

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, December 16, 2015 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

BUILDING KOINONIA “Love and Acceptance” *Ephesians 2:1-18, 1 Corinthians 13:1-7*

The word “koinonia” is the word that is most usually translated as “fellowship.” But it is really more than our common understanding of fellowship as we usually understand it. Most often we think of “fellowship” as a get together involving food. But “koinonia” fellowship is much more. We find the idea and most fully demonstrated embodiment of “koinonia” exhibited in God, through Jesus Christ... in His desire for fellowship, communion, relationship with us, many, His most prized creation. We find it expressed in Genesis 3, following Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden, when God came down into the garden looking for the man and his wife in **Genesis 3:8-9**, *“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”*⁹ *Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’*” The Bible indicates that it was God’s usual practice to be in communion and fellowship... “koinonia” with Adam and Eve, but in the garden something was broken... the “koinonia” between God and man. The entirety of Scripture is about God’s seeking to restore “koinonia” with man... you and I. And in His coming, Jesus... God in the flesh, was God bringing about the possibility of a restored “koinonia.” What brought God in the flesh (Jesus), here to us? **John 3:16** tells us, *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* Interestingly, Christmas is the perfect time to focus on fellowship... both our fellowship with man (each other) and our fellowship with God restored by His coming.

“Koinonia” is risky fellowship. Why do you think it is? Was it risky for God? *Yes!* Why? *Because we can choose to reject it, and have “koinonia,” fellowship, intimate communion and relationship with things other than God. It is a “risky” investment of yourself into another that may reject you, and not love you back.* Remember, Paul said in **Roman 5:8**, *“⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* God risk a lot for “koinonia” (fellowship, communion) with you and I. We were “sinners” in open rebellion and at enmity with Him, out of fellowship and relationship with Him when He came to us to restore that broken fellowship. Isn’t that essentially what we celebrate at Christmas.

Is it risky for us? Yes! Why? Same... we are called to extend it as God did in Christ, whether or not it is extended back, and we are called to extend it even to those who may be at odds with

us... those we may want to “fellowship” with, that are hard for us to love, or that are very unlovable.

It’s not easy to have this kind of bond and intimacy with others that the Greek word “koinonia” literally is describing. It is risky, involved investment from those giving it, it will cost you something of yourself. We see that in this first characteristic of true, genuine, dangerous fellowship.. “koinonia.” You see, “koinonia”, true fellowship, ceases to exist apart from love. It can’t exist apart from real love. I’ve shared this quote with you before, but I believe it bears repeating here and fits with our discussion of “koinonia” fellowship particularly as it regard to the love and acceptance that is associated with it. In “Saints and Snobs,” Marion Jacobsen insightfully suggest, “People are hungry for acceptance, love and friends, and unless they find them in the church they may not stay there long enough to become personally related to Jesus Christ. People are not persuaded, they’re attracted. We must be able to communicate far more by what we are than by what we say.” The world is in desperate need of the magnetic appeal created by authentic love – “agape” in action. Let’s look at the “how” of love and acceptance... a key to this genuine, deep, real, “koinonia” fellowship.

QUOTE - “People are hungry for acceptance, love and friends, and unless they find them in the church they may not stay there long enough to become personally related to Jesus Christ. People are not persuaded, they’re attracted. We must be able to communicate far more by what we are than by what we say.” - Marion Jacobsen, “Saints and Snobs,”

What do you think about this quote? Is it accurate or not? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? You may record your response below: _____

¹Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ²but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. –Galatians 4:1-7

I. THE PERSON AND PROMISE OF LOVE... A Restored “Kononia” (Ephesians 2:1-18)

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1-3, ¹“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the

desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

4 Ways Our Fellowship With God is Described Prior to Salvation:

1. **Dead (v.1) -**
2. **Worldly (v.2) –**
3. **Fleshly (v.3) –**
4. **Wrathful (v.3) –**

How do you think these things affect our fellowship with (1) God, (2) with others... those close to us (family and friends) and those around us? _____

According to Ephesians 2:4-5, what was the driving force behind God’s desire for renewed fellowship, “koinonia,” relationship with man (you and I)? _____

Here is Paul in Ephesians 2:4-5, *“⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”*

2 Powerful Drivers of Renewed Fellowship with God:

1. **Mercy (v.4) –** God was “rich” in mercy toward us... there is a difference between “grace” and “mercy.” Both are beautiful expressions of God’s love for us, but “grace” is God giving to us what we do not deserve... while “mercy” is God not giving to us what we do deserve.
2. **Love (v.4) –** This is the word “agape”... God’s unconditional love for us was behind His desire to restore “koinonia” with us... intimate communion and fellowship with us.

Notice verses 6-7 of Ephesians 2... what evidence do you see in these 2 verses of a renewed “koinonia” fellowship and communion (renewed relationship) with God through Jesus Christ? Ephesians 2:6-7, *“⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”* The word “together,” repeated twice in verse 6 speak to the renewed “koinonia” that Christ Jesus came to bring to us.

What does this renewed “koinonia”... intimate relationship and fellowship with God through Christ show us according to verse 7? *“... the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

2 Things this Renewed “Koinonia” with God Should Produce in Us:

1. **Genuine humility (vv.8-9) –** *“⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

2. **Good works (v.10)** – *“¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

“¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”—Ephesians 2:1-17

According to verses 11-17 who is the great “koinonia” restorer between you and I and God? (Jesus Christ)

II. THE PRIORITY OF LOVE... An Example of Extended “Kononia” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

1. **Conditional Statements... “ If I..”** – This conditional appears five times and give actually give six surprising weak substitutes for genuine love in verses 1-3

Six Weak Substitues for Love:

- (1) **Spirituality** - *“If I speak with the tongues of men and angels...”* Have you ever known those who always may you feel like they were spiritually superior to you, more pious? Ask yourself what might have been missing?
- (2) **Religion** - *“If I have the gift of prophecy...”* Have you ever known those who were very religious and devout... so religious and devout that they cut themselves off from other people? Ask yourself what might have been missing?
- (3) **Knowledge** - *“If I can fathom all mysteries and have all knowledge...”* Have you ever known those who knew all about the Bible, very smart and learned about Scripture, many be knew how to answer all the questions, but when it came to relating to others they couldn’t? Ask yourself what might be missing?
- (4) **Faith** - *“If I have great faith to move mountains...”* Have you ever known those who may have had a lot of faith, they would perhaps want to step out on faith, but when they encountered those who had some reservations or who felt like we might need to wait, they would get angry? Ask yourself what might be missing?
- (5) **Benevolence** - *“If I give all my possessions to the poor...”* Have you ever known those who like to give and give a lot, they didn’t mind others knowing that they were giving, or maybe they made sure that somehow others new what they gave, or maybe they gave, but complained about giving? Ask yourself what might be missing?

- (6) **Sacrifice** - *“If I give my life in martyrdom...”* Have you ever know those who were constantly serving and giving, and doing things for others or for the church, busy all the time... so busy doing in fact that they were tired, burned out, and in subtle ways let others know? Ask yourself what might be missing?

NOTE: *Surprisingly great churches are not built on great spirituality, great religious acumen and insight, great knowledge, great faith alone, great benevolence, nor great sacrifice. While these are important without the missing ingredient they will always ring hollow and fall short. Do you think this ever happens in churches? What are the results?*

2. **Repetitious Statements...** *“... But do not have love...”* – Three times in the first three verses this statement appears *“... but do not have love...”* This three time repetition sounds similar to the three time repetition that Jesus gave to John in the last chapter of John’s gospel (**READ: John 21:15-17**) Remember that Peter had been one of Jesus closest followers and disciples. He was one of the inner circle disciples with James and John, but when Jesus was facing his darkest hour Peter had denied Jesus not once but three times. Peter’s three fold denial is here covered in Jesus’ reinstatement of Peter’s affirmation of his love for Christ repeated three times. From this we may learn something about the priority of love.

3 Truths Learned from 3 Repetitious Statements:

- (1) **Real love is not shown by our religious following and seeming devotion, this can be fleeting** – Don’t think it can’t! I’ve seen the most religious of men and women fall and lose their way. If it can happen to Peter it can happen to you! And Paul mentions all of these highly public, visible religious expression and tells us they are not enough and implies they can be absent of love.
- (2) **Real love is not negated by our faults and failings, because we always have one who will keep on loving us no matter what (*that is not a license, but a humbling truth*)** – This is important to know, because it inspires us to love deeper, like God and Jesus love... to be motivated to a higher love that love no matter. Jesus loved Peter unconditionally, even when he was denying Him. That is why He reinstated Him. John 21 is a love act by Jesus on Peter behalf. That is how we are to operate within the fellowship. Also remember that the first 3 verses are ways that we try to love God, but they ring hollow compared to His love and are meaningless apart from His divine love.
- (3) **Real love is not so much in what we say, but what we do and not so much in what we do, but how we do it (*what is behind it... love*)** – In otherwords, “Peter don’t say you love me. You did that once and denied knowing me. Peter show you love. Show you love me by loving and caring for others.” Listen, don’t just be spiritual, religious, knowledgeable, show faith, be benevolent, be sacrificing... be loving. Show why you are those things because of love and through those things express love. That is truly fellowship building.

III. THE MEANING OF LOVE... “A Picture of “Kononia” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

1. **Working Definition of Love** – “Seeking the highest good of the other person; doing what is best for them.” – Charles Swindol

The world says, “*Love is never having to say your sorry!*”-*Love Story* But love must always be saying “I’m sorry!” “Please for give me!” “I was wrong!” Sometimes love even has to say “I’m sorry” when it wasn’t your fault because that is just what love does.

The world say, “*Love is a many splendored thing!*”-*Movie* But sometimes love is not splendored, glorious or brilliant. Sometimes it’s messy and difficult and painful and many times it hurts. That is what love does. The world has a very mixed up notion of love.

The world’s mixed up definition of love? – Below list some of the things that might describe how the world today defines love:

1. **Love is conditional** – “*I will love you if...*”
2. **Love is me oriented** – “*What is in for me...*”
3. **Love is fickle** – “*I love lots of things and lot’s of people and if it doesn’t work out I will find someone or something else to love.*”
4. **Love is misunderstood** – “*I love things, hotdogs, baseball and apple pie...*”
5. **Love is sex** – “*Love is sex and sex is love... we even call it ‘making-love’*” Sex is an expression of love between two married and committed people, but sex is not necessarily love.

In the ancient Greek speaking world, love could be a pretty confusing thing, like it is today, so the Greeks had 4 different words to describe “love.” Each of these 4 words was a different kind of love.

4 Kinds of Love in the Greek:

- (1) **Storge = Family love** – “Storge” love referred to love within a family, parental love between a parent and child, or the love bond that existed among kin.
- (2) **Phileo = Friend love** – “Phileo” is literally “brotherly love,” the love that exist between close friends... even best friends. The city of Philadelphia is known as “The City of Brotherly Love” and that pin name from the root meaning of the city’s name coming from this Greek word, “Phileo”... Philadelphia.
- (3) **Eros = Romantic Love** – “Eros” is the love between a husband and wife, the romantic attraction that two people feel when they are drawn together and love is ultimately consummated in “eros” love. Unfortunatley this beautiful Greek word has been corrupted today and used by the Pornography Industry as a designation for their business “Erotica.” So when we see the wore “Erotic” we immediately think of something dirty. Originally this was the word use to describe what a couple in love felt for each other... something beautiful.
- (4) **Agape = Divine Love** – This was the highest form of love in the Greek language. It was not used (maybe rarely) by the ancient Greek and not a words used in

Classical Greek, but almost exclusively used in New Testament in Koine Greek... the common Greek of Jesus day (the New Testament was not written in Classical Greek but Koine Greek, "Koine" means common) This words denoted a type of love unknown to man... divine love. It was a love that was "unconditional." It is a truly committed kind of love, an always kind of love, and unchanging love. It is a love that says, "No matter what you do I am going to keep loving you!" This is the kind of love that Scripture tells us that God has for us, that He demonstrates for us through Jesus, and it is the kind of love that we are called to exhibit and practice toward others. It is this kind of love that is characteristic of genuine "fellowship." And you can see why it is so dangerous... it is unconditional!

NOTE: *"Agape" is the kind of love spoken of in 1 Corinthians 13, therefore as 1 Corinthians 13 describes this kind of love we are to pay close attention because this is what we are to exhibit in building true, genuine, koinonia fellowship.*

2. Fifteen Worship Characteristics of Love –

- (1) **Patience (v.4)** – This term refers to being long-tempered, and is always directed toward people. On the other hand, "endurance," though similar, is always directed toward things and circumstances.
- (2) **Kindness (v.4)** – Kindness can be described as "helpful, friendly, free from petty criticism."
- (3) **Not jealous (v.4)** – To be jealous is to "burn with envy." Put another way, jealousy is "the inordinate passion to possess what I already have." "I am jealous. That belongs to me! Envy, on the other hand is different. Envy is "the inordinate passion to have what another person possesses." "They have more than me and I want I want it." Jealousy want to keep, while envy wants to have.
- (4) **Not bragging (v.4)** – Agape does not act or play the part of a braggart. The term can easily be used in reference to intellectual or spiritual pride.
- (5) **Not arrogant (v.4)** – Arrogance blows, is inflated, puffed up, and is proud and haughty. Bragging is something we do, while arrogance is something we are.
- (6) **Not unbecoming (v.5)** – At the heart of this word is the idea of scheming. It refers to shape, form and outward appearance. The outward appearance of love must not be tactless or rude.
- (7) **Not self-seeking (v.5)** – Literally, agape "does not seek the things of itself," which includes its own rights, ways and interest. It puts the rights, interest of others ahead of it's own.

NOTE: *Genuine fellowship must have love if it is to live. Without love, fellowship is destroyed... and total death results*

- (8) **Not provoked (v.5)** – Two original word shape the thought... (1) "to sharpen" (2) "beside." Here's the idea... "not sharpened beside others, not irritated." Love does not permit the one who is sharp and abrasive to affect it. Effort is implied in the characteristic.
- (9) **Forgiving (v.5)** – "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered." An accounting suggests the thought of making entries in a ledger. Love does not keep score, but forgives and erases from the ledger.

- (10) **Righteous loving (v.6)** – “Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness.” Agape finds no pleasure in, nor sympathy with wrongdoing, but loves “right-relatedness” both with God and others.
- (11) **Truth loving (v.6)** – Love and truth are inseparable twins. When love is present, there is no room for hypocrisy. Love bears the responsibility of searching out the truth, and not responding to, nor spreading hearsay.
- (12) **All bearing (v.7)** – To “bear” has the idea of covering over, so as to protect or shield. Real love is durable, and withstands the blows and attacks of others.
- (13) **All believing (v. 7)** – This is not being gullible, but putting aside suspicion... giving the benefit of the doubt without skepticism.
- (14) **All hoping (v.7)** – This agape quality has to do with anticipating the very best in the other person.
- (15) **All enduring (v.7)** – Being determined and refusing to quit also characterizes agape

IV. THREE POSSIBLE RESPONSES

3 Possible Responses:

1. **“I’m never going to be unlovely again”** – *Evaluation:* Totally unrealistic. Every effort of the flesh is bound to fail.
2. **“I have tried and tried, but failed. It’s not worth the risk”** – *Evaluation:* Refusal to try is disobedience. *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)*
3. **“I admire these qualities, want them, but cannot produce them in my strength”** – *Evaluation:* This is the only proper response. The key to such loving is a commitment of the mind and heart to the Holy Spirit’s control. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)*