

Unity & Fellowship in God's Family

(Go To Meeting)

Albert Jones—October 21, 2023

We know King David was viewed and referred to as a man having a heart like God's. Many of the Scriptures that are attributed to David convey God's sentiment:

- about His family
- about His way
- about His passion and compassion for His people

As King of Israel, David representing God's people, conveyed a number of those perspectives for us to be inspired by, to recognize David, a man, first of all. We recognize that in this flesh we are weak and we do have our shortfalls. But God—through His grace, love and work within us—is conforming us or molding us into His very image.

We'll just make that quick observation here from David's perspective of how God views the unification of His people when His people come together; how He views and appreciates that.

I will say to you that this year at the Feast of Tabernacles and for the last few years here, I have really taken note of the unity of the brethren. When we are all there at the Feast of Tabernacles and God's Spirit is in great supply amongst His people. We are fellowshiping—extending true, Godly love to one another because God has given us His love—there it is, being displayed, practiced, exemplified through our acts of love one to another. That it really is inspiring!

This Scripture (Psa. 133) makes plenty of sense to me, when David was inspired to write by God Himself, he writes:

Psalm 133: "**Behold... [observe, look, take it in] ...how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.**"

I don't care what corporate organization you might be a part of, ***IF*** you have God's Holy Spirit dwelling within you and the Spirit of Christ dwelling within you, ***you belong to Them!*** You are Theirs.

So, if you think it is cut off somehow, somehow shortened by your corporate affiliation, you're missing the point. ***I hope that:***

- anyone whom God has called
- anyone who has God's Spirit
- anyone who has been granted forgiveness of sins
- anyone who has hope in Jesus Christ

will understand that it is a relationship between us and our Creator God and our Father in heaven!

He describes it this way, v 2: "It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the hem of his garments."

That's a lot of oil! God pours it out from His Throne upon us!

Verse 3—*describes it even more eloquently: "Like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."*

So, this dwelling together is of a common hope, a common journey! As Norbert said last night in his message, a common purpose that we're all tapped into, connected to through Christ.

{Note message: *God is a God of Purpose* by Norbert Bohnert}

Abraham had an appreciation for this relationship of unity, brotherhood and family.

Gen. 13, when talking to his nephew and having this love for his nephew, if you remember when he nephew was taken captive, Abraham's wasted no time assembling the men to go after him. Against great armies and great odds, he knew that God would not stand for that. Abraham acted, but here in this particular instance, he was nowise selfish in any way, but his love was outgoing toward his nephew.

Abraham said to Lot, and this is where their blessings had grown so much that they had to divide them out a little bit:

Genesis 13:8: "And Abram said to Lot, 'Let there be no strife... [no argument, no division] ...I pray you, **between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brethren.**'"

- we are brethren
- we are on the same journey
- we are on the same path, trying to get to the same place

Our hope is in Christ!

- we're fighting this fight against the flesh
- we're fighting this fight against the world
- we're fighting this fight against Satan, the devil

*who doesn't want us to make it, **but God does!***

Let's see what Christ inspired Paul to write in Heb. 13. First of all, we want to establish this Truth that ***the same One Who spoke and inspired David***—Who is exemplified through the love that He showed in Abraham—***is the same Lord and God Who came and died for us.*** He affirmed so that we never forget that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

This is the God that we serve! He is not a some tiny God. He is a consistent, loving, kind, patient and caring God. He wants us, as His children, to be the same way. He wants us to have this love for one another that He and Christ are able to enjoy. They came, They dwell in us so that we can put that on. They really do.

Verse 1: "Let brotherly love be present among you continually."

This is not just a Holy Day event; this is not just a Sabbath event. We are family! We're a family every day of every year, every moment, every hour, every second! ***We are the children of God! We are begotten sons and daughters of God!*** We need to recognize that!

- we always care for one another
- we look after one another
- we pray for one another

Verse 2: "Do not forget to show hospitality..."

If a brother come into our midst on the Sabbath, visiting our fellowship, then we embrace them as members of the Family.

I've always wondered about this foot-washing ceremony in the Old Testament, *how valuable it was!* When Abraham saw the strangers coming or the people coming there, he quickly went out and greeted them. ***He became a servant*** at that moment doing what he did.

The Bible tells us that we are to always show hospitality because:

"...by this some have unknowingly welcomed angels as guests. Be mindful of prisoners..." (vs 2-3).

He tells us those who might be suffering as a result of the Word of God, those who might have been persecuted, as there were many in that day of the early Church.

Verse 3: "Be mindful of prisoners, **as if you were imprisoned with them...**"

- not above

- not judging

but with compassion and understanding, praying that God would intervene for them and lift them up!

"...and think of those who are suffering afflictions..." (v 3)—*those who are going through some trials, think of them. let them be on your prayer list!*

We have a brother here in Michigan who is consistent in praying for the brethren. Consistent! He puts that name on that list, and he doesn't take it off until we have reported God's intervening hand. He's always inquiring, and he's an inspiration to us all, because this is important from God's perspective.

Verse 3: "Be mindful of prisoners, **as if you were imprisoned with them;** and **think of those who are suffering afflictions, as if you yourselves were in their body.**"

That is empathy; that is a true outgoing concern of the greatest degree! God is very much inspired of that, and inspires that in us.

Let's just kind of get an overall perspective here.

Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God [the Father]..."

Here are the two right here in this opening verse, established! *The two greatest Beings in the universe!* The universe and everything else exists because of Them. They are addressing a message to whom?

"...to the saints who are in Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (v 1). *That is the fellowship that we are a part of!*

Verse 2: "Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly things with Christ" (vs 2-3).

- Do we understand our status before God?
- Do we understand His perspective of us?
- Who we are to Him?
- How much we mean to him?

I know we want to have that same love toward Him!

Verse 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself..." *I'm talking about the greatest Being there is, and that is the Father!*

"...before the foundation of the world in order that we might be Holy... [and that's a Holy people set apart for His use and purpose] ...and

blameless before Him... [here is the seasoning on top] ...in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will" (vs 4-5)

As Norbert said, *you can add Their purpose*; His own will and purpose!

Verse 6: "To the praise of the glory of His grace..."

This incredible thing He's doing in our lives, giving us access to all this that He gives us access to. Spiritual aspects of existence that we can tap into.

"...Wherein He has made us objects of His grace in the Beloved Son; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins... [the forgiveness of transgression, sins against God] ... according to the riches of His grace" (vs 6-7).

Verse 9: "Having made known to us the mystery of His own will..." *Because it is hidden from the majority of mankind right now, but it has been revealed to us.*

"...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (v 9).

Now, He defines it very clearly, again through Paul, that in the Divine Plan, God's Plan for mankind:

Verse 10: "That in the Divine plan for the fulfilling of the times, He might bring all things together in Christ..."

- there is the Root
- there is the Vine
- there is the Source
- there is the Foundation
- there is the Chief Cornerstone that this entire game plan or this entire plan is built on

"...both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth" (v 10)—*are going to come together in Christ!*

So, nothing in heaven or on this earth is going to happen *unless God purposes it*

- for His purpose
- for His will

That we, those He has called:

Verse 12: "That we might be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; in Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation..." (vs 12-13).

This is the Gospel of Salvation that I'm talking about here and what Christ makes possible.

"...in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (v 13).

Here's a sealing of this promise through God's Spirit dwelling in us. An earnest of God right there. The very, teeny-tiny little bit of God's existence in this fleshly body through the Spirit of God. We don't have the full glory that God will bring at the resurrection, yet; **but it's coming, brethren!** We have the earnest

Verse 14: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

So we have an incredible thing that we're looking forward to.

Ephesians 4:1: "Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called."

Our walk should be an example:

- to the world
- in our communities
- in our jobs
- in our—*very critical*—families

They should see God's Light! Don't ever cover it up to the extent that you aren't able to express ***this hope that's in you!*** If they ask, let them know; they might want to know!

If you ask me about this hope within me, you need to have some time so that I can truly convey it to you. I am willing to tell you about this great hope I have within me, this joy that God has promised me that is in His Son. It is greater than just a feeling or some idea of eternity on a cloud. ***It is about life eternal as a very born son or daughter of God!***

This is heavy stuff! This is tremendous stuff that God has given to us! Words can't describe it!

"...were called with all humility and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (vs 1-2).

So this walk is 'worthily' through those actions. And those are fruits of the Spirit. *Longsuffering* is a big part of that. *Love* is a fruit of the Spirit.

Verse 3: "Being diligent..."—*applying ourselves every day is a way of life!*

It's not something you do on occasion. It is something you live and exist in. It defines you ***because it defines God!***

- God is love; we live in love and righteousness

- we aspire to righteousness; we are righteous in Christ
- we're striving to live our lives like Christ

Verse 3: "Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling" (vs 3-4).

I'm talking about the Church of God. I'm not talking about the corporate organization of Christian Biblical Church of God or United Church of God or Global/Living Church of God. I am talking about the Church of God, ***the called out ones***, the 'ecclesia'! The Great Congregation of God; those whom the Father identified by name, tapped them on the shoulder *spiritually and offered them salvation*. And they said, 'Yes.' Now we're walking together.

We don't talk down to one another. None of us have a corner on all that is true. God is revealing Truth to us. In the end, no matter how much you have been given in the way of knowledge and understanding, that'll fade away. ***But:***

- the love of God is there
- God's love is there
- His calling is there

Here is our common existence and hope in anyone that God has called He wants to bring to the Kingdom.

Verse 5. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ. or this very reason, He says that after ascending on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men" (vs 5-8). *We are recipients of those gifts!*

- eternal life
- salvation
- justification

Gifts! We can't earn those things; Christ had to come and make that possible for us! We are truly a blessed people; yes, we are!

Psalms 33:12: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, and the people He has chosen for His own inheritance." ***Yes, we are a blessed people!***

Verse 13: "The LORD looks down from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men.

His creation is down here! Every man, woman and child that lives upon the face of the earth, billions of human beings on this earth, God looks down upon the sons of men.

Verse 14: "From His dwelling place He looks intently upon all the inhabitants of the earth."

God is aware! Nothing is being snuck by Him!

Verse 15: "Together He fashions their hearts alike... [we're all human fleshly beings] ...He considers all their works."

He's a just God, He's consistent, He's no respecter of persons. Sin is sin! Righteousness is righteousness before God.

Verse 16: "The king is not saved by a great army; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon those who fear Him, upon those who hope in His loving kindness... [all of us are hoping in that] ...to deliver their soul from death... (vs 16-19).

Yes, we know we ***have been saved***, and we pray every day that we ***are being saved*** through our walk with God. Our hope is that we ***shall be saved*** at His return as we continue in that faith and in that hope.

Verse 19: "To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield, for our heart shall rejoice in Him because we have trusted in His Holy name. Let Your loving kindness, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in You" (vs 19-22).

That's where our hope is as a Body, as a Church, and as a Family. When we come together on the Sabbath or on the Holy Days, that hope is enriched and it is truly magnified because we're dwelling together in unity.

Of that hope and everything else that God has laid out for us. Yes, we are God's sons and daughters. But we're not the only ones. Others will be called. What is God doing in His Family?

John 11—This is a prophetic word regarding Christ. Individuals against Him are prophesying Truth regarding Him, though their meaning the words in hate and deceit. They don't know that what they're prophesying. Here it even applies to them and their hope. They'll come to understand that at some point.

John 11:49 "But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You have no understanding, nor consider that it is better for us that one man die for the people, than that the whole nation should perish'" (vs 49-50)—*because they had a problem with Jesus Christ.*

They needed to get rid of Him. He was threatening their reputation, their existence as leaders of that day.

Verse 51: "Now, he did not say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation; and not for the nation only... [this is the Truth I want to bring out here] ...**but also that He might gather together into one the children of God who were scattered abroad.** Therefore, from that day they took counsel together, so that they might kill Him" (vs 51-53).

We know the history, brethren. They were successful, but it was prophesied that He would do this for us. We recognize, as His created beings, this death was necessary for us. Let's go back to Gen. 11 when they got on the wrong track from the very beginning.

Here they are, having come to this point after the Flood and mankind is truly on the wrong track

Genesis 11:1: "And the whole earth was of one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar. And they settled there. And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build us a city and a tower, with its top reaching into the heavens. And let us establish a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth'" (vs 1-4).

Verse 5: "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, the people are one and they all have one language. And this is only the beginning of what they will do—now nothing, which they have imagined to do, will be restrained from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another's speech.' So, the LORD scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth. And they quit building the city. Therefore, the name of it is called Babel, because the LORD confused the language of all the earth there. And from there the LORD scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (vs 5-9).

Christ is fulfilling His Plan for all His creation now that the time is drawing near, has begun to call, beginning with His life in the flesh, providing a means by which all mankind could access the Father through Him, access forgiveness, access a justification through Him. As I said, **nothing is possible without Him:**

- the Foundation
- the Rock
- the Cornerstone
- the Vine

He is the Source of life for all mankind!

As Norbert mentioned last night, this purpose for which God has made us, is for His created beings to come to Him, to be born into His Family. Yes, we are just the first wave, just the firstfruits; the rest will come.

We have a struggle and a responsibility and a great calling right now as God's Family. So, let us recognize that no *one* of us is in this calling, **but all of us are in this calling!** God is going to save His Church. God is going to help His Church. God is going to perfect His Church, His Family.

Acts 17 is where Christ conveys His thoughts about His Family. We know He loved His disciples. We know He protected them. He prayed and told the Father that that's what He did. He said that He was going to be going back to the Father and that He would need to take care of them and send them power so that they can exist and be okay.

Acts 17. Let's read something. Here, Paul is telling again, conveying to the to the officials there in Athens. So Paul is there waiting for the disciples, his disciples to join him.

Acts 17:16: "But while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he saw that the city was wholly given to idolatry, and his spirit was sorely moved within him. Because of this, he reasoned earnestly in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshipped there, and daily in the marketplace with those who met with him. Then some philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics encountered him. And some of them said, 'What will this babblers have to say?' And some said, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign gods,' ... [they don't know; they didn't know the true God] ...because he was preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus and the resurrection" (vs 16-18).

Their only hope, But they didn't know!

Verse 19: "And they took him and brought him to Mars Hill, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is that is spoken by you? For you are bringing certain strange things to our ears. So then, we desire to know what these things mean'" (vs 19-20). *Good question!*

Verse 21: "(Now, all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning among them spent their leisure in nothing other than to tell and to hear something new.)"

You can imagine the elite scene. You can imagine those who had all this free time because they didn't have to work very hard with their hands. They had this time to think, reason and philosophize about things.

Verse 22: "Then Paul stood in the center of Mars Hill and said, 'Men, Athenians, I perceive that in all things you are very reverent to deities; for as I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, "To an unknown God." So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance is the One that I proclaim to you'" (vs 22-23).

Now here is the God that I want to convey through this set of Scriptures. Paul is trying to convey to the world that there those who have ideas about other things. He's trying to convey the Truth, this Gospel of the Truth, this Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Verse 24: "He is the God Who made the world and all things that are in it. Being the Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands... [He does not dwell in a corporation; He dwells in His people] ...nor is He served by the hands of men, as though He needs anything..." (vs 24-25).

What can we do for God?

- obey Him
- repent
- teach His Truth
- become knowledgeable about His Truth

God is God! He is orchestrating His purpose and He's going to fulfill it!

"...for He gives to all life and breath and all things" (v 25).

What can we give Him if He gives us all things, other than

- adoration
- praise
- honor
- obedience
- humility
- submission

That's where we need to be malleable clay in His hands, usable by the great God. That's what we need to be.

- stop fighting Him
- stop arguing with Him
- stop disagreeing with Him

But yield to Him!

Verse 26: And He made of one blood all the

nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand their appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that they might seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us" (vs 26-27).

If you look at how God has worked in His Church in the last century, last 100 years, God has called people to this Truth from all walks of lives, all around the world. We have brethren scattered throughout the earth. God is doing a great work in His Church.

Verse 28: "For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said... [Paul is trying to reason with them with their own understanding] ...'For we are His offspring.' Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead is like that which is made of gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art devised by the imagination of man; for although God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance..." (vs 28-30).

Yes, there has been a time that ignorance was bliss or ignorance is an acceptable thing. But today, brethren:

"...He [Christ] now commands all men everywhere to repent" (v 30).

So that this Gospel of repentance can be preached unto the world as a witness to all nations that this Word of Truth gets out there, because the times we're living in are difficult times! ***The time of the end is near.*** Look around you, consider the society of the world in the world's condition, and the thinking of man.

Verse 31: "Because He has set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man Whom He has appointed, having given proof to all by raising Him from the dead."

- all judgment belongs to Him
- He is the foundation

Verse 32: "And after hearing about the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but some said, 'We will hear you again concerning this matter.' And so, Paul went out from among them" (vs 32-33)—***having fulfilled God's purpose for preaching the Gospel to them!***

Today, God is gathering unto *one spiritual body*, His children. Note:

- 1-Corinthians 12:12-14
- Matthew 23:8-9

- What is true fellowship?

- What is true fellowship?
- *The fellowship that God has called us to!*

1-John 1:1: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of Life."

Now, they're talking firsthand accounts of their relationship with God in the flesh. Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, their Teacher.

Verse 2: "And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us; that which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (vs 2-3).

First as a Body, a Church; God's called out ones individually, because they dwell in us. So, we're fellowshiping with God, whether we know it or not, every single day that fellowship is occurring through the indwelling of God's Spirit. He's connected to our spirit. Yes, the spirit in man joins with the Spirit of God! God has connectivity to us through His Spirit.

So, true fellowship with God is based upon that! Yes, our fellowship is with the Father His Son, Who is our Brother! *Jesus Christ is our Brother!* Let's hear Christ make this statement:

John 20:16: "Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' Turning around, she said to Him, 'Rabboni'; that is to say, 'Teacher.'"

Mary walked with Him. How would you feel to have someone that you know as your Savior all of a sudden they were crucified?. You sit there and watched them bleed out, and then, according to the promise, He is alive! The third day He is alive.

Verse 17: "Jesus said to her, 'Do not touch Me, because I have not yet ascended to My Father....'"

But he says this—this is Christ speaking concerning us—to His disciples at the time, but also those who would be called according to their preaching. We're reading their preaching right here.

"...But **go to My brethren** and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" (v 17).

Jesus Christ is there right now at the right hand of God the Father. He sees us as his brothers and sisters in Christ.

He says, "...and My God and your God" (v 17). So we have the

- one God
- one faith
- one baptism
- one Spirit

This is what we are fellowshiping in every day!

When we come together, we're celebrating it and magnifying it through the unity of that fellowship that we're able to share each Sabbath and each Holy Day. When we prayed for one another, when we come together in Go to Meeting. This is what we're doing. We are to be one within Them as They are one.

John 17:1: Jesus spoke these words, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come...'—*having fulfilled his purpose on earth in the flesh!*

The hour had come when He was about to conclude the matter. He was about to enter into that final phase, that final step that would secure life for us.

He is praying to God, looking forward, not doubting, not looking back. He's continuing to go forward to that great purpose for which God has called Him. That's what we have to do.

- we can't be looking behind wondering
- we can't be doubting
- we can't be procrastinating
- we can't be unsure

Brethren, we have to be all in; we are committed. You know, we get real zealous to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, but bring that zealousness back with you. Bring it back and use it today. Be zealous now, because the truth is that the same status you had at the Feast is the same status you have at this very moment.

I mentioned in Bible study this past week that we take the Feasts of God, the lessons from the Feast, and:

- we take them with us every single day
- Passover is with us every single day
- the days of Unleavened Bread are exemplified in our life every single day
- we utilize the power of God's Spirit given to us at Pentecost every single day

We are looking to the return of Christ and the removal of Satan, hoping for that, because as I said to the brethren, 'I am sick of Satan!' *I am sick of Satan, and I'm sick of this flesh!* I look forward to the body that God is going to give us:

- Righteousness
- Holiness
- a spiritual existence

Christ is saying to the Father in His prayer:

“...glorify Your own Son, so that Your Son may also glorify You; since You have given Him authority over all flesh, in order that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me with Your own self, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed” (vs 1-5).

Brethren, the Father fulfilled that prayer. The Father was faithful, according to the covenant They made, when Christ said:

Here I am. send Me; I will go. You have prepared a body for Me. They are My creation!

That's His sentiment. His love toward us was manifested, and He revealed the Father to us!

Verse 6: “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me... [the Father calls us and gives us to Christ for perfection, for the perfecting of this person that we are] ...and they have kept Your Word.”

Verse 7: “Now, they have known that all things that You have given Me are from You.”

Yes, everything is from the Father. We belong to Him. They are one love. His love to us and our love back to Him. For His love to us and that love back to Him, and we to each other. Note:

- 1-Peter 3:8-9
- 1-John 5:1-4

2 John 1: “The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in Truth, **and not I alone**, but also all those who have known the Truth. for the sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with us from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced exceedingly that I have found among your children those who are walking in Truth, exactly as we received commandment from the Father” (vs 1-4).

This that I'm sharing with you is not Albert's idea as to how God's Family is supposed to work. God Himself has laid it out through

- Paul
- Christ
- John
- all the apostles
- through the prophets
- Moses

*This theme runs throughout: **We are God's Family.***

Verse 6: “And this is the love of God: that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, exactly as you heard from the beginning, that you might walk in it, because many deceivers have entered into the world...” (vs 6-7).

There are many people that will come even on the scene at this time and later saying that Christ didn't come in the flesh. Or this that this idea of God is a myth. ***That's the foolishness of the world!*** Those who do not confess that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh of true believers, ***that is the spirit of the deceiver and the antichrist!*** So, this is this idea, rather.

There's an insert there regarding this verse, and I encourage you to read it because it really speaks to this one Truth: God dwells in us through His Spirit. Christ is dwelling in us fleshly human beings through the power of His Spirit connected to our human spirit:

- moving us
- helping us to understand Truth
- giving us a different heart
- giving us a different mind

This is happening throughout God's Body, throughout the 'elect lady,' *the chosen lady and all the children of God* (1).

I wanted to emphasize that. let me let me bring this just one step further toward a conclusion here when we read and comprehend the indwelling of God within His Family. We have we have a relationship with God the Father and Christ, Them dwelling in us through the Holy Spirit. Both are with us, affecting change within us.

Every begotten saint, everywhere in the world, where God is dwelling, His Spirit connects us. Every begotten saint is holding onto Christ in hope.

Now, I want to go to Colossians and we'll read something there to help us bring it to conclusion.

Colossians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossi...” (vs 1-2).

Not only this letter, of course, is preserved for all of God's Church everywhere now today.

"...Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you continually" (vs 2-3).

We give thanks to God. To the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ praying for you continually. Yes, we are praying for the brethren.

Verse 4: "Since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that you have toward all the saints because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven..." (vs 4-5).

This hope that we have, which you have heard before in the Word of the Truth of the Gospel. We heard the Gospel preach brethren and that Gospel gave us hope, and we hold onto that hope:

Verse 6: "Which has come to you, even as it also has in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, just as it is among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth; even as you also learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ for you" (vs 6-7).

So, if Epaphras was preaching this Truth, conveying this principle, and I hope that I have done the same.

Verse 8: "Who has also informed us of your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for **the share...**" (vs 8-12):

- a part in this Truth
- a part in this Gospel
- a part in this great promise

"...the share of the inheritance of the saints in the Light; Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness and has transferred us unto the Kingdom of the Son of His love; in Whom we have redemption through His own blood, even the remission of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation" (vs 12-15).

He's not the only one, He's just the First One, and then those who will follow in faith.

Verse 16: "Because by Him were all things

created, the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether they be thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things subsist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church; Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence" (vs 16-18).

Verse 24: "Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings..."

And we all will go through some trial testing, maybe even some suffering one day. But we need to know that God is still on His Throne. He is fulfilling His promise with us.

"...sufferings for you, and I am filling up in my flesh that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ, for the sake of His Body, which is the Church" (v 24).

This is our commitment as ministers. That ordination put us in servitude to you. That ordination placed us

- as a guard of the Body
- as a guard of the sheep
- as servants under Christ

Let's be clear, w are His. We were ordained to His service for His Body!

Verse 25: "Of which I became a servant, according to the administration of God that was given to me for you in order to complete the Word of God; even the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom God did will to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (vs 25-27). *We all have this hope!*

Verse 28: "Whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

That perfection is through Him. But we want to keep you connected with Him. We want to keep pointing you to Him. When you come to a minister and ask for information or insight, You know we're not giving you our opinion; we're pointing you to Christ, because hope is in Christ.

My hope is in Christ, and your hope had better be in Christ. That's the only hope that's going to save. For this cause Paul said and I think every minister would convey this:

Verse 29: "For this cause I also labor, striving according to His inner working, which works in me with power."

So yes we have a great and wonderful calling as God's Family. God is not divided. He is making possible the true fellowship.

Philippians 1:24: "But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes."

This is to recognize that:

- eternal life is better than flesh
- spirit is better than flesh
- existence with God is better than flesh

But we're not there, yet; now is not the time! *Now is the time for us:*

- to take care of God's people
- to care for God's Church
- to preach God's Word
- to instruct in the righteousness of God
- to be growing and overcoming
- to be helping to convey to you the things that help you to grow and overcome

But I don't preach to you without preaching to myself. as well!

Verse 25: "And being persuaded of this, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your advancement and joy in the faith; so that through my presence with you again, your rejoicing for me may abound in Christ Jesus. Only conduct yourselves worthily of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or am absent, I may hear the reports about you; that you are standing fast in one spirit, striving together with one soul for the faith of the Gospel, and not being intimidated in any way by those who oppose the Gospel; which to them is a demonstration of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His name's sake; experiencing the same conflict that you saw in me, and now hear of concerning me" (vs 25-30).

We know that we may have to go through some things to bring this to a final conclusion, ***that is to get from flesh to spirit!*** The only way we're going to do that is:

- to stay close and keep our eyes on Christ
- be intent in His Word; diligent in His Word
- prayer
- fasting
- study
- loving the brethren
- staying close to one another
- rejoicing

- lifting each other up
- encouraging one another

This is the work of God and His Family. So, let's continue to do it in love according to God's purpose for us!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 133:1-3
- 2) Genesis 13:8
- 3) Hebrews 13:8, 1-3
- 4) Ephesians 1:1-7, 9-10, 12-14
- 5) Ephesians 4:1-8
- 6) Psalm 33:12-22
- 7) John 11:49-53
- 8) Genesis 11:1-9
- 9) Acts 17:16-33
- 10) 1 John 1:1-3
- 11) John 20:16-17
- 12) John 17:1-7
- 13) 2 John 1-4, 6-7
- 14) Colossians 1:1-18, 24-29
- 15) Philippians 1:24-30

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-14
- Matthew 22:8-9
- 1 Peter 3:8-9
- 1 John 5:1-4

Also referenced: Message:

God is a God of Purpose by Norbert Bohnert

AJ:bo
Transcribed: 11/6/23

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