

The Fellowship of Believers

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[0 : 0 0] the book of Acts and that means this morning we are coming to Acts chapter 2 and we're going to be looking together at verses 42 to 47 a passage that is often called the fellowship of believers so it's Acts chapter 2 verses 42 to 47 now just before we we jump into this passage I just want to remind us of one thing so in the passage just before the one we're looking at this morning and the passage that Liam shared on last week we saw how Peter was preaching the gospel to anyone and everyone who would listen well we read in verse 41 which is the verse directly before our passage this morning that those who accepted his message that's Peter preaching under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he's preaching the gospel those who accepted his message were baptized and about 3,000 were added to their number that day so in our passage this morning as we consider the incredible togetherness that the early church believers had among them just keep in mind that the number at this point is fairly large you know we might kind of read our verses this morning we might think there's a small little gang of them but at the moment there is at least well over 3,000 people well over 3,000 people so it is about those thousands of early believers that we read these verses they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer everyone was filled with all at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles 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 looking at these verses there just seems to be an incredible togetherness among the early church believers that are described here in fact someone said when you read these verses it's almost like you are tasting honey in that when you read these verses you can almost taste the sweetness of the fellowship that they enjoyed among themselves what is described here really is so special what's described here is so positive in fact notice nothing at all negative is mentioned in these verses the early church believers as they're described here they are binded together in such a sweet positive special way and just looking at these verses we see that they were together in so many things verse 42 they were together in teaching fellowship breaking of bread prayer verse 43 they were together in all of the the wonders that the Lord was doing

verse 44 they were together in giving generously verse 44 they were together in giving generously they sold property and possessions to give to anyone that who was in need verse 46 they were together in meeting together they saw the value in meeting together and verse 47 and verse 47 they were together in worship they had glad and sincere hearts they praise God for what he was doing just looking at these things teaching fellowship breaking of bread prayer in all of what the Lord is doing having everything in common giving generously meeting together worship these great things are still very much the marks of the church today these are things that we are called to do encouraged to do as a community of believers and what we see here in these verses is these early believers as described in these verses are in a wonderful way together together in them all as we just briefly for a few minutes consider the togetherness that these early believers had I want us to to briefly consider the source of their togetherness and the blessing of their togetherness so for believers I want us to consider the source and the blessing of true togetherness and as we look at these things just for a few minutes it's my prayer that these things will encourage us as we as we move forward together so first the source of their togetherness the source of true togetherness well the New Testament I think is very very clear that for the believer the source of any true togetherness is the unity that we have in Christ it's the unity that we have in Jesus and Galatians chapter 3 verse 28 comes to mind there is neither Jew or Gentile neither slave or free

neither male or female for you are all one in Christ Jesus for these believers here in Acts chapter 2 the source of their togetherness is what they had in common in the Lord Jesus the source of their togetherness is they were one in the Lord Jesus they were one in Christ and there's no doubt about it they all had different personalities they all had different they were all different characters they had different strengths they had different weaknesses but they all had the wonderful great thing in common that they were all saved set free forgiven by the Lord Jesus through his death and resurrection they were all new creations in Christ 2 Corinthians chapter 5 they had all received they had all received the Holy Spirit

Acts chapter 2 and as new creations filled with the Spirit they were compelled by the Spirit to share the love of Jesus with others so the source of anything that they had truly in common was Christ was who he is what he had done for them who they wore in him and the mission that he had given them all the source of their togetherness was Christ when they looked to Christ they were together they were one well the same is true for for each one of us here this morning as Grace has been talking about for each one of us here this morning we are all different we have all different personalities we have all different characters we're different people but for us as believers the great experience the great reality that we all have in common is that we're all saved by grace as believers the great thing that we all have in common is that once we were blind but now we see the great thing that we all have in common is that for us as believers we have all been set free from the ultimate chains of sin death and the enemy we've been set free by those things through what the Lord Jesus has done for us on the cross and because we have been all set free because we have all been saved by Christ we read in Ephesians 4 4-6 in Christ there is one body one spirit one hope one Lord one faith one baptism one God and Father who is over all things we are all one in Christ so as believers the source of any true unity of any true togetherness is what we have in common in Christ when we look to Christ we are together when we look to what he has done for us we are together

Christ is the source of true togetherness well with that in mind with Jesus being the source of true togetherness when we look to Jesus we are together well with that being the case what then is the the blessing of true togetherness well I think that the the real blessing of true togetherness in the Lord Jesus is simply how it strengthens us as believers as believers we are stronger together as Grace pointed out the church in the New Testament is described as a body Romans 12 1 Corinthians 10 Ephesians 4 and as believers each one of us are part of that body well in relation to the body in relation to the church each one of us have a part to play and each one of us are so desperately needed whether we are so to speak an eye or an ear or a toe we are all part of the body and it is when the body is together that is when each individual part is actually at its strongest for example when the toes and the foot are together that is when both the toes and the foot are at their strongest how strong would a foot be without any toes and how strong would a bunch of toes be without a foot it is when the body is together that is when each part is at its strongest it is when the toes and the foot are actually together that is when each part the toes and the foot are at their strongest and that's true for us as believers as different parts of the body as different parts of the church each one of us are stronger when we are together and I think if we just look at our own lives [12:21] I think we would see that that's true for example as a believer are you in a better place to face the storms of this life if you're kind of out by yourself and if you are isolated on your own or would it be better as a believer if you are connected and together with other believers who could encourage you who could come alongside you who could be there for you as Galatians 6 bear each other's burdens there's no doubt about it as believers we are stronger together like different parts of the body it is better to be together and when we are together in Christ there is a strengthening in that that helps each one of us face the storms of this life and I think we will see that very clearly in Acts chapter 2 and as the book progresses we will see that the believers they would face persecution in so many ways well there's no doubt about it the togetherness that they had in Christ strengthened them as they move forward and as they face that persecution this togetherness that they had helped them to move forward and the same is true for us we are stronger together and the amount of times

I've heard people saying that and I'm sure you've heard many people saying it too as believers believers can be going through some very challenging times some very difficult times but the strength that they sense and the strength that they get when other believers come in alongside them and help them and encourage them there is a real sense that that that helps us to face the

storms of this life all of this kind of reminds me of something that I saw in a magazine that we have at home Isaiah gets these magazines from his grandparents and they are called Ranger Rick has anyone heard of hands up if you've heard of Ranger Rick a few people I think the magazine comes from the states but Ranger Rick is a raccoon and each magazine he looks into some different creatures he looks into some different animals well in this one magazine that we have at home

Ranger Rick he looked into these fellows fire ants now this fellow might look fairly big but fire ants are actually one of the smallest types of ants out there and they are especially very common in hotter climates especially in South America and in the Amazon rainforest well in the Amazon rainforest when the heavy rain comes it causes flash floods on the ground and the grounds can be flooded for weeks or even months at a time and when these floods come it is amazing how these ants operate when the floods come incredibly if one of these ants were by themselves they would flounder and they would sink and they would die essentially but when the floods come what they do is they band together and with their own bodies they cause each other to float which helps them to survive these flash floods as a unified raft they can travel for months on water before reaching dry land and Ranger

Rick pointed out that in an article in the Los Angeles Times they summarized a research study on these ants by saying after collecting a bunch of ants scientists dropped them into containers of water the ants quickly spread out and formed themselves into rafts each individual ant used its claws and sticky pads on their legs to grip onto each other then the insects used air pockets that they formed around their own bodies to keep themselves afloat for several months here is another picture this is from the Amazon of how they they band together but we can learn a lot from God's creation at times because in many ways just like these ants as believers alone we will struggle isolated we will sink but moving and working and sticking together with each other in Christ we can face any storm in this life and if we remember anything from this morning or if we take anything away from this morning let us take away this as believers we need each other as we look to Jesus together as believers when fellowship is possible I know maybe if you were in jail or something like that or if you were in some sort of a persecuted country it might not be possible but where fellowship is possible we are not meant to do it alone you know Jesus never sent the disciples out by themselves he never told anyone to be a one man or a one woman church where fellowship is possible we are not meant to do it alone we are made for fellowship we're made for fellowship with each other and we are made for fellowship with God and yes we are not perfect there is no doubt about that at times we will get on each other's nerves at times we will need to show each other grace at times we will need to forgive each other none of us have always said the right thing none of us have always responded in the right way none of us have always acted in the right way we will need to show each other grace we will need to forgive each other but as believers in and through it all there's no doubt about it together we are stronger as believers we have this wonderful unity in

[19:07] Christ true to spirit as believers this unity that we have in Christ through the spirit means we're all a family we're all a body we're all a unit and together we're stronger so let us be aware that we do need each other if anyone thinks we don't need each other we are wrong we do need each other and let us be aware of that and let us be thankful for each other like Paul was thankful for the believers and the Thessalonian believers as Paul was thankful for them let us be thankful for each other and let us continue on let us press on with a love for each other with the Lord's help because there will be such a blessing and an encouragement and a strengthening in that Jesus said in John 13:55 by this everyone will know that you are my disciples by the love you have for each other let us with the

Lord's help have a love for each other let us have a forgiving gracious heart for each other because together we are stronger just want to finish with a couple of verses from Hebrews chapter 10 and with the Lord's help and we do need his help with the Lord's help may this be our prayer this morning let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching I think we see this very thing in Acts chapter 2 in our passage this morning they were meeting together they were coming together every opportunity they had they were spurring each other on they were encouraging each other and that would strengthen them and that would help them well with the

Lord's help with the help of the spirit and we really do need his help with his gracious help may this be our prayer may we going forward continue to spur one another on toward love and good deeds let us with the Lord's help continue to meet together and not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing and let us with his help seek to encourage one another and all the more as we see the day approaching because there will be incredible blessing and encouragement and strengthening in that let's pray together Lord I thank you for these verses here in Acts chapter 2 and for how they show us the unity and the togetherness that the early believers had and we thank you Lord that the very thing that binded them together that exact thing we have this morning we are no different as believers we have been saved by you we have received your spirit and because of all of that we have this wonderful togetherness in you so

Lord help us to take the example of the believers here help us to spur each other on help us to use our words to build up and not to cut down Lord I pray you would help us you would bind us together more and more just give us a love for each other Lord help us to continue to grow together and live together and we know that as part of any family there'll be ups and downs but help us to stick together as Grace said earlier help us to stick together as we look to you together and I pray this in Jesus name Amen Amen