

Message

Sunday April 7, 2024

“KOINONIAN GOD GATHERS HIS PEOPLE WITH GRACE, PEACE & LOVE”

Pastor Hans Peethala

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small Australian flags were mounted on either side of it. The six-year-old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside him, and said quietly, "Good morning, Fred."

"Good morning, Pastor," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque. "Pastor Hans, what is this?" Fred asked.

"Well, son, it's a memorial to all the men and women who have died in the service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Fred's voice was barely audible when he finally managed to ask, "Which one, the 06:30 or 09:30 service?"

Dear Friends! We all survived the 06:30 and 09:30 am Services and we thank God for the new life. We are not afraid of death anymore. Death has lost the battle by the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

What brings you back to this church service after Easter?

A happy Christian one day met an Irish salesperson and said to him. "It's a grand thing to be saved." "Aye," said the salesperson, "it is. But I know something better than that." "Better than being saved?" asked the other. "What can you possibly know better than that?" **"The companionship of the Man who has saved me," was the reply. The companionship of Jesus! —we may all have it.**

Dear Friends! Yes, it is fellowship.

THEME: “KOINONIAN GOD GATHERS HIS PEOPLE WITH GRACE, PEACE & LOVE”

JOHN in his first letter 1:3 writes “We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

**How beautiful it is to hear that we are invited to join in fellowship with God the Trinity!** Dear Friends! Fellowship is the key ingredient in sharing the Gospel. The **Definition of fellowship in Oxford Dictionary is “Friendly association, especially with people who share one’s interests: they valued fun and good fellowship as the cement of the community”**. Koinonia is a [Greek](#) word (κοινωνία), which means communion, joint participation; a gift jointly contributed, a collection, etc. **It identifies the idealized state of fellowship and unity that should exist within the Christian Church, the Body of Christ.**

**Our God is a communion God, or a Fellowship God and I would like to call our God as “The Koinonian God”, He loves to have fellowship with us. In spite of the world spitting and mocking and persecuting and nailing him on the cross, He comes back to the world with open arms.**

God the Trinity shares a Holy Communion, a divine fellowship with each other. It's a similar communion that God invites us to join in. The fellowship of God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are inter woven with grace, love and peace that brings joy.

Let's look at what this fellowship is all about in 1 John 1:1-2:2.

### **1. FELLOWSHIP BEGINS WITH THE WORD!**

The declaration here reaches back to the beginning, just as it does in John. **The word of life, namely God's Son Jesus Christ, is the revealed source of life, the one who is to be proclaimed. This word is not disembodied; it is a tangible word, one that has been heard and seen and touched with the hands.**

Thomas was a daring and wrestling disciple. He wrestled with the truth. He was someone who wanted to hear, see, and touch the truth in his life. He said unless I see and touch, I will not believe. Thomas probably had faith that our God is God of Fellowship and He will have access to here, see and touch Jesus. **The good news is Jesus is the Koinonian God who loves to have fellowship with us “God Immanuel;”. He comes to us no matter where we are and gives us exactly what we need. We hear him through his word, we feel and touch him as we take the Holy Communion.**

### **2. FELLOWSHIP GIVES ACCESS TO PEACE**

The people needed God's peace. The first thing Jesus does when he appears in front of the disciples is “Sharing God's peace. Peace be with you”. Every Sunday we share God's peace to remind ourselves His peace helps us to have peace with our neighbours. I have witnessed in my ministry how passing the peace has softened people's heart to be with peace with the other person and share God's forgiveness with each other.

The cross and resurrection are inseparable in the Fourth Gospel and 1 John. The triumph of the cross in the gospel indeed expresses the reality of Easter morn. **That is to say that a theology of the cross is inseparable from a theology of resurrection. God's glory or presence (doxa) is most fully known in the cross event.** It's an important truth to remind us **that our Koinonian God is glorified through the Cross. The body and blood of Jesus on the cross is the act of saving grace so that we may live in God's light with a new life and a new fellowship.**

### **3. FELLOWSHIP LEADS US TO A TANGIBLE TRUTH**

**The truth that is being proclaimed** requires ongoing and faithful testimony. **The message must be proclaimed; it is not a private matter, something to be hoarded or kept under wraps. It is audible, visible, tangible truth, reaching back to the beginning of time.**

**The community is expected to listen, act, and then testify to what they know about this word of life, a word that makes an ultimate claim. This received and revealed truth performs the dual function of bringing about fellowship among the members of the gathered body and fellowship with God.**

Now we get to the problem in the Church. It seems, though, that this dual fellowship in the community of 1 John was in some kind of trouble; divergent views were undermining the life and teaching of the community. **Any community that confesses one thing and acts in a contrary manner is deceiving itself.**

If people know that God is light, yet act in shadowy ways, they undermine the very truth to which they testify. **Sadly, this is how the world looks at the Church.**

The writer presses this matter by constructing a series of parallel “if we” statements. If, for example, **we say we have fellowship while walking in darkness, we lie.** This blunt language points to insincerity, even hypocrisy among the members of the community. It is language well adapted for the confession of sins.

**How can we have fellowship with God (who is light) while walking in darkness? How can we say we have no sin when we are sinners? We lie if we do these things, and the truth, which we confess, is not in us. By denying that we are sinners, not only are we liars, but we make God out to be a liar as well. It is bad enough that we should be liars; it is truly ludicrous to make God, who is truth, a liar.**

**What we say and do, then, are not matters to be taken lightly; they have serious consequences. Our confession and action not only demonstrate what we are, but they also reveal what we really think God is.**

**The good news is “The one who is righteous, Jesus Christ, does for us that which we cannot do for ourselves. He makes reparation and brings about harmony between us and God and between us and other members of the community. And there is more. This is the good news. As we were baptised, we were invited to join God’s family that we may grow in fellowship with God and with each other. Jesus calls us by our names, and we experience the Kononian God in our baptism. We are baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Baptism reminds us we are born to have fellowship with God the Trinity and our neighbours.**

**The good news is our KOINONIAN GOD gathers us as one body in Christ through grace, peace, and love. Our Fellowship God unites us with the Holy Spirit to teach us God’s word and grow in fellowship with God’s love with one another. God’s power is at work as we fellowship with one another. God is giving us a vision to form fellowship care share groups to lead us to fellowship with each other and grow in love, peace, and joy. Amen**