

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **James 2:1-4; 2:8,9; 3:8-13; 4:1,6-8; 5:13-16.**
- B. There many things that Xians have that are alike and many things that are different. We are to be united in X (Jn. 17:20-22; 1Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3).  
(Jn 17:20-22) "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; **21** that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. **22** "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one;  
(1Cor 1:10) Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.  
(Eph 4:3) being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- C. Yet, we are different socially, economically, physically, financially and at one time religiously. Think of the extreme differences between Jews and Gentiles in the 1st century.
- D. What I am talking about this morning is fellowship. How are we to build fellowship one with another. We are to be devoted to the fellowship (Ac. 2:42).  
They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- E. In a most interesting way James deals with the issue of fellowship.

## I. **FAVORITISM HAS NO PLACE IN FELLOWSHIP.**

- A. Scripture text: James 2:1-4.  
My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of* personal favoritism. **2** For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, **3** and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?
- B. James tells the story of one who is rich and influential receiving better treatment from the brethren than one who is poor.
- C. Sometimes we think the same way; if we only converted one who is powerful in politics, or is rich in funds, or is influential with people we will have a better church. This is not so.
- D. In doing this we have made distinctions that God does make (Gal. 3:28; 1Cor. 1:26-29).  
(1Cor 1:26-29) For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; **27** but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, **28** and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, **29** that no man should boast before God.  
(Gal 3:28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## II. **PARTIALITY HAS NO PLACE IN FELLOWSHIP.**

- A. Scripture text: James 2:8-9.  
If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.
- B. James says we will show partiality if we act out of personal favoritism one to another.
- C. We will choose those people we want to help and will help from those we wish were helped.
- D. Jesus has commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:39).  
The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

## III. **THE TONGUE CAN BREAKDOWN FELLOWSHIP.**

- A. Scripture text: **James 3:8-13.**

But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; **10** from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. **11** Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*? **12** Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh. **13** Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

- B. What we say is powerful. Fellowship can be made or broken by what is said and what is not said. Everyone has the responsibility to build fellowship with what they say not tear it down.
- C. The tongue is explosive, but even dynamite when used properly is useful.
- D. May we never be guilty of speaking against a brother or sister for it is not wholesome, edifying, meeting any-needs or giving grace to those who hear (Eph. 4:29).
- E. Remember that Jesus said out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. We may be saying more than we think when we tear down w/words.
- F. James 4:11 says, to speak against a brother is to speak against the law of God. To speak against the law is to be a judge of it and not a doer thereof. Think of the consequences!

#### IV. LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWSHIP MEAN FELLOWSHIP.

- A. Scripture text: James 4:1, 6-8.  
What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?... **6** But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." **7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
- B. Throughout Bible history God has placed men and sometimes women in leadership positions to carry out His will with the people.
- C. But one often overlooked area is that of fellowship. Sometimes there was good leadership but no fellowship.
- D. Examples from the OT:
  - 1. The building of the tower of Babel (bad leadership--good fellowship).
  - 2. Moses in the wilderness (good leadership--bad fellowship).
  - 3. Joshua and Canaan (good leadership--good fellowship).
  - 4. Nehemiah and Jerusalem (good leadership--good fellowship).
- E. Today in the church, the elders are leaders. Those who rule well are to be followed. Not murmured against and disobeyed. We have leadership, so do we have fellowship? If we do, we will have good fellowship one with another.
- F. As we submit ourselves to God will we also submit ourselves to being good followers.

#### V. THERE IS FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

- A. Scripture text: James 5:13-16.  
Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. **14** Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; **15** and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. **16** Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
- B. We are not to have to bear our struggles alone. If we do we will fail.
- C. We can call for leaders and other Xians to work and pray in our behalf so that we overcome the trials and troubles in our life.
- D. As long as one in the church suffers and the church does not reach out to help there is a fellowship problem. Remember we are to be devoted to the fellowship.
- E. We are to pray one for another that we might be healed of troubles and sickness.

## CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We shall close this lesson with a sobering thought.
- B. Fellowship is gained in a congregation by not showing personal favoritism and partiality.  
We show fellowship by rightly choosing our words and being good followers.
- C. But if we persist in not being able to love and fellowship our brothers and sisters, then John teaches that we cannot love God as we should (1Jn. 4:20).  
*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.*
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.