***Till Death Do Us Part***

**The Covenant of Our Fellowship; I John 1:1-10, Colossians 3:12-15**

**I. The Basis of Our Fellowship, I John 1:1-4**

* **Our fellowship is first with the Father and the Son, I John 1:3-4**
* **Therefore, our fellowship with each other comes from our fellowship with the Father and the Son, I John 1:3-4**

**II. The Nature of Our Fellowship, I John 1:5-7**

* **Our fellowship with God is connected to His moral purity, I John 1:5-7**
* **Therefore, our fellowship with God and with one another is connected to our moral purity, I John 1:5-7**

**III. The Demonstration of Grace in Our Fellowship, Colossians 3:12-15**

* **Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, Colossians 3:12**
* **Forgive each other just as God has forgiven us, Colossians 3:13**
* **Put on love with the intent of saving the unity of the church, Colossians 3:14**
* **Let peace and thankful hearts mark the relationships in the church, Colossians 3:15**

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**The Covenant of Our Fellowship; I John 1:1-10**

**Scripture Reading and Prayer by , I John 1:1-10 (NASB) (slides)**

**I. Introduction (Header Slide – The Covenant of Our Fellowship)**

* Ice skating yesterday with Michael, we purchased some hockey skates in Montana last year and went to the Dallas Stars Center with great expectations of improved skating
* The problem – you have to sharpen new skates and they come with a coat of wax on the blades, so our new found hockey skates made skating much worse because of a lack of knowledge
* That is my concern for the church, you come to Matthew Road with great excitement, feeling like you have a new church home
* You have certain expectations and sometimes your expectations are met and sometimes they are not
* At times a failure to have your expectations met are due to failures with me, primarily and then with the rest of the body of Christ because we are imperfect
* At times the failure is that individuals have their expectations set in the wrong place
* The church is a fellowship, a gathering of a common people with a common mission
* The Word fellowship – in Baptist circles usually brings to mind two interconnected concepts, first – food and second, a place – the fellowship hall
* Both of these concepts are unfortunate because it leads to the false sense of the word that fellowship always involves eating and it involves eating together as a church in a place
* The word fellowship within the New Testament begins with the New Testament church
* In Acts chapter 2, Simon Peter has just delivered the Pentecost sermon and thousands have come to faith in Christ and were baptized as a public profession of their faith
* What follows this initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit depicts the critical features of the early church
* First there is repentance from sins and faith toward or in Christ
* Second there is baptism as a public profession of repentance and faith
* That brings us from the individual profession and individual public expression to the community
* **Read Acts 2:42-43 (Slide 2)**
* Two primary areas of devotion, the teaching of the Apostles and to fellowship
* The teaching of the Apostles involves opening the Bible, learning the content of the Bible and applying it in our lives
* **Fellowship - Luke then describes the nature of their fellowship – spending time together in relationship with each other through the breaking of bread, prayer, and meeting needs**
	+ **Spending time together**, the early church spent time together in each others’ homes, at a common meeting place – more than just one hour on Sunday morning
	+ **Breaking of Bread,** Some are thinking, see there preacher food is involved
* However, it is likely that when partaking of food the highlight of the food taken together was the Lord’s Supper
	+ **Prayer**, praying for each other, praying for the advancement of the Gospel, praying for strength in the lives of each other
* You need a group of individuals that knows you well enough to pray for you and for you to pray for them – find a group, find a small group within the church where prayer for one another is taking place – man cave, Sunday school, home studies – find a place
* **Read Acts 2:44-45 (Slide 3)**
* The meeting of physical needs and the ministry to one another in all of our needs
	+ **Meeting needs**, The fourth feature of this fellowship is the meeting of needs
* **For the early church fellowship involved spending time together, breaking bread together, praying for each other and the church, meeting needs of others**

**II. The Basis of Our Fellowship, I John 1:1-4 (Slide 4)**

* Definition of fellowship, not a room on the church property and not food
* The word koninonia in the Greek comes from the word that means common
* There are two ways the word is used and both seem to be in play within the mind of the early church
* First, it means to have a common relationship – we share in a common relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ
* Second, it means to have things in common like material possessions, encouragement, living life together
* Third, it means having common goals/purposes – the word participation comes to mind
* Relationships in common – the community that is based in our mutual relationship that comes through our faith in Christ
* Things in common – the meeting of needs
* Things in common – the mutual participation in a cause- the glory of God the Father through the exaltation of His Son
* Lets begin with this first feature, our mutual relationship with God
* **Our fellowship is first with the Father and the Son, I John 1:3-4**
* In this verse we find that the basis of our fellowship is first and foremost with God
* How does fellowship with God work, given our definition?
* First, God meets our needs – the rest of this chapter focuses on God meeting our needs by forgiving our sins and establishing a relationship with us
* Second, God calls us to participate in His cause, the cause of the Glory of the Father through the exaltation of His Son
* That same relationship that we have with God becomes the basis of our fellowship with one another
* **Therefore, our fellowship with each other comes from our fellowship with the Father and the Son, I John 1:3-4**
* We cannot have true fellowship with a non-believer – we might could meet their needs and they might even meet our needs, but we do not have a mutual relationship

**III. The Nature of Our Fellowship, I John 1:5-7**

* **Read I John 1:5-6 (Slide 4)**
* **Our fellowship with God is connected to His moral purity, I John 1:5-7**
* We cannot say we have a relationship with God and walk in impurity
* This is one of the items that will break fellowship within the church, an individual begins to walk in darkness – to sin without any repentance in the heart
* I have found in those moments that the individual that walks away from the fellowship will at times blame the church, that it is the church’s fault they have walked away when in reality they are living in open rebellion against God
* **Read I John 1:7 (Slide 5)**
* **Therefore, our fellowship with God and with one another is connected to our moral purity, I John 1:5-7**
* When an individual is out of fellowship with God, the connection to the church will feel strained, this is a good test for us
* If you feel disconnected to the church, the problem may be with the church
* However, be careful that the problem does not reside in some area of unrepentance in your own life
* We cannot have a relationship that is based on mutual trust, mutual care and a common cause if one of us is walking in darkness
* We cannot walk together with God if He is over there and we are over here
* We cannot walk with each other if some are walking in the light with God and others are walking in darkness

**IV. The Demonstration of Grace in Our Fellowship, Colossians 3:12-15**

* When we have this common purpose of bringing glory to God through the exaltation of His Son and we are walking in moral purity, then there are certain behaviors within the church that most mark her relationships
* **Read Colossians 3:12 (Slide 6)**
* **Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, Colossians 3:12**
* **Read Colossians 3:13 (Slide 7)**
* **Forgive each other just as God has forgiven us, Colossians 3:13**
* **Read Colossians 3:14 (Slide 8)**
* **Put on love with the intent of saving the unity of the church, Colossians 3:14**
* **Read Colossians 3:15 (Slide 9)**
* **Let peace and thankful hearts mark the relationships in the church, Colossians 3:15**
* **Final words of encouragement and one final assignment**
* If you come to Matthew Road purely on the basis of what you can get out of the church, you will always be disappointed in Matthew Road or any church
* We come to serve each other – find someone to serve
* I have found that often the most disappointed individuals are ones that were hoping Matthew Road would provide all their spiritual needs but they were never willing to actually invest in the church or others with their life
* Find someone to encourage, find someone to minister to, find someone that you invest your life in their growth
* The fellowship of the church is a two way street
* An assignment, since the life of the church involves relationships, we can hurt each other at times
* With that said, we must pursue restoration whenever it is possible
* Cards

**I John 1:1-10**

**1**What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--

 **2**and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

 **3**what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

 **4**These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

 **5**This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

 **6**If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

 **7**but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

 **8**If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

 **9**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

 **10**If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

**Colossians 3:12-15**

**12**So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

 **13**bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

 **14**Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

 **15**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.