

Transcript 0 20250824

We are talking about this idea of reset, right? So we've talked about the reset of salvation, making sure that we're where we need to be in our walk with God and being right with Him in salvation.

Then last week, and we're going to get back to the text in Acts chapter 2 and read some more of it,

but we kind of began down this thought process of, okay, once we become a child of God, then what's

next? That's not, becoming a Christian is not the finish line, it's the starting point. And sometimes

we kind of have that idea that, okay, we've become a Christian, it's over. No, it's just beginning.

We're talking about kind of this idea of getting stuff, and that's really what we're looking at.

Last week, we talked about the idea of being devoted to the Word of God, devoted to His study,

and I hope maybe you didn't jump into a brand new Bible study this past week, but if you were with

us last week, maybe you were more in tune with that thought. Maybe that was your first step

of being more in tune with the idea of, I do need to study more, thinking about it more.

Sometimes that is the first step in the process of being more aware that I've got to be engaged

with the Word of God more. This week, we're going to talk about the idea of our relationships,

of being devoted to fellowship. And we'll get to that idea in that text here in just a few moments.

But if you go to John 13, and we'll start in verse 34 in just a moment, as Jesus is sharing kind of his last family moment, if you will, with his apostles, he has his 12 closest friends,

you know, right here with him in this story, in this moment.

and he takes an opportunity to give them one really final powerful command, one final moment

to teach them a lesson that is going to really kind of set their direction of how they deal with

things as they move forward in what they are fixing to have to do. So starting in verse 34,

actually we can back up and really start in verse 31. When he was gone, he's talking about

uh, Judas here. He says, now Jesus, the son of man is glorified and God is glorified in him.

If God is glorified in him, God will by the son of man in himself and will glorify him at once.

My children, I will, uh, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me. And just as

I told the Jews, so I'll tell you now where I'm going, you cannot go. So he's letting them know,

Like, there's going to be a time here really soon that I'm not going to be right here with you.

And that's kind of one of those.

So let me have your attention.

Like, you really need to listen to what I'm about to say.

So it says, a new command I give you.

Love one another as I have loved you.

So you must love one another.

By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.

Now, is the command of love one another, is that a new command?

Is that something that was new to them?

That command itself was not a new command.

What's the new part of the command that he gives them?

Love one another as what?

As I have loved you.

To me, there's a great statement there.

There's a great maybe new idea that he's trying to get them to understand.

If you think about 12 guys at this point, 11 guys that are sitting around the table with Jesus,

and you think about where they've come from, you think about just these 12 guys and their background.

You've got blue-collar workers, okay, the fishermen in particular, but blue-collar worker type guys.

And Peter, who was outspoken and impulsive, kind of bold, I'm going to go headfirst into it, Andrew, who is quiet.

but yet he's always kind of bringing people to Jesus.

You've got James, who is ambitious,

kind of positions himself for power in some moments.

You've got John, who is called the disciple

that Jesus loves.

He's kind of that best friend, but he's hardworking.

But just these guys are just ordinary men, all right?

They're two sets of brothers.

They're close-knit guys.

Then you've got a tax collector, all right?

A guy that you would not think,

if you're building the roster of guys

that are gonna lead the cause in the church.

The tax collector in Matthew is not the guy

that you're going to pick.

But the fact that he's a tax collector

probably means that he's wealthy,
probably means that he's well-educated,
but yet he's despised by Jewish people
because he's working for the Roman government.

Then you've got a guy in Simon who's a zealot.

And a zealot is basically a radical anti-Roman,
some people would even call them terrorist,

that everything that they do, it's about tearing down the Roman establishment. So you
take a tax

collector and a zealot, and what normally happens when you put two people like that
together,

you've got conflict all the time. You would never put two guys on the same team. Then
you have just

ordinary guys like Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and then James. They're not really
the kind of guys

you would put on the team.

And then what we know about Judas

on the back end of his story,

he's gonna be the betrayer.

If you knew that on the front end,

how many of you would have signed Judas up

to be one of the 12?

None of us would have done that, right?

So Jesus is saying, look,

I took all 12 of you guys three years ago,

guys that come from all different backgrounds,

guys that are completely different in personalities,

and I put you together.

And in these three years,

I have loved you to the point that now you've become family.

Now we are this unit of guys that love each other, that take care of one another, that we're all moving in the same direction.

And as you now take the lead, fixing to leave, what I need you to do is I need you to go out and love everybody and love them in the same way that I have loved you. Love everybody in the same

way that sets the tone, that sets the table to bring everybody together in the same way that my

love has brought all of you together despite all of your differences. Now, let's fast forward to Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2, and we look in our section here, starting in verse 42. It says,

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread,

and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

And I want you to really key in on verse 44.

All the believers were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Now, the reason I ask you to really pay attention to verse 44 is because of that phrase.

All the believers were together and had what?

Everything in common.

Say that phrase again.

Had everything in common.

Now, if you sit down and you go back into Acts chapter 2 and you read where all these people are from,

these people come from 15 different cultural backgrounds.

15 different cultural backgrounds.

They come from Rome.

They come from Saudi Arabia and that area.

They come up from European areas.

They come from around Egypt.

They come from all kinds of different places, all right?

15 different cultural backgrounds,

even though their Jewish faith has a commonality with them.

That's why they're in Jerusalem to begin with.

But their background come from very different,

because there's all these different languages that were spoken by the apostles that day.

Now, I want us to kind of bring this down a little bit, a little bit into,

let's really think about this for a second.

Instead of 15 languages, let's take 15 people.

We're going to take 15 people, and we're going to load up on the bus.

Okay, I need 15 volunteers.

We're going to load up on the bus, and we're going to drive for the next five hours.

And in five hours, I'm going to ask a question.

Hey, where do y'all want to go eat?

It's time to eat.

Jamie, how many different places are people want to go eat?

We've got 15 people on the bus, 15 different places,

at least five at the minimum.

But we're going to have 15 different ideas of where we go eat.

Somebody in the back is going to go,

it's probably going to be one of the wives.

I don't care where we go eat.

And then someone's going to say, well, how about we go fill in the blank?

And that person that just said, I don't care where we go eat, what are they fixing to say, coach?

I don't want to go there.

I don't care where we eat, but I don't want to go there.

Okay?

That's funny.

We understand what we're trying to say.

How amazing is it that Scripture says that these thousands of people from all of these places had everything in common?

Do you think they had everything in common?

Or do you think they had everything in common that mattered?

I think they had everything in common that mattered.

And it all goes back to sitting around the table with Jesus and Jesus saying,

a new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you.

That translates into our text as they gathered together daily in the temple courts

and they devoted themselves to the reading of God's word,

the teaching of Jesus, and to, starts with F,

fellowship, which within fellowship is the idea. It's motivated. The core of fellowship

is not a casserole dish, although casserole dishes are a huge part of our fellowship,

right? And we're going to talk about that in a minute. It needs to be core of fellowship.

The motivation behind fellowship is what Jesus talked about back in John as he's sitting with

his apostles, the core of fellowship is the word what? Love. And when we love one another,

when we love each other like Jesus has loved us, when we love each other, and it doesn't matter

what backgrounds are, it doesn't matter where we come from, we know that we come together and sit

down in this room, sit down at a table, and despite our differences, that at that table in this room,

we are loved, then our differences aren't what we're defined by. It's what we have in common

through Jesus. And in that way, we have everything that is important in common.

And the differences aren't what matter. In the world and in our culture today,

people want to point out the differences way before they point out what we have in common.

because they want the argument.

They want the division.

Jesus said it is the love that brings us together.

Now, I think this is maybe,

and as I've thought about it this week,

and as I've studied the last couple of weeks on this idea,

some things that I've been listening to here recently

on this idea of fellowship and where we are as a culture,

I truly believe this idea of fellowship might be up as one of the most important things that churches need to be focusing on right now.

And I'm going to explain to you why here in just a second.

And I know that in saying that, some people might say, well, no, Matthew, doctrine needs to be.

And I'm not saying doctrine is not important, but I'm thinking about the future of our church, the future of evangelism,

the future of our society and where our society is going and where it's struggling right now

and where the church can play a role in that and the difference that we can make in the world right

now. Fellowship is the answer to what people are looking for. Now, once the, and that's the entry

point. Now, once they get here, yes, we have to teach truth. And I'm not ever saying we don't teach

truth. Don't hear me, Brian. You hear me? I'm saying we have to teach what? Truth. Always,

forever and always. Jamie, we always have to teach. But the door to that in our society right now

is in fellowship. Let me explain why. Some of the latest studies that are being done in our culture

are telling us this. We have two generations, my generation, the millennials. If you are qualified

as a millennial, raise your hand. Do you know if you're a millennial?

Yeah, are you younger than me?

You're a millennial.

I'm 41 years old.

If you are younger than me, raise your hand.

If you're younger than 45, raise your hand.

Let's do that.

If you're younger than 45, raise your hand, okay?

I am talking about you right here, right now.

Millennials, Generation Z, okay?

That is who we're talking about in these studies right now.

They are now qualified as some of the loneliest people in our country, even though they are also

some of the most connected people in our country, especially Generation Z have grown up.

Where's mine? They have grown up with these things in their hand and have more connectivity

in their life than any generation before. So for those of you younger than me, especially

this section, did you know that there was a time that if something happened today,

you didn't find out about it till tomorrow? How many of y'all remember that time? You got up and

got the newspaper out of the newspaper box the next to find out what happened yesterday.

and you were excited that you could find out what happened yesterday now you know what happens

before it happened right ai artificial intelligence has taken it to a different level the connectivity

and the studies are saying about it right now as to where social media was the biggest culprit of it

artificial intelligence, the big one right now being chat GPT. And for some of you, you're like,

what in the world is this? And I'm going to try to explain it to you because it's so important

about what we're talking about today. But for those of you that do know, a year ago, 2024,

a study that Stanford did showed that they just recently have done this study, that last year,

The most common prompt to chat GPT, which the easiest way to describe it is it is a massively smart Google search, okay, that pulls a lot of information and puts it right at your fingertips.

The most common prompt was help me find fill in the blank.

It was used as a research tool.

Help me find this answer.

Help me find that answer.

Help me with this question, especially from parents.

Help me solve this math problem, okay, as I'm trying to help my kids with this homework.

So it was help me with this research.

Into 2025, the number one prompts for the type of AI-generated conversations are around therapy.

I have this problem.

They're going to computers, basically, to receive therapy and companionship to the point that you can take these artificial intelligent computers and you can create identities within them.

And the easiest way for me to describe it for our older generation is to where you might send me a text message and we might have a conversation on a text message back and forth.

millennials in generation z are having conversations with computers that way

and they're having those relationships that way and they are getting to the point to where they're

not just general conversations and they're getting deeper and i want you to use your imagination

because i'm not going to go any deeper kids but let your mind go there that's where these things

are going, okay? We have a lonely young group in our country that have more connectivity

and fewer relationships than any other generation before them. And if you think social media

was bad, artificial intelligence is fixing to take the mental health crisis and just run off

a cliff with it. That's a problem. That is a problem. Now, you might be thinking, well, that's

just what happens with younger generations. They're just, here's the side of that. In the same studies,

do you know what two generations are coming back to church more than any other generations in

America right now. Can you guess? Millennials and Generation Z are coming back to

church

in larger numbers than generations post-COVID. What does that mean for us? It means that

we have opportunities, that we have the loneliest generations of young adults and teenagers that

have ever existed in our country, and they are looking for connectivity in ways that they've never looked before. They are looking for real relationships because they are so hungry for them.

They've never really had them before, and they are so hungry for them, they're turning to artificial

relationships to try to find it. But what they're finding is that those artificial relationships is a

cotton candy. They look great, and the second you bite into cotton candy, where does it go?

It disappears. It's not real. So, what is the answer to that? They devoted themselves to the

apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to fellowship. If we are a church that is devoted to true

biblical fellowship, to Christian fellowship, to Jesus loving fellowship, to just fellowship.

When someone walks in, they just feel, I am loved here.

Are you going to be able to fill this building? Absolutely. Are we going to have to put seats in

the aisle? Absolutely. You won't be able to stop the growth because of fellowship. It is the most

needed thing in our culture right now, Jesus-centered fellowship. Now, the question is,

that's a lot. I've got 10 minutes and it's going to be time to go. It's a big preference to get to

the biblical side of what I want to talk about this morning. But I want you to understand,

the reason I spent all that time on it is I want you to understand what the problem is in our

culture, in our nation, in our community, in our homes. Haleval is not, we like to think we

live

in a small town, little community. We're exempt from some of these big world problems. We're not.

This is happening in our community as well. So how do we become a church that's focused on

fellowship? That's what we've got to figure out. So how did the first century church focus on

fellowship, okay? The first place, or there's three places to me that you see fellowship.

One is right here. One is fellowship and worship. One is fellowship and worship. We see that

they came to the temple courts daily, and in that time together, they worshiped with one another.

They prayed with one another. They built their life around scripture with one another. True

Fellowship is about social connectivity, but the difference in fellowship and just friendship in the world is that its base, its center is Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit.

It's not football.

It's not cheerleading.

It's not baseball.

It's not fishing.

Okay?

It's not those things.

It's centered and grounded in a relationship with God first and foremost.

And you see this early group of Christians came together at the beginning. They came together

every day to spend time to connect with each other spiritually and to have that spiritual devotion

with one another. As you continue to read through the book of Acts, you see that kind of their rhythm

and their routine brought them together on the first day of the week. And that became that they're

they're like, we're, this is our non-negotiable time to be together. And you see that that continued through early church history and even till today. Okay. That that's kind of our, our,

our mark in the week that we're going to, if nothing else, no matter what goes on in the world

on this day, we're going to be together and spiritually fellowship with one another.

Now, sometimes I wish we wouldn't be so hung up on, we got to only do it in an hour because

some of us eat,

it takes us longer to eat dinner

than it does to go to church, okay?

Sometimes.

That's another sermon.

I don't have time to get into that, okay?

That's a good meal, though.

If it's taking you an hour to eat,

that's a good meal.

Fellowship and worship.

Come together, be together.

This time is vital

to not just your connection to God,

but your connection to one another.

speaking of food they fellowshiped around tables that was so prevalent in the first century

and if you study the early church writers the second century and the church in the third century

in our text they broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts if you

go and look in jude verse or jude 1 12 it's really just verse 12 you'll see paul reference

what's called the love feast. When you look in 1 Corinthians and the issue that

Paul is having with the Lord's Supper and kind of pair it into what goes on in the second and

third century writings of the early Christian fathers of their kind of history of the first

or of the second and third century church, you see that part of their time together

was this idea of basically almost every time they got together was this huge meal that they called a

love feast, an agape feast of fellowship that was part of their Sunday every time they got together.

And Paul, I feel like is addressing that in 1 Corinthians where he says, you come together and

some of you leave full and some of you don't get anything. Some of you get there early and it's just

all about eating. And I've always been like, well, how do you do that off of the Lord's Supper? Well,

you don't do that just off of the Lord's Supper itself,

but if you put it in the context of this love feast

where there is a meal tied into this time together,

it would be like next week is potluck, right?

Church, eat church.

It'd be like some of you showing up before bringing your food

and like this side of the auditorium is going to show up

and do the class, go ahead and eat.

You're going to eat all the food, have all the fellowship,

have all the wine, and this side is going to get left out.

And Paul's addressing all of it.

And he's saying you've missed the whole point.

You have forgotten the body aspect, the fellowship aspect of it.

It's just about feeding yourself.

But you see through Scripture the importance of gathering around a table and sharing a meal with one another.

You know what I've learned in life?

People talk more over a plate than they do anywhere else.

If you get someone set at a table and you get them comfortable,

You get them relaxed.

You get them, you know, two or three glasses of tea into the conversation.

You know, a good blooming onion or some onion strings or something, you know, something like that.

A good barbecue sandwich, you know, people will get to talking.

They'll share about their day.

They'll share about their life.

They'll share about their struggles.

Table fellowship, it was a huge part of what happened in the first century church.

I love the fact that we have our fellowship meal every week.

A lot of people, a lot of churches do fellowship fifth Sundays, right?

I love that it is a monthly thing that we do as a church family.

It's a biblical thing that we do as a church family.

And I love that it is part of our shared lives with one another.

But it serves a great, great, great purpose.

But that all needs to lead into that idea that verse 44 through 45, all the believers were together and had everything in common.

Fellowship wasn't just about worship.

Fellowship wasn't just about meal.

It spilled over into their daily lives.

It spilled over into the ball games.

It spilled over into going to Walmart.

How many of you have ever been to Walmart and you went to Walmart for five minutes and you were there for an hour and a half?

Not because you were shopping, but because everybody from church was there.

Everybody from everywhere was there.

The other day I went, Patty was at Walmart for two and a half hours the other day, y'all.

I don't know what she did.

I was there.

I left, went to the doctor's office and came back.

And she was still there.

Then she goes, I got to go tell Brian.

He's got to take me out to dinner because I don't have time to cook what I bought.

So sounds like she just wanted to go out to dinner, Brian.

I don't know.

But, you know, that's fellowship, right?

That is fellowship.

Fellowship is those moments that we just live life together,

that when times are bad, when times are tough, when times are difficult,

I don't have to worry about going through this moment by myself

because I know because of the life of fellowship that we live with one another,

we're going to be alone.

That's what's important.

If my relationships are built around worldly things, a lot of times when things get tough, my friends disappear.

If I'm built around fellowship, around God, around the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit,

I should know that I'm never going to be alone.

That's the beauty of fellowship.

So, Lulu told me, this is fellowship.

Unless you become like one of these children, you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

This is fellowship.

Lulu told me Friday night at the ballgame, somebody upset Ellie, pushed Ellie down some boy.

Britton comes up, goes, I'll take care of it.

She said, next thing she knows, here comes Britton and this little boy.

This little boy is apologizing to Ellie four times.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

Shouldn't have done it.

You know what that is?

That's fellowship.

That is, you are never alone.

Doesn't matter what you're going through.

I'm here with you.

We are in this boat together.

And if you're hurting, I'm going to do everything I can do to take care of you and vice versa.

If we carry each other's burdens, guess what?

Everybody's burdens get carried.

That's what fails.

And that is what our culture needs right now more than it's ever needed.

And you know who is built to do that more than anybody else?

The church.

that's what we're called to do because jesus says i want you to love as i have loved you

and if we do that we do everything else we save souls we make disciples we teach jesus

we get people to have we have to be devoted to fellowship that means next week when we eat

come and eat be devoted it's not just a meal it's not just it's it's about sharing time with one

other be devoted to fellowship when we do that we're going to take care of much more than just

our physical bodies