

The Servant



Newsletter for Under-Shepherds and other Servants of God /5523 Newberry Drive/Raleigh, NC 27609

Vol. 11 No. 2

March 2001

The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry

What a Fellowship!

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us..." 1John 1:3a

We often hear talk about the "fellowship" when people really mean the local church. When we become born again we are automatically made part of a different and dynamic fellowship. Many churches are looking for ways to attract people to their fellowship in order to "build up" the local body and pay close attention to the attendance tally which they hang on the wall. They try to produce, plan, and promote programs that will be attractive to various "special interest groups." Everything from Jazz-a-size, to some pop-psychology video series given by video preachers (who never notice if you are there or not anyway), to carnivals (carnival means "flesh" by the way), and mother's day out programs (where mothers leave their children with strangers) which are called "ministries" designed to meet the needs of the "fellowship." Some of these are great ideas. There is only one problem however. They all have nothing to do with fellowship. If we would continue to read the verse in 1John we would see that our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son and any "fellowship" we may have with others is simply the residual effect of drawing close to God. It has nothing to do with us wanting to lose weight, or find a date, or wanting people to feel great.

Sure, we wish that others would "have fellowship with us" but only in as much as we want others to have fellowship with Him. As a matter of fact, "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Someone said that when God is not working we have to make a lot of oyster stew. I am afraid we sometimes work so hard at fellowship down in the fellowship hall that God is not even on the guest list, let alone ever missed.

SHOULD THE PREACHER BE ORDAINED?

I only like to listen to ordained preachers. I dispise having to listen to those who are not. No preacher should preach before he is ordained. I have heard too much bad preaching by men who were not ordained. *"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."* Mk. 3:14. Many a preacher has failed because he has forgotten the Order of Worship. He has rushed out to preach without first being "with him." The order is clear, the Lord desired that the twelve "should be with him." Our success depends on this. It is foolish to try it any other way, besides, the preacher who is not first "with him" doesn't have anything to preach anyway. The only ordination that counts is the one I get from Him. *"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him..."* How much time I spend "with him" in prayer and in the Word determines the effectiveness and outcome of my ministry. This is not something that can be measured by the number of smiles or number of miles I travel. Nor can it be measured in souls or goals. God is the one who shall judge our work, as Paul says "of what sort it is." If the preacher does not deliver God's Word, he has delivered something less, and nothing less will do. The Apostles made a promise for every preacher in Acts 6:4. It is a promise we must keep. *"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."* Paul put it another way in his letter to the Galatians: *"To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."* If we would know His power we must find it in His presence.

Getting Ready

Before I rush into the World
Or face a world of sin
Or carry flags of faith unfurled
First I must be with Him

With Him

It's all about being "with Him." We say Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship. If it is a relationship then it is necessary that we be "with Him." Nothing is more important than this. Salvation, faith, and the New Birth can all be explained as the description of a relationship, our relationship "with Him." Sin, on the other hand, is something that severs that relationship. It is some evil thing or act that comes between God and me. The Bible is a spiritual bridge of words that calls a soul to come to faith, by standing upon that very word of truth and trusting that truth to be true. This is another way of saying it will bring a soul to God. The Bible is a collection of God's words. The Bible is the Word of God. Faith in God's word places us in a special spiritual relationship with Him and that makes us complete or whole.

Paul describes an unbeliever as someone who is in the world "without God." That pretty much sums it up. We are either "with Him" or "without Him." Man's story begins in a garden where Adam and Eve were with Him. Then Satan entered and sin came between man and God. Man was cast out of paradise and the relationship was broken. The history of man is a sad story of life without God. It is a story of life without faith, without hope and without love. Religion is man's attempt to re-establish a relationship with God on man's terms. It is an attempt to re-establish contact with a God "somewhere out there." Cain killing Able was the result of one sinner trying to be more religious than another. Cain was determined to "do it his way." It was religion over relationship. The tower of Babel was man's attempt to get closer to the heavens without getting closer to God. And yet in the midst of all the chaos and confusion of a

humanity that had lost its way, there were always individuals who had a personal relationship with the Almighty, like Enoch for example. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Look at that word "with." Everything depends on that. We are either "with" Him or "without" Him, and that decides the difference between one man's life story and another's.

Two thousand years ago the Word came to this world in person. The Word became flesh. Jesus Christ was the Word of God incarnate. The New Testament is the story of what happened to this Word, what men did with this Word, how men treated this Word. Everything, let me repeat, Everything depends on what we do with the Word of God.

The Scriptures tell us that He (the Word) came unto his own, and his own received him not." What men did to the Word of God two thousand years ago is outrageous, yet what men do with the Word of God today is no less so. What we do with the Word determines everything. Some men received the Word, welcomed the Word, believed the Word, bowed down before the Word, loved the Word, followed the Word. Other men ignored the Word, rejected the Word, or tried to destroy the Word. What we do with the Word divides the world in two. Those on one side are "with Him," everyone else is "without Him."

God wants to be with us. That is what Immanuel means "God with us." Grace is God desiring to be with us. No wonder we call it amazing. Faith, on the other hand is us desiring to be with God. Some people don't want to be with God, at least not now anyway. Faith wants to be with him now and forever.

Faith is how we are with Him here, and

it is through faith that we will be with Him there. There is no other way. "For by grace (this is God wanting to be with us) are ye save through faith (this is us wanting to be with God), and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast." This is a relationship.

I have no real right to be in heaven on my own. Should I try to walk through its pearly gates the guards would have every right to stop me, except for one thing. Yes, should someone try to stop me, I will say (and excuse me if this sounds irreverent, I don't mean to be) I will say, "I'm with Him." Everything depends on this.

To a world that rejects the Word, I am someone who just is (as they would say) "not with it." Well, I may not be "with it" but it is more important that I am "with Him."

Emmanuel

"For with God nothing shall be impossible" Lk. 1:37

The secret of having your dreams come true is to get your dreams from God. It is the "With God" that makes for beautiful dreams and that insures that they will all come true. In Mary's wildest dreams she would never imagined what God had planned for her. Take God out of your dreams and they may come true, but what you will end up with is a nightmare. In verse 38 Mary bows before God's Word. "be it unto me according to thy word."



Editor and Author- Ingimar DeRidder
5523 Newberry Dr. Raleigh, NC 27609