

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Fellowship of the Body, The Part 1

Scripture: 1 John 1:1-7

Code: 1314

Let's bow in prayer. Father, we do thank you for the love of Jesus. Something that the world indeed knows nothing about, but that we experience every waking moment of every day. How grateful we are for the joy and the privilege of living within the sunlight of that love. Feeling its warmth and it's life giving properties. We are grateful Lord that we can be here tonight because of that love that from all of this world, with all of it's problems, you have called us to gather together in the name of Jesus Christ, this night, for fellowship and study together and praise to you.

Lord, how rich it is to be here and how indeed your grace is sufficient for every trial, for every anxiety, we rejoice in all the provisions that are ours in Christ. Lord, bless our time tonight, enrich because of it. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Tonight we come to our subject, the last subject that we will deal with in our preliminary study to Ephesians. This little study that we've done several weeks now, it really kept going on and on and we didn't expect it to, but the Lord led in this, on the body of Christ. And very frankly, folks for those of us who are Christians, I don't feel there is any more important series than this. And I trust God that you are learning these truths. That you are not merely hearing them and walking away and saying wasn't I inspired and wasn't it nice, but I don't remember anything.

If that's your case, you better get those tapes and listen to them until you understand this most significant concept of the body of Christ.

Now tonight we come to the last study, the last general subject, although it may not be the last particular message, this is the last subject we'll deal with in the body...in the body series, the fellowship of the body, the fellowship of the body.

Let's bow in a word of prayer as we begin our study. Lord, we thank you for fellowship and we pray Lord, tonight, that You will teach us by Your Spirit, that we might not be taught by human mind or a human wisdom, but that we might speak the wisdom of God, the oracles of God in truth. And Lord that we might have the understanding of the Spirit to grasp these truths and apply them to our lives. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Now we have said many times and I want you to think with me, I'm not going to attempt to entertain you, but I am going to attempt to...to teach you some principles that are absolutely essential. Now we

have said many times that the true church is one body. All the members of that body are members of one another, like a human body. No member of the body of Christ exists detached from the rest of the body.

We are all members one of another and no one member can escape his responsibility toward all the other members. We have said that the health of the body that its witness and testimony is absolutely dependent on the faithful ministering of all of the members to one another.

Now we have talked about two kinds of unity, positional unity and practical unity. Or what we are in position and what we are in practice. Now we talked first of all about our positional unity. That is by the very fact that we are believers in Christ, we are one in position. That is we have all been placed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We are all positionally in the body. And our positional unity is manifest by the fact that the one same Spirit placed us into the body and that one same Spirit dwells within all of us. So from a positional standpoint, we are one. All having been placed into the body by the same Spirit, all having the same indwelling Spirit within us. All being redeemed, all being children of God, all being members of the body of Christ. That's positional unity. We are a unit...we are a unit by virtue of salvation.

But then on the other side, we want to talk also about our practical unity. Though we are one in position, unfortunately we are not one in practice. Now the practical unity of the body is manifest by two things. Now these are very important. One of them is service and the other is fellowship. The practical unity of the body is manifest by two things, service and by that we mean the ministering of our spiritual gifts to each other.

The second one is fellowship. That means sharing our love with each other. Service, the ministering of gifts and fellowship, sharing of our love. Now in our first message on the idea of unity, we spoke...or really the first message on the body concept we spoke of our positional unity. And I told you that we are one in Christ. We are all members of the same body. We are members of one another. We were all baptized by the same Spirit. We all possess the same indwelling Spirit. We all have the same life, eternal life. We all have the same head, Christ, who is the head of the entire body.

Positionally we are one. No question about that. All Christians are one in Christ. But that positional oneness is no guarantee at all that we are one in practice. And I don't need to tell you we aren't one. All you need to do is look around and see all the little denominations and all the little organizations and all the little cliques of people and all the ones who stand over here and say we don't associate with those. And the others to say we don't associate with you either, so we're both happy. And we have all of this fractioning, practically, we're not one.

And when Jesus prayed in John Chapter 17 in verse 21, he said, "Father, I pray that they may be one." Now He was not praying for our positional oneness was He? That's accomplished by salvation. He was praying that we would act like one. That we would be one in practice as we are in position.

So really when we're talking about the body, we're talking about the importance of practical oneness. That is that we are really one in practice, not just in position. So the theme of what I've been trying to say to you for several weeks has been the fact that we ought to be one in practice.

Now, we've already talked about the first thing that manifests our oneness, service. We spent three weeks on the spiritual gifts. We've learned much about service. How you minister your gift. We've learned what the gifts are and what they aren't and what the basic operating principles are.

Now every believer has certain grace gifts, certain spiritual gifts, neumatics spiritual gifts, which we are to minister to each other and by that ministering to each other, we are in effect bringing about this practical oneness. So for the last three weeks we have emphasized and studied the various gifts and their principles.

Now since we have covered the positional unity and also the first phase of practical unity service, that leaves only with a second one to cover and that we'll cover tonight, and that's fellowship. That's the only subject we haven't tapped in terms of our practical unity. There are only two things that make us one, that is service and fellowship.

We've covered service, so tonight we want to talk about fellowship. Now the word for fellowship in the New Testament is an interesting word. It's the word koinonia. Koinonia means communion or fellowship. It means intimate communication. That's what fellowship is.

And when God designed men, He designed them for fellowship. In Genesis Chapter 2, I think it's verse 8, where God says, "It is not good for man to be alone." Man was not made to be isolated. Being alone is not the will of God. People were made for fellowship. And the church, the body of Christ is a body for fellowship.

The church is to be a fellowship. Not a building where you all alone walk in, listen and all alone walk out, but a place of fellowship. Larson says an interesting quote that Stott puts in his One People, it says this, "The neighborhood bar is possibly the best counterfeit there is to the fellowship Christ wants to give His church. It's an imitation dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality, but it is a permissive accepting and inclusive fellowship. It is unshockable. It is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others or even want to. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to

know and be known, to love and be love...be loved and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers."

If I can add an editorial comment, because they haven't really seen the real in the body of Christ. Now this need for fellowship is the genius of the church. But may I quickly add that it is not met by the Sunday services or the typical mass aggregations of unrelated, disconnected people. So there exists in the church today a desperate need for personal, intimate fellowship.

And this fellowship like the ministering of the gifts is intrinsic to the manifestation of our practical unity. Fellowship is absolutely essential to the life of the body. Now, I want to share with you five areas that the New Testament teaches us about fellowship. It's basis, it's nature, it's danger, it's responsibilities, and it's result.

Five specific areas on which the New Testament teaches regarding fellowship. It's basis, what fellowship is based on. It's nature, what it's like. It's danger, what interrupts it. It's responsibilities, what do I have to do to maintain it? And it's results, what happens when we are in fellowship? And we'll go as far as we can tonight.

First of all, I want you to see the basis of fellowship. What is it based on? And I want you to look at 1 John Chapter 1. 1 John Chapter 1, you're going to have to put on your thinking cap, screw your brain down tight, because we're going to talk about some things that you're going to have to think with me on.

Now, what is the basis of our fellowship. There's a lot of phony fellowship going on today. You read about it in all the ecumenical nonsense that's going on where people are getting together on all kinds of pretenses. That's not true fellowship. You read about it sometimes when so-called evangelicals decide that they're going to cooperate with liberals in certain ventures. That's not true fellowship either.

The basis of our fellowship is not the need of our community. The basis of our fellowship is not some kind of a common goal for social ends. The basis of our fellowship is not that we're in the same denomination. The basis of our fellowship is not that we're not in any denomination. What is the basis of our fellowship? Is there really a legitimate basis? Not just ecumenical hash. Is there really a legitimate fellowship?

Well, I think there obviously is. The basis of fellowship is clearly delineated for us in the Chapter 1 of 1 John. Now let me remind you that the word *koinonia*, or fellowship, means commonness or a mutual communication. *Koinonia* means commonness, give you a couple of other forms, *koinonas*, means a partner, just a different form and *koinoneto*, the verb means to share.

So the idea of koinonia is just sharing partnership, commonness, fellowship, communion, whatever you want to say. Do believers then have a common ground? Do they have a koinonia or a knoinonas? Are we partners in something? Do we have something that we can share? It often looks like we don't, but in fact we do. Because our fellowship is graced...is based on the same common ground. And I want you to see this in 1 John, Chapter 1 and verse 3.

Here is the ground of our fellowship. Now John is relating the gospel that he's heard back in verse 1. He said, "That which we have heard and seen and our hands have handled concerning the word of life, we declare unto you." And he says it again in verse 3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." In other words, I'm giving you my firsthand experience with Jesus Christ. He's proclaiming the gospel. And the reason he's proclaiming the gospel is that "ye also may have," what, "fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Now John is coming along here and he's writing this letter and says, "I'm declaring unto you the gospel." And the gospel was about the word of life, verse 1, who is Jesus Christ. He says, "I'm declaring unto you the gospel. And the reason I'm doing that is because the gospel is the basis of fellowship. I want you to know the same God and the same Christ that I know in order that we may have common ground for fellowship."

You know something interesting that you probably never thought of it this way, but the proclamation of the gospel is not an end in itself. The reason John says we preach the gospel is in order to have something else. And it is what? Fellowship. The whole point of the preaching of the gospel was to create a fellowship.

And how ludicrous it is to accept the atonement of Christ and to accept all that he's done for us and then whack ourselves off from the fellowship that we have been introduced into. The proclamation of the gospel then is not an end in itself. The proclamation of the gospel had a goal and the goal of the proclamation of the gospel was to create a fellowship. Not an organization, but a fellowship. Not a hierarchy, but a fellowship. Not a structure, but a fellowship. Not an organizational chart on a printed sheet, but a fellowship.

And that beautiful, meaningful fellowship created by Christ and His disciples in the days that He was here on earth was not to be limited just to them, but all of us who came after and believed in Christ were to be introduced into that very same fellowship.

It was for all generations to provide fellowship between them and God and Christ and each other. Notice verse 3 again, "That which we have seen and heard declare we under you, we preach the gospel, that you may have fellowship with," whom, "with us." In a sense we are in the fellowship of the apostles. We're a part of their fellowship. But our fellowship is not only together, it's with the

Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We're all wrapped up in a total fellowship involving the Father, the Son, and every other believer in history.

This is our fellowship. So you see the end of the gospel proclamation is not just salvation, but fellowship. With God, with Christ, and with all other believers. That's exactly what...that's exactly what salvation did for you. Did you know that? It made you a part of a fellowship. You had no fellowship with God prior to salvation. You had no fellowship with Christ prior to salvation. You had no fellowship with believers when you became believer, automatically at that instant you entered into fellowship with God, fellowship with Christ, and fellowship with every other believer and that fellowship is eternal.

So what then is the basis of our fellowship? It is one word, salvation. That's the basis of our fellowship. A common Savior, a common God, a common faith, fellowship. Now, our fellowship originates with God. It was God's design to bring us into fellowship wasn't it? The apostle Paul writing in 1 Corinthians 1:9 says this, "God is faithful," this is beautiful. "God is faithful by whom," oh this is good, "you were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Don't you like that?

God is faithful and so He reached down and he called you to be a part of the fellowship of His Son. Oh that's beautiful. You know, we're not detached from God, are we? We're in the fellowship friends. God is not some cosmic deity way...we're in the fellowship. It's a beautiful thought. Through His sovereign grace He brought us into the fellowship.

You say, how did He do it? Well, it was by faith in Jesus Christ. God designed to call us. We put our faith in Christ and entered into the fellowship. Titus 1:4, listen to this, "To Titus mine own son," here it comes, "after the common faith." "After the common faith." Everyone of us comes to God the same way, right? By faith. Common to everyone of us.

How did we enter into the fellowship? By the common faith. We all came to the same God, through the same Christ with the same faith. And that's the basis of our unity. Each of us is saved by grace through faith and that's the basis of our fellowship. A common father, a common savior, a common faith, a common salvation.

And even though we're different and even though you say well my...you know, my salvation wasn't any rubber stamped deal, it was unique. You're right, every salvation of every individual is as unique as the individual, and as God's love for that individual and yet there's a commonness in all of it, isn't it? You say well, wait a minute now, is our fellowship just with the Father and with the Son and with each other? What happened to the Holy Spirit? Well, that's taken care of real well.

Listen to this, 2 Corinthians 13:14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit." You know what communion is, koinonia fellowship. So our fellowship is with Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit and each other. We have fellowship with the Trinity, that's the basis of our fellowship with each other. I mean, this is an exciting thing to realize, you're in fellowship with God, isn't it? Positional fellowship. I'm in the fellowship. You know, I'm in it. I'm a part of it.

I want to expand this thought for just a moment. We've seen that fellowship is a specifically Christian word. That it refers to that common participation in the grace of God in the salvation of Christ in the blessing of the indwelling Spirit. It's all a common participation. We all experience it. Our fellowship with each other stems from our fellowship with the Trinity. This is our fellowship.

So the apostolic objective in all preaching was to create a human fellowship, watch it, arising spontaneously out of a divine fellowship. A divine fellowship existed and because of the divine fellowship reaching down to man, a human fellowship existing with that fellowship came into being.

You might...you might put it this way, fellowship is not just one aspect of the body, it's the goal of the whole gospel to create a fellowship. Now John reviews this thought. We're back in 1 John 1 again, in verse 5, "This then," there it is again see, "This then," going over it again, "is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light and Him is no darkness at all. If we say that 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, cleanses us from all sin."

Now what is this saying. It's saying this, some people counterfeit the fellowship. Look at it closely, verse 6. "If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." You know, there are some people who come along and say oh, I'm in a fellowship and they're liars, counterfeit. It's counterfeit.

There are an awful lot of counterfeit fellowships. The ecumenical movement would be the classic example. There's an awful lot of counterfeit fellowship. Now some people say that this verse refers to believers. That verse 7 refers to a believer...verse 6 refers to a believer who is a believer, but who walks in darkness. Other people say it refers to an unbeliever.

Now may I add this, there are...there are acceptable scholars on both sides. It is a very difficult issue. I do not intend to tell you that I have all the solutions. I do intend to give you what I feel is the best interpretation, but I cannot be totally dogmatic. You must, as the Spirit of God directs you, consider it yourself.

But the question here, and this is where you have to think with me, the question here is this, does this refer to a believer who is out of fellowship or does it refer to a counterfeit believer who's not even a

believer at all? That's the issue.

If we make it a believer, then in verse 6, it's this. "If we believers say that we have fellowship and walk in darkness," that is we say we're in the fellowship, but we sin, then we lie, we're not in the fellowship, "and do not the truth." Verse 7, "But if we walk in the light, that is if we believers who are redeemed and saved keep on walking in the light as He is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

So you have two possibilities. Now the question is simple. Does this refer to believers? I feel the answer is no. I do not feel that 1 John in this particular portion refers to believers. And I'll show you why. Particularly look at verse 7. "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 cleanses us from all sin." There you have a conditional statement. "If we walk in the light...His blood cleanses us." That would mean if it's talking about a believer there, that if a believer didn't walk in the light, his sins would be unforgiven. You see.

In other words, the cleansing is conditional on the walk. So if a believer does not walk in the light, if he strayed over into the dark deeds, the blood of Christ would stop cleansing him. Well, friends that's theological suicide. I do not believe that any believer can be characterized as in the darkness in this text. Let me show you why.

In Acts 26:18, to begin with, I'll read these to you. Just jot the text down. You don't have to look it up. Acts 26:18, "To open their eyes," this is why Paul preached to open their eyes to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light." Salvation is a turning from darkness to light. All right?

1 Thessalonians 5:4 and 5, stay with me. Now watch it, "But ye brethren," to the believers, "are not in darkness." Verse 5, "Ye are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night, nor of the darkness." Is it believer of the darkness? No, he is not of the darkness. He is of the light. He is of the day.

One more, Colossians 1:12 and 13, listen to it. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Now according to those passages, the believer has no part in darkness. We're in the light. We are in the light.

So these verses, back to 1 John, do not then have primary reference to believers who are out of fellowship. They have primary reference to unbelievers who claim to be a part of the fellowship, but who obviously by walking in the darkness prove that they are not part of the fellowship.

Now notice how it reads when you consider it to be an unbeliever. Verse 6, "If some unbeliever says that he has fellowship with Christ and walks in darkness, it's obvious he lies and doesn't do the truth." "But we believers walking in the light as He is in the light have fellowship with one another and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin."

Walking in the light friends is not an option in the Christian light, that is the Christian light. Do you see it? Any believer is walking in the light and the blood of Christ is cleansing him. You say yeah, I may be walking in the light, but what happens when I sin? Well, once in a while you can do the deeds of darkness, but you are in the light.

Listen friends, if being a believer isn't being in the light, what is it? We are in the light and consequently the blood of Christ cleanses us. It's not saying if you believers keep your life pure, you know, and...I mean, after all that would be ridiculous. If we kept our lives pure, we wouldn't need the blood of Christ to cleanse us, right?

If that referred to a believer, why would he say "If you walk in the light," which means, you know, constantly doing what God wants, why would the blood of Christ keep on cleansing us? We wouldn't have anything to cleanse. That meant a believer's walk. That's a position of a believer. He is in the light.

We're in the light and the blood of Christ does cleanse. Then in classic apostolic fashion, John gives to those unbelievers an invitation to come into the true fellowship, verse 9. Now he says, you've been faking it, how would you like to be a real part? Here's how. "If you confess our sins, He's faithful and just," to what, "forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from," how much unrighteousness, "all unrighteousness."

Now, some people say well that refers to a Christian and if a Christian confesses His sins, then he's forgiven. How much is he going to be forgiven of? What does it say? All, so if he did it once, how many times would he have to do it again? If he's forgiven of all unrighteousness, you see once you confess your sins, what are you forgiven of and cleansed of? All unrighteousness. Doesn't leave a whole lot left.

Verse 9 is an invitation to the counterfeit fellowship, to come into the real fellowship by confessing sin, then in turn God forgives and cleanses and the verb there is linear keeps on cleansing. Keeps on cleansing. Keeps on cleansing from all unrighteousness.

To say that a believer has to keep on confessing for forgiveness, is to make forgiveness contingent on confession. Did you get that? If that's a believer, then it means every time you sin, you have to confess to be forgiven. And I read several books this week that said that. That you have to confess to be forgiven. I don't believe that. I don't believe a Christian has to go through his life constantly,

constantly, constantly, asking God please forgive me, please forgive me, please forgive me. You know what you're doing, you're making a mockery out of the cross. Jesus said at the end of the cross, "It is finished." Once you confess and ask forgiveness, He cleanses you from all sin.

And to deny that I believe is to deny the full work of the cross and the word that says all our sins are under His blood. Now let me show you something interesting. You say well, gee, I didn't think 1 John was written to an unbeliever. Well, the first chapter has applications of an unbeliever, obviously, we've just seen that. But now watch how he changes and talks to the believer in verse 1 of Chapter 2.

Are you ready for this? Now, "My little children, these things write I unto you." Do you see a transition there? Sure. "That ye sin not. If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Does he say that we need...we little children need to confess? Does it say that there?

It just says, "Now, getting to us, little children, we have an advocate." You see the difference? So that you don't stack up two sins in a row. Every time you sin, it's under the blood, just as fast as it happens. You say that sounds like license. No, no, it doesn't work that way.

Now look at verse 12 of Chapter 12. "I write unto you little children because your sins," what? What's the key word there? "Are." "I write unto you little children because your sins are forgiven because you confess them." Is that what it says? What does it say? "For His name sake." Just because of who Jesus is and what He did little children they're all forgiven. You see that in the life of a believer, forgiveness is not contingent upon confession. You don't need to ask God to forgive you. He did.

Confession...you say, well shouldn't I ever talk about my sin? Of course, you should. You just go to Him and say God I'm sorry and I repent. But you don't have to say please forgive me, please forgive me, please forgive me, He already did. He already did.

Let me show you. Romans Chapter 4, I want you to watch this because it's very important. And I told you we were going to have a short message tonight and I meant it. Romans 4, you'll see, maybe. Romans 4:6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness apart from works." Now listen here it comes. "Saying blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Now, who is that man? That's the believer and God never imputes one single solitary sin against any believer any time. You can't stack them up friends. And they're not forgiven on the basis of confession. I can't see it.

Colossians 2:13, listen to this, Colossians 2:13 says it. Here it comes. Are you ready? "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh," watch this, "hath He," that is Christ, "made alive," now watch it, "having forgiven you all trespasses." Did you hear that? How many? All.

Now when did He forgive them all? When you were saved. Now watch this. One more and there are more than just these. Ephesians 4:32, listen to this. This is really something. "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath," what, "forgiven you." Hath, what tense is that? Past tense.

Oh your sins are forgiven. Your sins are forgiven. You don't ever need to ask God to forgive your sins. You like what Paul says in Romans 5 when he says, "In this grace in which we stand," we stand in grace. We do not beg God to forgive. Oh yes, we ask Him with humble hearts to lead us, to guide us, to instruct us, to reveal His will to us, and then when we fail in those areas to follow Him, we get on our knees and in sorrow we cry out and repentance don't we?

But we don't beg Him to forgive us. We say God, I'm sorry, I want it to be different. I agree with You. I acknowledge my sin and I thank you for already having forgiven me. See, it's exciting. See that's why no believer ever has to worry about losing his salvation, because as soon as the sin comes along, it's forgiven.

So fellowship then is based upon God's grace. That's going more into 1 John 1:9 than we anticipated. Fellowship is based on God's grace. It is based on my personal faith in Christ. It is based on confessing my sin one time and asking Him to forgive me and come into my life and the He keeps on and cleanses me from all unrighteousness.

And then you know what happens when I do that, I am in the fellowship. That's exciting. And my fellowship is with God. Have you ever fellowshiped with God? It's terrific isn't it? With Christ, oh I love that. With the Spirit, sweet fellowship. And with everybody else who's in the body. And you know how long this fellowship's going to go? Forever. And it's only going to get sweeter, because when we get to heaven everybody's going to get in on it see.

That's the goal of the gospel friends to create an eternal fellowship, did you know that? True fellowship isn't based on church membership. It isn't based on a religious deed. It isn't based on good works. It isn't based on church attendance. It isn't based on claiming to be in the fellowship, that's counterfeit. It's based on salvation.

Now I want you to keep in mind the concept of confession though, because we're going to see how even in a believers life though we do not ask for forgiveness, we need to open up our hearts and admit to God our sin and we'll see that in weeks to come. What is the basis of fellowship then?

Salvation.

I'm going to close right there. And next week we'll talk about the other areas. Told you. Because I want to say a couple of more things and then I want to...no I'm just kidding. But I want you to get a grip on this theme. And I want to say this as we close our message tonight. There may be some of you here tonight who aren't in the fellowship and may I please say to you with all the love that I can in my heart, I do not want you to get the idea that we feel our fellowship is exclusive.

It's not an us for, no more, shut the door, not at all. It's not a...it's not a super sanctimonious kind of sectarianism. Not at all. Listen the fellowship that we have with Jesus Christ is something that we want every single one of you to have. Somebody probably asked you to come here tonight. If you're not a Christian, you're not in the fellowship. The fellowship of all those around the world who love Jesus Christ. Somebody probably asked you to come and you know why they asked you, because they loved you and because they wanted to open the fellowship a little bit and get you in it.

You say well, I'd like to be in the fellowship. My heart is lonely, my hunger for answers, and I want to know truth and reality, how can I get in the fellowship? I tried to tell you tonight. By believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and falling down on your knees before Him and saying Christ, I confess my sin, please forgive me, come into my life.

And in the split second when that happens, you'll come into the fellowship and from then on every sin that comes into your life will be forgiven instantly. And some day when you leave this world, you'll enter into the presence of God.

An eternal joy forever. That's what the fellowship's all about. We don't want to keep you out. We want you in. We're here to share with you. And if you don't know Jesus Christ tonight and you're not in this fellowship, I'd beg you in Christ stead, receive Him, ask Him to cleanse your life, forgive your sin, place you into the fellowship of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Let's bow in prayer. Father, tonight we just have rejoiced. We've learned some things tonight. And we rejoice because we're in the fellowship not because we deserve it, oh we didn't deserve it. We know that. Not because we were worthy of it, far from that. But because you called us by Your grace and love into the fellowship of Your Son. Oh Father, what a joy that is. Thank you and then to think that You just keep on cleansing us. What a thrill.

Lord, we realize too that there perhaps are some here tonight, we know there are, who aren't in the fellowship, who don't know what it is to walk and talk with God. Who don't know what it is to just feel the love of Jesus Christ and His arms about them. Who don't understand the precious sense of the indwelling Spirit and all the power that He gives.

Father, tonight I pray that they might come into the fellowship.

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