

Hospitality

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- [0 : 0 0] I haven't spoken at Learner's Exchange before. It's nice to have be serenaded as you're speaking with hymns, hymns of praise to God, because that's what this is about.
- Well, let's close our eyes and we'll pray and ask God to come among us by His Holy Spirit. Father, we thank you and we praise you because you call us into fellowship in your church.
- And as we learn today about your will for the church, the mark of the church of fellowship, we ask for your Holy Spirit to work in our minds and our hearts. We pray that you would enlarge in those hearts towards one another, towards Vancouver as well, as we hear your word and as we think and speak together.
- We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, once you've got Ezekiel, turn to Acts 2, that's page 909.
- And I want to let you know that in the day of Pentecost, which is what chapter 2 is about, there is an extraordinary thing that happens.
- [1 : 1 8] And this is the beginning of the church. We see it all coming about as a fulfillment of all the things that were prophesied in the Old Testament. And at the end of chapter 2, at the end of the amazing sermon by Peter, there is a summary of the church in 42 through 47.
- And we're going to look at that in a few minutes. Because that's going to be where we're gathering this information about hospitality and devotion to fellowship.
- What you see in the life of the church through Acts is there are three marks of the church. There is devotion to God's word, and they call that the apostles' teaching. There is secondly, devotion to fellowship.
- And then thirdly, there is devotion to witness as well that happens, being a witness of Christ. And I want to look at that second mark of the church.
- And I would like somebody to read Ezekiel 37, 1 through 14. I just want to have that in our mind as we begin this lecture.
- [2 : 3 3] Does somebody want to stand up and read that who has a good, loud, clear voice? Yes, please, Beth. That would be great. So, 1 through 14. Chapter 37.
- The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the middle of the valley. It was full of bones, and he led me around among them.
- And behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley. And behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live?
- And I answered, O Lord God, you know. Then he said to me, Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.
- Thus says the Lord God to these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live.

[3 : 47] And you shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, Son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God, Come from the poor winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost, and we are indeed cut off.

[4 : 58] Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people, and I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord. I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord. Okay, thank you, Beth. Now I want you to have that in your mind, and I'm going to look at that in a moment, but talk first about the day of Pentecost, because on the day of Pentecost, Peter preaches, and his sermon is full of the Old Testament, and certainly he had that reading in mind.

And Peter's convinced that the last days have begun with that pouring out of the Holy Spirit. It's the event that sets into motion everything that's going to happen until Jesus comes again.

And that's why in that scene in Acts 2, if you remember, there is great joy, and there is relief, and there is hope, and it's because they believed, and we do now, that we are in the last days of God's purposes, the last days of his mission to the world.

And that's why the whole world gathers into Jerusalem on that day to hear that sermon. And Luke tells us that the day is marked by three signs.

[6 : 38] I'm going to talk about one of them, three supernatural signs. There is a sound, there is a sight, and that's the flames above them, and there is other speech.

It is the speaking in other languages, miraculously. And I want to talk about that sound, because at the beginning of Acts 2, what Luke describes is that on the day of Pentecost, they're all together in one place, and suddenly there comes from heaven a sound, like a mighty wind, and it fills the entire house where they were sitting.

That is a sound from heaven. And I want you to notice that it is not a mighty wind. It is something that is like the rush of a mighty wind.

Luke is very careful to tell us. And there is sheer power in this, and it is about a dream coming true. And the dream is what you just heard that Beth just read from Ezekiel 37.

Because in that dream, the prophet Ezekiel is faced with a valley of dried up human bones, and there's nothing living. Living. Everything is parched and dust, bones in the valley.

[7 : 53] It's a picture of devastation and desolation. It's a picture of our spiritual state of humanity being separated from God by human sin.

And God tells Ezekiel to prophesy. And the interesting thing is, if you remember in the reading, he asked Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones, but he also, in verse 9, says to prophesy to the wind, or to the breath, or to the spirit.

And what happens next is that the dead bones begin to rattle, and sinews grow, and finally the breath of God enters into these bones, and they come to life.

It's a startling picture. You know, it is something vivid that you can't forget when you see it. And that's because it is about a new day.

It's a new era when God is going to make a new creation. He will begin that. And he's going to do it by forming a new humanity by his breath.

[8 : 58] And if you were to look back at Ezekiel 36, 26, he promises this. He says, A new heart I will give you, a new spirit I will put within you, and I will take out your flesh, out of your flesh, the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. So those two chapters are about a day when God is going to raise up a new people from death.

When God is going to bring out about a new creation by his spirit, he's going to breathe his life and his breath into his people by his Holy Spirit.

This is the promise. And on that day, God's going to change our hearts of stone, and he's going to give us hearts of flesh, living hearts, hearts that beat with his life.

And that's the promise here. And that's the prophecy of the day of Pentecost. And so the word that Luke chooses for wind in verse 2, if you go back to Acts chapter 2, and we're going to be back there now, the word he chooses for wind is not the normal one for the spirit or wind or breath.

[10 : 18] It is the word for the breath that is in your body. And it comes from Genesis chapter 2, where it says that the Lord formed man of dust from the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And the man became a living being. So it's an interesting choice. He chooses that word, that breath of life that we have that makes us alive. And Luke wants us to know that the wind of Pentecost means that there's a new humanity.

There's a new creation taking place. And that means that the coming of the Holy Spirit is not like an extra possession that we have for people who might be spontaneously inclined.

It's actually something that it can't be relegated to a corner of our life, to part of who we are. No, Luke's telling us it is our life, it's our breath.

And without the Spirit in our lives, we are walking dead. And the Bible's very clear about that. And that's exactly what Jesus meant.

[11 : 21] He says, Don't marvel that I said to you, you must be born anew. The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

And that's from John 3. You see, he's saying that without the Spirit, there is no spiritual birth, there's no spiritual life, but when the Spirit comes in, it brings the power of God into the community of Christ.

One of the great privileges of being a minister, and this is one of the joys that we experience in life, we look forward to it, is to hear the power of God at work in people's lives.

To talk to people and to see and to hear how that life-giving power of the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. And I think often you may not realize how God is transforming your life or what God is doing through you until you speak to somebody about your life, about your life in Christ as well.

It is an incredible encouragement, and I actually think it's probably good for us to have more conversations like that because you need to be encouraged about God's work in your life. It's very easy to look around the Christian community and to see people through the eyes of the world, to make comparisons and in a way to give grades to each other.

[12 : 52] You know, how do they measure up? And you really miss the point when you do that. The point is that the people who are sitting next to you are dwelt by the Holy Spirit.

They are indwelt by that same Spirit of God that Ezekiel is talking about, that Luke is talking about here. The people next to us in our church are people for whom Christ died and with whom you and I will spend eternity.

And God has given us to each other with all our idiosyncrasies so that we might grow to be like Christ together and become a living embodiment of His Holy Spirit.

This is what the church is. And this brings us to that second mark of the Spirit-filled church. And now you can turn to the end of Acts 2.42.

2.42. And here's where we are. They devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.

[14 : 02] Now that word fellowship is a bit of a feeble translation of that word that you probably know, *koinonia*, the Greek word. And it is about this amazing reality that I've just been talking about of being, of the fact that we participate in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This is the amazing thing that we have as Christians by the Holy Spirit. It is a spiritual communion that we share because we participate in God together. And so, *koinonia* is far more than a spiritual attitude.

It has to do with a living transformation when the Spirit of God takes hold of us. And so it has to do with what we do with our homes, what we do with our families, our money, and our free time.

And it's really about, it's not some esoteric concept, it's about what we do concretely and the concreteness of everyday life. It lies at the heart of the portrait of the church of the Spirit.

Fellowship permeates that devotion to fellowship, the life of the church that's described in the church in Acts. There's a number of summaries, and in those summaries, fellowship is always at the heart of it.

[15 : 21] The reality of that fellowship is given more attention than anything else about the life of the church in the book of Acts. And here in chapter 2, in those verses from 42 to the end, fellowship sort of spreads its umbrella over everything that you read about that church.

So I'm going to read that right now. It says, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers, and awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common, and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with the people.

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Well, this is what it means to be devoted to fellowship. The church's life, believe it or not, was about more than preaching and witness.

It was about being devoted to one another. It is so countercultural for us to hear that because it's foreign to the way we put our lives together in Vancouver.

[16 : 51] It requires a focus on Christ and on other people and not on ourselves. That goes against the grain. It requires our best energies to be given to others and to Christ.

And it actually impinges on our rights and our freedoms and our families. But the Holy Spirit knows that being devoted to fellowship is what we need and want.

It actually undermines our individualism and it erodes our arrogance and it gives us a true connection with one another. It is the way to the fulfillment that God gives us by his Holy Spirit.

And Luke wants us to see that it affects every part of your life. So there's a public aspect and a private aspect to it. Publicly, the church gathered in the temple and devoted themselves to prayers not once a week, it says here, but daily.

And the fellowship affected their family lives as well. So in verse 42, it says, they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. Now the breaking of bread may have included communion, but it also was largely meals in people's homes.

[18 : 09] It was often just a simple gathering over food. And verse 46 tells us they broke bread in their homes and partook of food with glad and generous hearts.

It's amazing how much food enters into fellowship. and I think, Nora, you can probably relate to that, can't you? It's fun. It is.

I mean, this is what, and you have that sense of fun and joy and bringing each other into one another's lives. And you think about what those meals must have been like. In the book of Acts, what you hear are people are from Parthia, Persia, Pontus, Phrygia, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Egypt, Rome, and all of them had very different customs.

And all of them had very different ways of eating food as well. So you can imagine that all of these things were together in a grand mix of people coming to each other's homes and eating in this way.

But these were not feasts. They were simply breaking a bread. They weren't elaborate dinners where they were trying to impress one another. They weren't trying to climb the social ladder.

[19 : 21] all it was really was sharing their family space with one another. And it was very different from turning up every so often and expecting others to care for you.

It was about really being together because of Jesus. Very simply, that's what it was. But that runs so counter to our culture because in our culture it is bred into us that we have to make decisions that are for our own good, for the good of our families.

What fulfills me in my world is the important thing in our lives. How can I get ahead? There is an inward focus of our lives and we can be very much consumed by our own agenda.

And these dubious priorities and fear of missing out actually can lead to lives that are very bad for us spiritually. Lives that are over scheduled and we have no time for simple, generous hospitality.

And we might wonder why we are lonely or we have no real friends. That is a weakness in Vancouver. And we know that for a fact partly because of a report that was just released this year by the Vancouver Foundation.

[20 : 40] Has anyone read that report? It was on connections, it was called. And connect and engage. And there was a big splash about this, it was in the papers and it's actually a very interesting report.

If you get a chance to look at Vancouver Foundation dot CA, look for the connections and engagement on the left side and click on it and there's the report. It's a very accessible report.

But what they did was they wanted to, Vancouver Foundation is the second largest charitable foundation in BC other than the BC government. and they pulled 275 charitable foundations and 100 community leaders in 2011 to find out what the most pressing issue was that they were facing.

This foundation gives money to strengthen the community. And much to their surprise, the top issue wasn't poverty or homelessness, it was isolation and disconnection.

Those were the two things. And this was a big surprise to them. And so, what they did was they found that Vancouver can be a very hard place to make friends.

[21 : 55] One in four people in Vancouver are alone more often than they would like to be. They also found that the neighborhood relationships are cordial but weak. And what they meant by that was many of us know at least a few of our neighbors' first names, but our connections typically stop there.

This report says. Most of us do not do small favors for each other like looking after the mail when a neighbor is away or visit in each other's homes. Most people don't. And we found that many people are, Vancouver Foundation says this, many people are retreating from community life.

And that it isn't because of a lack of time, it's a feeling they have very little to offer. And then finally they found that there are limits to how people see diversity as an opportunity to forge meaningful connections.

over one third of us have no close friends outside our own ethnic group. And we generally believe that people prefer to be with others of the same ethnicity. This report found that.

And so certain groups of people are struggling more than others to feel connected and engaged. Well, this is a report that clearly says that there is a great deal of loneliness in Vancouver.

[23 : 06] and this is not just something that's anecdotal, it's something that was done by a fairly extensive survey. I think that there is an amazing opportunity for the church here because number one, we can model something that comes very naturally to a spirit-filled church where you are living out what God calls us to do.

It actually meets all of these issues that are being brought up here. We model that. But in modeling that for each other, we are actually training one another how we relate to those outside the church as well.

Because what the fellowship of the Holy Spirit does is it takes us out of ourselves, it takes our friendships and our families and our homes, and it demotes them from being idols to being the places where we worship.

It's the place where we serve. And I know that some of you open your homes up, and this is a great, great gift. Whether it's Bible studies or having people over and so forth, this is something that I really want to encourage you in, because it's not something that's easy to do in our society.

The fellowship of the Holy Spirit takes the boundaries of what is my family, and it moves them outward. And that's stretching for us. That's something that can be uncomfortable.

[24 : 32] comfortable. Because when you have people into your home, things happen that you can't always control. Others impose on our priorities, and we discover that fellowship can be deep and costly and beautiful, sort of all at the same time.

That's what fellowship ends up being. And I know people who look for people in our morning services who are new to them and invite them for lunch, for instance.

And that's a great challenge to do. It can be very difficult to do that. It's a great challenge to invite a stranger from church for a meal, or for coffee, or someone you know who can't return the compliment.

But the flip side of that is what a commentator said when I was reading about Acts 2, who said, the higher we value our personal privacy and our freedom from commitments, the shallower our grasp of fellowship will be.

And as he put it, it will be reduced to moments of idle chatter over coffee before and after church. The coffee hour is fellowship, but it does not go deeply into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that we are reading about in Acts chapter 2.

[25 : 50] It's a way into that fellowship potentially, which is why we do it. It's an important time. But there is a challenge for us. It is a challenge. But I want you to know that it was not easier for our brothers and our sisters in first century Jerusalem.

It was not easier for them. They had no fewer distractions or temptations to be superficial or shallow or selfish and to avoid being involved with each other. The selfishness did not begin with television.

You know, it was just as easy for them to be with the people that they were like minded and to exclude others. We see that in the Gospels, don't we? But against tremendous odds, the Holy Spirit creates a community in Jerusalem which gathers in each other's homes and they are rejoicing in the life in Christ with each other.

They want to share the life of Christ together. And what fellowship did for them is it turned greedy people into generous people. And that's what fellowship does for us as well.

It's a work of God in our hearts and in our minds. Now it gets, it gets, it drives home a little further here in verses 44 and 45.

[27 : 14] It says there, and all who believed were together and had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

Now I wonder what you make of all this. You know, is this saying that we should sell all our possessions? Hand them over to our treasurer, you, and wilding for use amongst the needy.

Now that's what it seems to be saying here. But what this is talking about is a voluntary sharing. You know, the Bible is filled with the description of gracious giving, of giving with a cheerful heart out of a desire to worship God.

So there's no one who's under obligation. In fact, if you jump down to verse 46, we see that they were breaking bread in their homes. They still had their houses so they could offer hospitality.

So they did not sell them and get rid of them. So it wasn't a radical communism in that sense or communalism. New Testament doesn't teach that.

[28 : 27] Indeed, late in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 6, the Apostle Paul writes to the young pastor Timothy. And he says, as for the riches in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches, but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous. You see what the teaching is there. There's a responsibility with our wealth, and we are wealthy people if we look at the world overall.

There are wealthy people in that congregation, and their obligation was to use their wealth generously, not to get rid of it, but to use it generously. And so the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is not an economic system that demolishes private property, the idea of that.

It's something actually more radical. It is about the heart, and that goes back to Ezekiel, doesn't it, where God puts this new heart. There is this voluntary generosity from the heart which expresses genuine care and love.

It is a gift, a loving gift, this stewardship is. And in the Old Testament, people were commanded to give 10% to the ministry and to the needy.

[29 : 47] But what is that percentage in the New Testament? Does anybody know? There isn't one. There's nothing that's prescribed that says it's 10%.

But it's hard to imagine that God expects less. In fact, he opens our heart to give more. And that's what this description is talking about.

It's the work of God, the Holy Spirit, because Jesus has given that Holy Spirit to us. And it's very searching because being filled with the Holy Spirit has loosened their grasp on their possessions and on their wealth.

And so this was not about spare change lying around. They actually sold possessions that were important to them and goods to take care of the needs for others. It's a picture of them being gripped by this conviction that fellowship of Jesus has been created among them.

It's more precious than their wealth or their comfort, that gift of fellowship in Christ. That's an amazing picture. And this is evidence of being filled with God's Holy Spirit.

[30 : 56] It is a miraculous work of God. And it is what we have in the Holy Spirit in our own lives that we would give because we are loved as an act of love.

So you see, it springs out of the gospel about knowing that grace of God in your life, that there is this constant sense of generosity and thanksgiving to God for his mercies poured out on us.

That's true fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And it's the second mark of the church. Now, how long do I have to speak?

Go to 10-2. 10-2. Okay. I probably won't go quite that long, but I'd actually like to ask, I have some questions as well for you that we can do.

Or just to take them. Yes? Well, there is exchange. Yeah. But I'd like to close with that there's really a warning and a call to action that comes out of this.

[32 : 06] And the warning is that, as we've been saying, the culture says the very opposite of what Acts 2 is telling us. It's the very opposite.

Instead of encouraging people to devote themselves to fellowship, it really it calls us and preaches to us to devote ourselves to the good life and particularly to your own personal freedom.

It commands us to guard and to protect our privacy. It's very critical for us here in Vancouver that we do that. And it preaches to us, our culture, to commit, make a strong commitment to yourself to get ahead.

And to be very, very careful about where to spend your money. And it actually teaches us that whatever you do, don't commit to something more than once a week. That's a strong teaching in our culture.

And that's why verse 40 is very important. Look at verse 40. It says, With many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

[33 : 23] And the crookedness has to do with actually missing the path that God has for us. This path that actually has to do with fellowship. Because Jesus is creating a community that is marked by a real difference.

And this is something that is, you know, when I think of my kids, and they're 10 and 7 years old, I actually want them to be different.

But it can be difficult to be different, isn't it? You want to fit in. So a lot of being a parent is being wise and saying, okay, there's some areas that, yes, you know, you want to be able to understand what's going on and to relate well to your friends and so forth.

But I also want you to be different as well when it comes to the things of Christ. When it comes to the things that contradict the culture that we're living in, I want you to be different.

And I want you to behave towards other children in a way that's different from the things that others are doing that tear down or that wander away from Christ.

[34 : 38] And I got to tell you, one of the things that's most prevalent, I think, that I see happening to our kids has to do with materialism.

Their friends love to talk about material goods and the next thing coming down the path, whether it's video games or electronics or whatever it is. And they love to talk about Bill Gates and the richest person in the world and what I would do with \$13 billion.

I don't remember talking about that at that age, but maybe I did. But there is a crooked path that our generation takes. Each one does. And that's certainly one of them.

And to talk about how God thinks about money and what his attitude towards it is are valuable conversations that I'm having with my seven and ten-year-old.

And it's not easy, interestingly. I wouldn't have guessed that would be the issue. But one of the things I tell them is what we're talking about now, that belonging to Jesus means that there will be a difference in your life.

[35 : 44] It will be different. And the first step to being filled with the Holy Spirit is actually turning our backs against certain actions and certain attitudes of our crooked generation.

I mean, that sermon is very, very clear that that's what has to happen. That's, you know, that's Peter's application.

With many other words, he exhorted them, you know, in a number of ways. Be different. Be different from the culture in Jerusalem right now in certain ways. And the interesting thing is, is that that will be a blessing to Jerusalem.

Isn't it interesting that the Vancouver Foundation says the most pressing need has to do with that isolation and disconnection? It has to do with loneliness. If you talk to, if you talk to counselors, they'll tell you that that's one of the biggest things that they come up with.

I'm talking about secular counselors in Vancouver. One of the biggest things they deal with is loneliness. And in turning our backs on the actions and attitudes of our crooked generation, we can bless the city.

[36 : 54] We bless one another. And in that, it spills out into the world around us. But if our love and knowledge of God's word is shallow, and if our fellowship is superficial and sketchy, if we're resistant to being involved and being generous, and if we're avoiding our place in the mission of Christ, that's a sign that we love the world and not the spirit.

It is a sign that we are not turning our backs on this crooked generation in those areas. So this is a call for us.

And I'll close with this, I think. There's a call to us here to save ourselves from this crooked generation and examine ourselves. And ask ourselves, first of all, am I devoted to God's word, which is the first mark of the church?

And the reason I say that is because that word is telling us what God's truth is in the face of lies in our world around us.

The lies that says that in being selfish and looking at myself and my own needs, I can be fulfilled. Well, that doesn't actually happen. And God is saying it is in fellowship of the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Spirit calling you out of yourselves in acts of love and mercy and hospitality, that you will find that joy and fulfillment that you are looking for.

[38 : 24] So giving yourself away that it happens, that you can find that in God's word alone. So am I devoted to the word of God in my daily life? Is it a weekly passion? Because that's what's required in order for us to be different.

And secondly, am I devoted to the fellowship in regular weekly public gatherings? First of all, in glad hospitality.

And glad hospitality is something that that's an important word, that glad, because if it is something that is onerous, if it is something that you just do not want to do, it is time to step back and to see what what is God doing in my life right now?

How can I receive from him this joy of salvation, the joy of following him in that? But if you are devoted in glad hospitality and in financial generosity, there is a sign of the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

And to ask ourselves as well, am I willing to do what it takes to move from being a spectator that kind of looks on at what the Bible is saying and what God might be doing in his church to being a participant in the life of the Spirit?

[39 : 40] You know, am I willing to make that shift, which really the call to hospitality, the call to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is about? It's moving from participant, from spectator to being a participant, an active participant in the life of the Spirit.

The life of the Spirit being the life of the the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working within that, living within that, loving within that, enjoying one another within that fellowship.

And I think that we need to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit in us. You know, often when we think of the power of the Holy Spirit, we think of spectacular things, you know, whether it's miracles that might happen or amazing changes in one's life or powerful preaching and so forth.

But the life of the Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit is primarily in the life of the church going to be in moving you out of yourself into the life and the fellowship of Christ.

That's what it will be like. And it will be concrete changes that happen in your life, which may be very small and not really all that measurable. But there is a definite change that takes place as he brings us out of ourselves.

[40 : 53] It's a monumental shift in our mind to go against what the culture is doing in us. So ask the Holy Spirit to help you with the fellowship that he has given to us.

Help you to live that out in your life. Help you to be generous in your hospitality. Okay, I'm going to end at that point.

But I want to take five minutes or so. So you usually end at 10, too, do you? Is it fuzzy? Okay. Well, this is about a quarter to 10.

And I don't know if you... First of all, do you have any questions or comments on that? And if you don't, I'm going to ask you some questions as well in this.

So, yeah, go ahead. Gosh, this really touched me. Thank you very much. Because I sometimes have complained that we are spending time feeding an overfed congregation.

[41 : 52] I will never say that again. Now that I know... You mean physically feeding them? Yes. Okay. I mean, you know, you go home and diet. But we often feast here, especially Tuesday nights.

My comment, I think, was that this is a sign of the new Israel, what you are talking about.

Because I once spent part of a holiday with an Orthodox Jewish friend. And I really hadn't known anything about Kashrut except avoiding fork until then.

But, oh boy, we had it in spades, even when I put the fork on the wrong counter. And it had to spend three days in a flower pot getting itself here. I mean, it was...

A Pharisee of the Pharisees. I really knew what that meant. But when I sort of said about the food, but, you know, these things are not actually dangerous for us to eat anymore. Why are you still being so rigid about this?

[42 : 54] He said, Sheila, it has never been about health. It is about separateness. If I cannot put my feet under the table of my neighbor, then my son is not going to marry his daughter.

And the Old Testament is absolutely full of people who wanted to put their feet under that other table. I mean, Samson and others, you know. They wanted what the Philistines had.

And at that point in tribal history, I think it maybe was God's plan to create a spirit of separateness. You are different. I have chosen you.

Behave differently. But here we are with the new Israel. And the very beginning of it is inclusiveness. Bring them in. Don't put them out.

Have everybody's feet under the same table. I think it's absolutely beautiful the way you've described it. Yeah, you know, Acts 2 is about fulfillment, because this is where God was actually going with this.

[43 : 55] This is the promise to Abraham, is that I will bless you, and I will make you a blessing, so that through you, the nations of the world will be blessed. Well, it's easy to stop at the blessing, isn't it, about God blessing you, and not go beyond that.

And I think it is a work of the Holy Spirit for that to happen in our daily lives. And I have spoken about my neighbor who is Jewish in a couple sermons in the past, and a couple weeks ago I did.

And he's very interesting because he believes in this hospitality of welcoming the neighborhood in. You know, he says, my house is like Abraham's tent.

There's no doors. It's always open. And, you know, he wants people to come in, and they're very devout, and they're separate in what they're eating and so forth.

I mean, it's very, very clear. But they see that as a stepping stone to being different from the culture that would bring people into their home. And so what they have done is actually taken that next step.

[45 : 01] I actually see him as being very close to Christ in a lot of ways. He's read the Gospels. There's an openness. And I wonder why the Holy Spirit's working in his life, you know.

But I think you're right. The human nature is to stop and to say, you know, I will just be separate, which means staying with my own ethnic group or my own tribe and keep the fences up.

Yeah. Yeah. And we buy into that, don't we? Yeah. Let's see. I'm going to go one, two, three, four.

One? Yeah. Does the Bible put in front of us, though? I suspect it does, but I don't know. Richard Baucom, the great New Testament scholar, St. Andrews, he will talk about the fundamentally private self which knows God and then has fellowship.

I suspect some people are afraid of fellowship because that fundamental private self that knows God is weak. And so they back away. I'm going to be swamped by others because I don't know who I am yet in Christ.

[46 : 15] So I wonder if we have to be sensitive of the people who back off because they need the fellowship of the word to create that self which then can serve.

Is that true? That's really good. Or maybe Baucom's wrong there. No, no. I suspect he's wrong. No, that's very, very good. And that's why at the very end I said, you know, the first question I asked myself here is, am I devoted to the word of God?

Is it my daily, weekly passion? Well, that is that private time of your life in Christ and growing in your knowledge and love and maturity in Christ, too.

And I think it's that maturity in Christ that you're saying is important, that security in who you are in order to live out that life of fellowship. I think it's really important what you're saying.

No, I think you said it there, too, but the fellowship, the word is really, without that, my fellowship becomes probably smushy and weird.

[47 : 19] Yeah. And, you know, but the... Excuse my technical name. That's very, yeah, that's a character. But I think also that our fellowship, our devotion to the word of God can be compromised as we don't risk what is in God's word as well.

There is that that's happening as well. So there's clearly an interchange between that outward and inward life that has to be actually taking place all the time.

It's not simply that you reach a point in your private devotion that you can do this. It's more, it is out of that private devotion that God is pushing you out.

God's word is, I think, the primary place where the Holy Spirit is at work. You know, I mean, obviously the Holy Spirit is doing all kinds of things, but often the gift and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit is in the word of God.

And it's in acting on that that we would do fellowship. You can't really do one without the other at all. And I think Baucom's point is really, really important.

[48 : 30] It is that vitality of that private life that allows our public life to be generous and self-giving and so forth. Nora?

That sort of segues with what I wanted to say, which is this mysterious thing of this friendship that you have with your Jewish neighbor, which I find lovely to hear about from time to time.

We are, all of us, in our culture. And we are meant to bring the fragrance of Christ into our relationships with people.

And sometimes, you know, I've known, I was the kind of Christian when I was at art school, 40-whatever years ago, who used to pound Bible verses at people sometimes.

I used to, you know, go around to my classes. I always had my Bible with me. And I think, and I could find any scripture anywhere, you know, like I was that kind of Bible thumper for a little while.

[49 : 34] And I've known... I would have loved to have seen that. My sister tells me, and I'm embarrassed to believe it, but I used to answer her at the family phone, praise the Lord. But anyway, I think that sometimes we are embarrassed to bring that fragrance of Christ into our friendships outside of the church, too.

But that is vitally important. And the fragrance of Christ, you know, so I have one friendship with a jazz club owner. And he was really discouraged with paths of his life.

And he used to come up to our house and commiserate sometimes about what was going on. And he phoned me one time and said, I'm in trouble. What do you think I should do? And I said, well, I'm happy to talk about this problem with your heart or with your life.

But you have to know something. I will give you advice, but I'm Christian. And so the advice is going to be Christian. And there was a great pause. Then it was like the invitation, which he said, well, yes, I would like your Christian advice.

So, I mean, you know, so we're embarrassed. You know, it's a bit, your heart's pounding as you say those things. But we, but it, so there's a difference between just pounding the Bible down people's throats.

[51 : 06] And having the fragrance of Christ, you know, people will know, your neighbor. Well, I guess it's easy because you have a collar. I said that to David Shortland.

I'm really jealous you get to wear a collar. Oh, you will know I'm a Christian without you having a saint. They're fairly cheap if you need to know. Anyway, you know, it is at other places.

It's the inviting people into the fellowship of who they were meant to be. Because every person that we know who we love outside of this church is meant to be Christ.

That's good. That's a good word. Yeah. Yeah. That's our conviction. Mary, sorry. Yeah. As you were speaking, I was just wondering about the friends that we have who are non-Christians, friends and family.

And these people behave in a lot of ways like Christian people in that they are very generous, open their houses to us, and they really make sure that every need is looked after.

[52 : 14] And I'm just wondering, do these people have the Holy Spirit in them that's nudging them, even though they're not leading the word of God? Or is it a good works motivation?

What motivates them? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well, the wonderful thing is, and this is what I was thinking about with my Jewish friends as well, that God certainly places within us that we are made for that kind of fellowship, aren't we?

And I think what the Holy Spirit does, and I think this is why it's particularly shown in the life of the church, is because it moves us not just to love those who are very similar to us, but to recognize in one another the life of Christ in them.

And here's the difference, because clearly there is wonderful fellowship and self-giving outside the church as well. But what is unique about this is it is a recognition that that person who is next to me in the church has the same Holy Spirit within them, belongs to Christ, you will be with them forever.

And there is a difference in the way that fellowship works itself out in the life of the church. And it spills out into life with the world around us.

[53 : 35] It's not necessarily recognizing the fact that they're going to spend eternity with Christ and that they have fellowship in the Trinity with us. But it changes the way we relate to them as well.

And so, yeah, I think part of it is there's a difference in that quality of fellowship within the church that comes because of this fact I was talking about from Ezekiel 37 and Acts 2.

It actually should move us into fellowship with each other. But I think that is a practice for the fellowship that we have with one another. And in no way does that deny that you see acts of love and friendship and fellowship and self-giving in the world around us.

There's no doubt that happens. The motivation is very, very different because they don't necessarily know about the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we are part of.

And we really want them to enter into that life, that eternal fellowship with the Trinity as well. That's what we earnestly desire for them. It's not to replace the goodness of the fellowship that they are having.

[54 : 40] In fact, we ought to celebrate that. This is where, like with my boys, I'll say there are things that we want to be different. But, okay, well, here's a family that don't know Christ and they love each other in this way.

That's good. That's something that we want to affirm in the culture that's around us. Yeah. Yeah. So fellowship, you know, that is a picture of a deeper fellowship, I think.

It's an indication when you see that in your friends who are non-Christian. It's an indication of a deeper fellowship that we have with Christ that we want to hopefully invite them into as well.

Yeah. Now there was, yeah. Different things go through my mind, but the first century AD, I don't imagine they had restaurants and coffee shops like now.

So I'm just thinking, you know, because it is a big thing to cook a huge meal for six people or something like that, especially if you don't have a huge gourmet kitchen or something and space.

[55 : 46] It's a big commitment to do that. And I'm just thinking, well, maybe you can just substitute a restaurant or a coffee shop and still bring them back to your place or just bring them back for the dessert to your place.

Things like that, because it can be quite onerous for some people, perhaps with mobility issues as you get older. Yeah. But I also think, too, sometimes, like we like to have people over, but I found that it's just such a big thing to cook a big turkey, for example.

Yeah. And I sort of quit doing that. But I just think, too, some people, they don't want to know. Like, I've asked people in the past, and sometimes they just don't want to, maybe they don't like me.

Ah, yes. Or they don't like my husband, or they don't like my parents. Yeah. My husband, I don't know. But you can reach out. Yes. And you hit a brick wall. Yeah. And it's kind of okay.

And then others, there was a young lady at St. John's a few years ago, maybe before she was a single mom. And she invited me to a parents' house looking at them, and invited her over, and come over any time, kind of did.

[56 : 53] And she really appreciated that. Yeah. Well, you know, you're saying two important things there. I mean, the last thing you've said is that it is a two-way street. I mean, part of that hospitality is the willingness to accept hospitality.

Because that can be, in some ways, an inconvenience as well, and especially if it's not, it may not be somebody that you would naturally be drawn to do that. So, yeah, that's a very good point, that that work of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit involves receiving hospitality as well, not just giving it.

And it's enlarging our hearts that way. The first part, yeah, I mean, it's where does our culture gather? And, you know, I was reading just a couple days ago how there's going to be a high-rise, and all of them, all of these high-rise apartments will be around 300 to 500 square feet.

Now, you know, what you need there is an annex living room, you know, Starbucks or a restaurant in that case. And there's no doubt, and there's different, as you say, limiting factors there.

So where is the place that we gather when we invite people into? And, of course, that's where also the people with the ability to do that makes it even more important to bring others into it.

[58 : 11] And I think that hospitality can be shared as well. Because you said, it's not an easy thing to do. Well, are there people that can help you in making that turkey or in providing coffee or helping set up and clean up afterwards?

You know, that's all, it's not just you primarily doing it, but perhaps you helping somebody. If I'm in a small apartment, I can go to Margaret's house and help her. But you're right, it's not a wooden thing.

You know, it's thinking, really thinking in creative ways. How do I provide hospitality? How do I receive it? I mean, when I lived in Toronto for a great year, since a couple from England, and they knew my family, and then they met me, and they would call, she'd call me a lot, and she'd say, come on over to supper, you know, stay overnight.

And they would open when they were at a little chapel or a big chapel, whatever it was. They would say to young people, come on over and stay overnight. Some of them were, you know, drinking.

They shouldn't, you know, too many. They weren't yet in the faith kind of thing. They wouldn't try, I guess, experiment. And they stay there in the basement overnight. I mean, I've never met a couple like this.

[59 : 15] Yeah. Even in the UK, I never. And they just step down to earth and sit over in the room. Yeah. I will say something really quickly, and that is there also is a gift of hospitality that you read about.

That's, you know, this hospitality that all of us are involved in. But there are some that have an extraordinary capacity for it, that God gives. And I think you described it. Yeah. For me, one of the most people that affected my life is St. John's.

And I'm sure hundreds of others. Yes. I mean, she opened her home week after week to groups of us that had never been to anyone else's homes.

I mean, it shines out. Yeah. Oh, it did. Yeah. It's just wonderful. Yeah. I'm glad to bring it up because people like that really encourage the church around them in it.

And they bless it in a number of ways. Not just to the people receiving the hospitality, but those who are witnessing it. The one thing that we need to be careful of that is that I think she, Dorothy, really did have a gift of hospitality.

[60 : 24] And for us not to be intimidated by that, you know, but to actually have it spur us to enlargen our lives towards other people in the ways that we can. And God works through us.

And God works through us. If we pray for this to happen in our lives, for God to help us be devoted to the fellowship and hospitality, he will show us how to do that in our unique lives as well.

And I think he uses people like Dorothy to spur us on into areas in our life that we could do better in. And there's so many different ways of extending hospitality.

Hospitality doesn't mean you're putting on, only putting on a big dinner at your home. But even this morning, the people that greet you with a smile and ask how you are, the people that bring the food here.

You know, we're all blessed by the coffee and the cheese and grapes and everything here today. And that's hospitality. And people greeting each other. And, you know, Dorothy was a wonderful person to me.

[61 : 23] And I met her at a time when she was already past the stage maybe where she had these big dinners at her home. But still, every time she met me, she was always so gracious and warm and wanted to know how I was.

And she would tell me, I told her one time about my three brothers. And she would tell me, the Lord woke me up at three in the morning and I prayed for your brother. I don't hear her saying that.

It warmed my heart. It was just such a wonderful thing, you know. And just things like that. There's so many ways that we can be hospitable to each other, even at the church. It may seem superficial, but it's not.

It could mean the world to someone who's going through a hard time. Yeah. And I will just say quickly that we are looking for people on the greeting team, by the way.

But I'm actually looking for a specific kind of person who will actually look for, who won't be just tied to the back, but they'll be connected to the teens, in that they will look for people that they don't know and just strike up a conversation with them.

[62 : 26] And to see, you know, if they are new, whether they're plugged in, if they've been here for a while, whether they are. And in some cases, to connect them with a small group or with somebody else, have them meet Jan or whoever.

But a way of actually providing intentionally relationships to people who are fairly new to the church or who you haven't met before. Now, that's not everybody's cup of tea, but there's probably a number of people in the church that could do that, and people in this room.

So you can talk to me. I'd love to hear it. No, I'll go with you and then Celeste. I was going to say, being hospitable in your workplace is another thing you can do, even if it's not easy to connect in your apartment building or whatever.

I mean, that's a place. Like I know a young couple of people decided to move back to Berlin. He's Canadian, but they just found Vancouver so unfriendly. And she was teaching us on Fraser for a year, and she just found a workplace.

Everybody was just so unfriendly. It wasn't a sense of collegiality. And I just think, well, if that's where we can be hospitable to bring food one day or suggest doing something together, those are other ways that can be hospitable that might really make a difference.

[63 : 34] Yeah, because that's a big circle of people in one's life. Celeste, we... I was going to say, if you put in a plug for the Welcome Committee, could I put in a plug for the Missions Committee?

Sure. You need somebody to cook those food, which is marvelous times of opportunities for fellowship, those missions lunches. I know. I was just glad that you spoke about, you know, how people might be intimidated to return the favor.

I remember we had a couple from our Bible study over for dinner. And what I thought was a simple meal, she was just totally like, you guys eat like this all the time?

And I find myself apologizing, saying, well, I like to cook. I don't have... I have a child now, but back then I didn't have a child.

So I felt like I was always, you know, trying to apologize for putting on this meal. But I find these days I tell people, I said, hey, you know, when Neil goes out of town, I open up a tin of Elfaghetti.

[64 : 39] Elfaghetti. I just also... Yeah, this is a shocking admission here. I don't cook like this all the time, but I do find myself apologizing sometimes, you know, to people, you know, that I like to cook, you know, that...

So it is, you know, it's nice to just have people come and just be relaxed in your home and just, you know, not feel the pressure of having to, you know, one up.

Yeah, that's true. And it's good for people to see this example in scriptures. They were very simple, what they did. So that was critical. Sorry, Joseph, go ahead. I just want to interject a brief point on social isolation in Vancouver.

One of the things I tend to do is to always look for an associated material condition. And we are living in a place where the ratio of income to housing costs is seriously skewed.

And this is leading many people into, as somebody already pointed out, living spaces are constricted, but probably even more important than that, we have people who are...

[66 : 03] I know someone who recently told me that she was working four jobs, which add up to 60 hours a week. And I was commenting that I hadn't seen her in four to six.

And this is someone, I think, in her 20s. So that is probably the correlate, one strong correlate to the social conditions that we have in Vancouver.

You know, it's interesting also, it's just brought to mind the Vancouver Foundation Report also said, the most vulnerable people to isolation and loneliness are immigrants. And, you know, that's something that St. John's has been doing in the past.

And it might be something good for us to pray about as individuals and as a church as well, because there is a deep vulnerability there in a lot of ways with housing and with relationships as well.

Talking about a busy schedule, a friend of mine, a Christian friend, he felt he was getting too busy so that when friends called him up and needed help, he wasn't able to help them.

[67 : 16] So his advice was, it reduced your schedule so that you have time when friends do need help when they ask for it.

So I think a lot of us are in that situation. That's revolutionary. Yeah. Wow. I should just take two more, right? I mean, are we going way over here?

They're good until coming after. Okay. And then we really have to drop. Okay. Yes. I forgot who was first.

Okay. Go ahead. So the responses one gets, almost to my name. Last winter, two men said to me, I didn't know them, but they said to me, God bless you.

Why did they say that? Who were they? They were men sitting on wet pavement with a blanket around their shoulder. Now, I like biscuits, and I usually buy them as choppers when they are \$1.99.

[68 : 21] So I buy four of them. Last winter, this happened twice too. Just in the case. I bought my four packs of biscuits, snacks, crackers, went out, and there was a man sitting on the wet pavement.

So I don't know how many quarters I dropped in his cap. And as I turned around, something zapped me. And I took two steps back, and of my four packets, I gave one to that man.

I said, God bless you. That happened twice. Yeah. There's something more about actually sharing food together, isn't there, than just giving money.

There is something about... It's a basic way the blessing comes from. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I was going to say, just put in a plug for a little book called Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer that is really essentially about community.

Yes. And it's a wonderful read. Yeah. I mean, a lot of Bonhoeffer stuff is pretty intense stuff, but this is easy. Yeah. Thank you.

[69 : 35] That's very good. It is. It's a great book, and it exactly goes into hospitality and fellowship. Yeah. Yeah. I highly recommend reading Life Together. And it's not a long book either.

No. But it's very profound and very gospel-oriented. Yeah. Yeah. Yes. I've got to thank you for this presentation. All right.

And mentioning Dorothy Erdman, I've got to tell you where she got her good example, and that was from the Scandinavian Norwegian...

My mother is Norwegian descent, and she has a real connection with Dan Gifford.

And for those of you that don't know, Dan grew up in Minnesota, and he tells me he went to a Lutheran college in the first year, and he told me he had lutefisk.

[70 : 35] And when he said that, I said, Dan, you're more Norwegian than I am. If you know what lutefisk is, you know why he's saying that. It's basically rotten fish.

Well, you've probably had it, right, Sheila? Yeah. How do you describe that? It makes the bugger taste better. Well, that's true. We had an delicacy in the Middle Ages.

You know, they had to live on dried fish in the wintertime, but we are past the Middle Ages. Past the Middle Ages? Yeah. My question is, some of us are in difficult work situations, and reaching out in hospitality with those, in respect, being gentle.

In the middle of the night, it came to me, and I don't know whether I answered my own question, pray to the Lord of the hearts, and we'll give you words, a channel of peace, and mercy.

There is a time, I mean, this is why it was so great that this was brought up, that Margaret brought it up, but there is a time to receive hospitality. There's no doubt about it. You know, the Bible's clear that we should never presume on it, but it's also clear that we should bear each other's burdens, that we should be open with each other.

[71 : 57] And that means receiving hospitality. And I think that goes with lots of ministries in the church. It's amazing how often the problem is people unwilling or not feeling like they want to put people out, so they're unwilling to receive ministry of different kinds.

You know, and this is a little bit of an aside, but a number of Stephen's ministers are being trained up right now. And one of the challenges for them when they get out is to have people who are open to having them come to visit and spend time with them.

Even though it might be something that would be really helpful and good, they don't want to presume or they feel uncomfortable about it, and that will be a challenge.

And it always is in the church of receiving care from each other. You know, it's like Peter getting his feet washed by Jesus. Yeah. Yeah. I was just going to throw one other comment too, and it in some ways relates to your cross-cultural comment, comment, but it's also to be reaching out to the young people.

And it also relates to the last question of, you know, will they accept it? You know, when the kids or the youth cut through the coffee hour, you know, do we notice they're there? Are they also part of the fellowship?

[73 : 11] And I've been surprised as my kids have grown up how few adults will speak to them. I mean, it's not that they don't mean to not speak to them, but my kids don't necessarily present that, oh, do come and pitch me out.

Right, right, right. Yeah. But. No, it's something you really do, you do have to work at it, don't you? You have to just, it's stepping, it's risky. Hospitality is risky, there's no doubt about it.

Yeah, I mean, you can just in the coffee hour say hello to some 12-year-old. Yeah, yeah, that's a risky thing. Yeah, Nora. On that question, it's interesting because I think one of the things that we do in the Christian church but in the society in general is what John Stott at a conference I went to and it's called ghettoized people and set them, you know, they are only to be with their peers.

And when I, it was a real rite of passage for me in my Anglican church when I was a kid that I was expected when I hit 18 and, you know, I was still in my youth group, but when we joined a Bible study it was intergenerational.

And I got into these Bible studies and the same thing happened when I got married a couple of years later and would be at a shower when my mother's friends gave in my honor that I was suddenly to call Mrs. So-and-so Barbara or, you know, it was like I thought of her as Mrs. So-and-so my mother and in Bible study with women that I had seen as other, suddenly the intimacy of being there and they were interested in what my little 18-year-old brain had to say and I was interested in what their 35-year-old brain had to say and it's quite important.

[75 : 08] I think St. John's would do better if we would have some of the breaking down and that ghettoization. John's said that's the kiss of death to the continuing life of the church.

That's a really good point because this is one of the, you know, we've got lots of weaknesses at St. John's. One of the strengths is that we do have lots of different age groups represented. You know, lots of churches, big, fast-growing churches, they're all in their 20s and 30s so they're all, you know, they're very narrow demographic.

But we are in a church that has this wide range and so it presents a good challenge that Nora, you're describing of really reaching out beyond those little groups of same age or ethnicity or whatever it is and to go beyond that.

And it's partly, I remember when, you know, in our Bible study when my kids were little, if your kids get to know other Christians who aren't their parents, sometime in life, like, you know, with my surgery tomorrow, my daughter will, she's full of fear and trembling but she can't talk to us, her parents, about her feelings so well because it's too close.

But, there are some other adults who she knows really well because she's grown up with them and although it's kind of scary for her to go outside, their comfort is there and I think that's another really important aspect of being in the church together.

[76 : 40] He's crossed and raised and it's going to start to happen. Well, we're reaching our hard deadline but I'd like to say a prayer before Joseph stands up and they're still in church.

So, let's pray together and ask God to help us in this area. Father in heaven, we praise you and we thank you because you have breathed life into us, a new eternal life.

You have brought us into fellowship with you, with the Father, with the Son, with the Holy Spirit and Father, you have given us this gift of being with others who have been called into that same fellowship.

We pray that we will see each other as you see each of us as being those who are dwelt inwardly by the Holy Spirit who live with you forever now.

Father, help us to relate to each other in new ways that honor you. Help us to repent and turn our back against the crooked generation. Father, we pray for grace and strength to take risks, to welcome one another into our lives, to make difficult decisions and uncomfortable decisions for the sake of fellowship.

[77 : 57] And, Father, we thank you for the joy, the fulfillment you give through that as well as you work in us. Father, we also today pray for Nora and her surgery tomorrow.

We ask that your Holy Spirit will fill her and strengthen her, particularly that your peace, which passes all understanding, which the world cannot give, will fill her heart.

Father, bless her surgeon, lead and guide him and his hands as they work. Father, we pray for protection throughout the surgery and the recovery as well.

Pray that Nora will know your presence, will know the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in her life. And we thank you for bringing people into her lives and the lives of her family to minister to her and care for her.

So we ask that your blessing will be on her in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Okay, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[78 : 56] Thank you.