up the work of Christ at Calvary and centers it upon the one who in the ages of eternity was marked out to sonship to that place before the Father.

So he can say, the apostle, that we have been taken into favor. Divine grace has placed us where Jesus is. We don't need to use difficult terms about it. The place that Jesus now has in the presence of his Father is my place. The nearness that is his is my nearness. The dearness that is his is my dearness. [00:54:04] The Spirit that is in the Son is the Spirit that is in the many sons. And as consequence with him we can say, with him have a Father. And when the apostle Paul thought of this, his heart overflowed with divine joy and exaltation and he said, blessed be the God and Father.

There it is. There's a worshipping heart. There's a heart that is bubbling over. There's a heart that has lost self and everything else and has been caught up into the realms of where Christ is, the heavenlies. And is living there with him and responds to divine love and affection.

[00:55:04] It's open to us, beloved brethren. Every child of God, the very youngest, know the Father. I write unto you, children, because ye know the Father. It's not a matter of academic ability. It's not a matter of the knowledge and the understanding of scripture. It's the simple matter of the heart being caught up with the wonder of the Father's love and the love of Christ. And in the power of the Spirit expanding in that scene. There was one outside of it. That miserable person, that legal, pharisaical mind that would not go in, that was self-centred, that wanted things only his way and according to his mind.

[00:56:12] He makes inquiry. Why? Because he heard. What did he hear? Music. Symphonia.

It's the only time that word is used in scripture. It's the Greek word from which we get our English word, symphony. Sounding together.

Harmony. Harmony.

Unity. Oneness.

But expressed in joy.

He heard it.

And dancing. Chorus.

The word from which we get our English word, chorus. Which literally is an enclosure where persons dance. [00:57:06] You see, the Spirit of God is painting a picture. There was a sound that came out of that Father's house. There was a perfect harmony given expression to itself. Not only vocally, but too

in movement.

Remember, I'm talking about spiritual things, not physical things. I wouldn't like to see the brethren dancing in the room. No, that isn't what we're talking about. But the Spirit of God is painting a picture. Beloved brethren, when did your heart last dance in the presence of divine persons? When did your soul last bound over in expression with your brethren? To him, the spring and the source of it all. It's what we want, beloved brethren. [00:58:03] It's what the Spirit of God would produce in our hearts. It's what will fill our souls in eternity. May the Spirit of God exercise our hearts that even now we may know something of its joy and its reality. Oh, it will lift the soul. It will have an effect.

It will have an effect not only on the meetings, on one another, but on those that are without because its sound will go out. It will have an effect. May the Spirit of God encourage us and cure our hearts that these things are still open and available to us despite what we are and despite what we've done. May the Lord bless His Word.