



Lord's Day Worship

May 31, 2020

Opening Scripture Reading & Prayer of Thanksgiving

Read or have someone in your home read Eph. 2:17-22 aloud and then have an open time of prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for His goodness and mercy. After closing in prayer, you may begin to play the service audio or video from the church website.

Riverwood Family Greeting

Thad Gardner & Sam Waltman

Song of Praise

"Behold Our God"

Elder Greeting

Daniel Scarbrough

Song of Praise

"His Mercy is More"

The Teaching of the Word

Credo – Part 17– “The Communion of the Saints”

Song of Response

"The Church's One Foundation"

Benediction

Read or have someone in your home read aloud Eph. 4:4-6

CREDO

- "I Believe" -

The Christian Faith in a Faithless World

Part 17

"The Communion of the Saints"

31 May 2020

Introduction: Fellowship & Exile

- All people experience difficulty as they live life in a fallen world. For believers, however, we are given the privilege by God of sharing our lives with His people for our mutual encouragement.

Phil. 3:17-20—¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Key Point: The work of the Holy Spirit has brought about a union with our brothers and sisters in Christ which we experience _____ in the Church and which points to the _____ fellowship that we will have with God and His people throughout all eternity.

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH,
AND IN JESUS CHRIST
HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD,
WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,
BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY,
SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE,
WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED & WAS BURIED,
HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD,
ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN
FROM THE DEAD
HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN,
AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE
FATHER ALMIGHTY;
FROM THERE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.
I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT;
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH;
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS;
THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS;
THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY,
AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.
AMEN.

The Holy Spirit: His Work

When we take God for our God, we...take His people for our people..." — Matthew Henry

- We believe there is a *fellowship* with the Lord and with one another that the Holy Spirit effects for believers of all ages.

⇒ There are distinct _____ of God across the various dispensations (ages).

Psa. 81:13—Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! (Also of Egypt in Isa. 19:25)

1 Pet. 2:10a—Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; (See also Rom. 9:24-26)

- Believers in various ages experienced the work of the Spirit and access to God differently.

Psa. 51:11—Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Eph. 2:18—For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

"The chief advent of the Holy Spirit is...after the ascension of Christ to heaven...For, before that, [He] was upon the prophets alone, and upon a few individuals..." — Origen of Alexandria, *First Principles* (3rd C.)

- In spite of this, believers from all ages are referred to as "saints."

ἅγιος (*hagios*)—sacred (pure, morally blameless or religious, consecrated):—(most) holy (one, thing), a saint.

1. Israel (2 Chron. 6:41) 2. Christians (Rom. 1:7) 3. In the Tribulation (Rev. 14:12) 4. In the Millennium (Dan. 7:27)

Key Point: Believers from all ages are all saints because of their relationship to God who alone is _____ !

1 Pet. 1:15-16—¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY [Lev. 19:2]."

⇒ The fellowship that the various peoples of God have with Him and with one another is _____ during the dispensations (ages) in which they live.

"fellowship"—κοινωνία (*koinōnia*)—Close association or relationship; communion or fellowship; participation in or with.

In the OT

- Israel's fellowship with one another was grounded in their shared _____ and _____ heritage which was based on their covenant relationship to God.

- Although the OT does not describe Israel's relationship with God in terms of fellowship (instead in terms of master servant), it does picture their fellowship with Him and one another through their _____ and _____.

- Although not their experience in life, fellowship with God was the eternal _____ for the OT saint.

Psa. 23:6b—I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Isa. 25:6a,8a—On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food...He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces...

In the NT

- * Believers in Jesus Christ experience fellowship together with one another regardless of our ethnicity or _____ because we are all indwelt by the Spirit and united to Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 12:13—*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*

- * Believers in Jesus Christ have unique _____ with God the Father through the Son and by the Spirit.

Eph. 3:11-12—¹¹*This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,* ¹²*in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.*

Key Point: Believers from all ages can experience fellowship with Him and one another because He has _____ us all to Himself through the blood of His Son.

Col. 1:20—*and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

⇒ **Believers in Jesus Christ experience the communion of the Saints as we _____ to the Church.**

- * The Spirit of God has gifted us for the purpose of _____ one another.

1 Cor. 12:4-7—⁴*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;* ⁵*and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;* ⁶*and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.* ⁷*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

1 Pet. 4:9-10—⁹*Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.* ¹⁰*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace*

- * The Spirit of God enables us to _____ one another sacrificially.

Rom. 5:5b—*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

⇒ **Believers in Jesus Christ experience the communion of the saints as we _____ on the lives of those who have gone before us and anticipate eternity with them.**

- * Through _____, we are united to those who have gone before us.

Heb. 11:39-12:2—³⁹*And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,* ⁴⁰*since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.* ¹*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,* ²*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Heb. 12:22-24—²²*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,* ²³*to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,* ²⁴*and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

Key Point: Our present experience of communion together with one another anticipates our _____!

"Little is said concerning the activity of the citizens of that eternal kingdom, but certainly clues are given to us in Rev. 22:1-4. We will occupy ourselves with fellowship, not only with the Triune God but with the saints of all the ages. We can infer this from the reference to the fruit trees (v.2). Throughout Scripture eating is used as a picture for fellowship, and without doubt unlimited fellowship will occupy us throughout the unending ages of eternity." —Dwight Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come*

Concluding Thoughts

1. We experience the communion of the saints as we are _____ by the Spirit from God's Word.

2. We experience the communion of the saints as we are _____ by the Spirit to serve others.