

Fellowship with One Another

1John 1:5-7

Lent 2, March 20, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

When God speaks to you in the Gospel of John or in any of John's epistles, God speaks to you in simple categories.

God is light. There is no darkness in God.

God is light because God reveals. God does not conceal. If God concealed, He would be in darkness. God reveals and so God is light. A dark room conceals the furniture in it. A dark room conceals the toys that are scattered about on the floor. A light room reveals where the furniture is. A light room reveals where the toys are located on the floor. A dark room is dangerous. A light room is safe. A dark god is dangerous. A light God is safe.

These categories are not just for God. These categories are also for us.

If we are in the dark, we are not revealing something. We are hiding something. If we are in the light we have no secrets. We reveal everything. If we say we have fellowship with God and yet walk in darkness we lie and we are not practicing the truth.

If God is in the light and we are in fellowship with God, then we are also in the light. If God is light and we walk about in darkness then we do not have fellowship with God because God is light!

If we are concealing then we are not in fellowship with God because God is light. If we are in fellowship with God then we reveal because God is light.

Fellowship with God is sharing in the things of God. Fellowship with God shares in His light, His revelation, His righteousness, His life. Darkness lacks fellowship with God. Anyone who walks in darkness, does not share in His revelation, His righteousness, His life. Anyone who walks in darkness is concealing. He is hiding. Anyone who walks in light has nothing to hide, nothing to conceal. Anyone who walks in the light walks in the truth. Anyone who walks in the darkness does not do truth. He cannot live with the truth because in the darkness the truth is not revealed.

But if we walk about in the light just as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another. And there is the surprise.

God does this. He surprises us. He sets us up to expect Him to say that if we walk about in the light as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with Him. And indeed if we walk about in the light as He is in the light, then we do have fellowship with Him. It is only if we walk about in the darkness that we do not have fellowship with Him. But God surprises us when He says that if we walk about in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with one another.

Who is one another? It is anyone who walks in the light as He is in the light. When you walk in the light as He is in the light, then you not only have fellowship with God you have fellowship with everyone else who is walking the light along with you.

Those who walk in the light are those who walk in the revelation of God. They walk in everything that God has revealed. They do not hide anything.

God has revealed Himself and made revelation in the Word and the sacraments. Therefore anyone who participates in the word and the sacraments are those people with whom you have fellowship when you have fellowship with God. You cannot have fellowship with God while at the same time not having fellowship with those who participate in His Word and sacraments. That is to say you cannot have fellowship with God without at the same time also having fellowship with everyone else who is in the light. If you are in fellowship with God, you are in fellowship with those who are in fellowship with God. If you share in something with God, you automatically share in something with all those others who share in something with God. There is no way to avoid the other if you have fellowship with God. The only way to avoid fellowship with others is to avoid fellowship with God and walk in the darkness.

In simple straightforward terms, if you have fellowship with God you have fellowship with all those with whom God has declared Himself to be in fellowship. God declares Himself in fellowship with you when He reveals Himself to you. He reveals Himself to you in the Word and the sacraments. Therefore God declares fellowship with people when He baptizes them, when He speaks to them, and when He feeds them with His Son's body and blood. That is where the revelation is made. That is where the light is shed. If God is in fellowship with you, then you are in fellowship with everyone else who participates in these things. If you are not in fellowship with those who participate in these things, then you are automatically out of fellowship with God and in the darkness. There is no truth in you. You cannot be in fellowship with God without at the same time being in fellowship with those with whom He is in fellowship.

Our congregation keeps a book that lists the people with whom you are in fellowship in this congregation. It is our congregation's roster. It has a list of names in there. Those are the people with whom you are in fellowship when you are in fellowship with God.

I know that some of you think that certain names in the roster should be removed from the roster. If you wish a certain name to be removed from the roster, you should demonstrate to me whether or not that person has ceased to participate in the Word and the sacraments thereby putting themselves out of the light into the darkness. But be aware just because someone is not participating in the Word and the sacraments here does not mean that they are not participating in the Word and the sacraments some place else. And if they are participating some place else we may arrange for a release or transfer to that place. I will await the congregation's action in this regard.

Until then this list is the list of names with whom you are fellowship by virtue of the fact that they are in fellowship with the God with whom you are in fellowship. And when you walk in the light of His revelation, that is His Word and sacraments, not only are you in fellowship with each other, the blood of Jesus purifies you from every sin.

So if you are in fellowship with God, you are in fellowship with everyone else with whom God is in fellowship and in that condition of being in fellowship with God and others the

blood of Jesus cleanses you from every sin. If you are not in fellowship with those other people, you are not in fellowship with God. If you are not in fellowship with God then the blood of Jesus does not purify you from every sin. You are going to hell. The wrath of God remains upon you.

The blood of Jesus purifies everyone who is in fellowship with God. If it purifies one person who is in fellowship with God, it purifies everyone who is in fellowship with God.

Here is what that means. If you have been purified of the sins that you have committed against God, then everyone else in this roster who is in fellowship with God has also been purified of the sins that they have committed against God.

But the blood of Jesus purifies you from every sin. That being the case the blood of Jesus purifies you from every sin that you have committed against every other person in this roster. But since the blood of Jesus purifies the sin of everyone who is in fellowship with God then the blood of Jesus has also purified everyone on this roster who has sinned against you. If their sins that they have committed against you are not purified by the blood of Jesus, then the sins you have committed against them are not purified. If your sins are purified, so are theirs.

That is why you receive the blood of Jesus together. Only in exceptional circumstances do I give the blood of the Lord to people who are not gathered with the rest of the assembly to receive it. People with certain health problems cannot attend the Divine Service with the rest of us. In those cases I take the blood of Jesus to them so that they may receive it. But those are exceptional circumstances. In ordinary circumstances we receive the blood of the Lord together. In the Bible the Sacrament of the Altar is always celebrated in the context of an assembly of believers most commonly a local congregation. So you receive the blood of Jesus together.

When you approach this altar and the blood of Jesus purifies you of your sins, then it is also purifying everyone else at the altar of their sins. When the blood of Jesus purifies you of your sins at this altar that includes the sins you have committed against everyone else at this altar. That also means that the sins that they have committed against you are also purified at this altar.

Therefore at this altar not only do you have fellowship with God, but you also have fellowship with everyone else. If you do not have fellowship with everyone else at this altar, then you do not have fellowship with God either. That is why God commands that those who approach the altar recognize the body of the Lord, not just the body that is in with and under the bread but also the body that is the assembly of those in fellowship with God receiving His blood! If you fail to recognize that body also, then you are in the darkness, and the blood of Jesus condemns you rather than purify you. You have eaten and drunk unworthily.

So when you participate in the Word and the sacraments at Immanuel you are in the light. If you are in the light, you have fellowship with God. If you have fellowship with God you have fellowship with everyone else at Immanuel who participates in the same word and the same sacraments. And the blood of Jesus purifies you and them from every sin.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Chancel Drama:

Cast:

Two soldiers

One victim.

Two friends of the victim talking about the soldiers and the victim.

Scene one:

One soldier is holding the victim in front of the other soldier.

Soldier in front: Renounce Christ or die!

Victim: No! I will not renounce Christ. I believe in Jesus!

Soldier behind: (hits victim across the head. Victim falls to the floor).

Scene two:

The victim's friends are talking about him.

Friend one: Wow! He was brave. He shed his blood for the sake of Jesus Christ!

Friend two: True! But there is a blood that was shed that was more important than his.

Both look at the cross.