

Sunday Celebration (11-14-04)

## Restoration of the Church (Pt. 7)

"The Restoration of Biblical Fellowship"

### INTRO: RESTORATION of the CHURCH

*"Church-lite: "Does it seem to you that churches these days just expect too much from their people? Well before you remember that Jesus told us to pick up our cross and follow Him daily, read the following announcement, then repent! ... Has the heaviness of your old fashioned church got you weighted down? Try us! We are the New and Improved Lite Church of the Valley. Studies have shown we have 24% fewer commitments than other churches. We guarantee to trim off guilt, because we are Low-Cal... low Calvin, that is. We are the home of the 7.5% tithe. We promise 35 minute worship services, with 7 minute sermons. Next Sunday's exciting text is the story of the Feeding of the 500. .... We have only 6 Commandments- Your choice!! We use just 3 gospels in our contemporary New Testament \*Good Sound Bites for Modern Human Beings\*. We take the offering every other week, all major credit cards accepted, of course. We are looking forward with great anticipation to our 800 year Millennium. ... Yes, the New and Improved Lite Church of the Valley could be just what you are looking for. We are everything you want in a church... and less!!"*

*"Most people's sense of religious responsibility begins with personal felt needs and desires and ends with convenience and simplicity. If it takes too long, requires too much effort, costs too much money, seems too complicated or causes too much discomfort, then the chances are good it won't make the day's agenda. The rule of thumb is that religion exists to serve people's needs, not God's purposes"* George Barna, *Boiling Point*, p. 213

Today's Subject May be the One of the Greatest Displays of DISCREPANCY Between God's Design & Current Practice — The Subject of Restoring Biblical Fellowship

## SNAPSHOTS FROM ACTS .... Acts 2, 4

Today ..... 2 Functions of Fellowship and 2 Facets of Fellowship

## 2 FUNCTIONS OF FELLOWSHIP

### (1) PROTECTIVE ... Heb 3:12-13

- Why Do We Need Protection?

Life in a FALLEN WORLD

- From What Do We Need Protection? .... The Unholy Trinity

- The DEVIL .... a Real Spirit Being who is Actively Waging War Against the Church (Rev 12)
- The WORLD .... "The Air We Breathe" ... The Philosophies and Life Methods Used by Man to get through life
- The FLESH (Indwelling Sin) ....

*"Sin isn't just a permanent houseguest; it's a meddling wretch. It's always poking its nose in, looking over your shoulder, whispering in your ear. ... Do you want to pray? Listen to a sermon? Meditate on the Word? Give a generous gift to the kingdom? Encourage a brother? Resist temptation? This hateful wicked pest is in your face with a thousand distractions and surprises, making sure you can't perfectly accomplish the good you intend. It exasperates you. ... Does God command you to believe he is good and wise when you lose a friend? Indwelling sin sidles up with seeds of doubt and mistrust. Does God command you to help a neighbor in need? There is sin with apathy and stinginess in hand. Does God want you to long for the coming of Christ? Here is sin, dangling before your eyes the trinkets of the world."* Kris Ljungberg, "The Enemy Within", p. 33

*"The law of sin doesn't work on us from the outside. We carry it in us. It's not a written law, simply directing us by decree. It is inbred — working, compelling, and urging us from the shadows of our hearts. ... If only sin came to visit now and then, like an unwelcome in-law, we could get a lot of godliness done while it was away."* Kris Lungaard, "The Enemy Within", p. 31, 32

*"Take care!" or "Take heed!" or "Look!" In other words, don't be careless or nonchalant or inattentive about the condition of your heart. Look at it. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Or like Peter says in 2 Peter 1:10, "Be diligent to confirm your election and your calling." Don't coast or drift and take your perseverance in faith for granted. All kinds of alternative passions are making war on your soul every day to steal your faith and replace Christ with other treasures. Take care! Be on the look out! Be earnest! Be watchful over your heart. As Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." That's the answer of verse 12. Take heed!"* John Piper, "Eternal Security is a Community Project"

- **What Does God Assign to Protect Us?**

- The WORD

Ps 119:9, 11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. ...  
11 Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

- The HOLY SPIRIT

- Ministering Angels

- The FELLOWSHIP Of the CHURCH

**NOTE:** We're NEVER Encouraged to Pick the Ones We Want— We Need them ALL!!  
Fellowship Brings Unique Exposure of Our Sin— & Exposure is the 1<sup>st</sup> STEP Toward Protection

Eph 5:3-11

1 John 1:5-7

If You've Not Gone Public With an Area of Sin— You're Already Deceived and One Step Closer to Being Hardened!

*"[Owen's definition of indwelling sin] It is a powerful and effectual indwelling principle, inclining and pressing unto actions agreeable and suitable unto its own nature. (p. 158) ... It hath a self evidencing efficacy to them that are alive to discern it. They that find not its power are under its dominion. Whosoever contend against it shall know and find that it is present with them. That it is powerful in them. (p. 159) "The Works of John Owen" vol. 6*

**(2) SUPPORTIVE .... Heb 10:19-25**

- WARNING: It is Easy to AGREE with These 2 Functions, While Not SUBMITTING To Them! (There are plenty of Christians who agree with these passages, but can Rarely Identify when They have Been Intentional about Pursuing Protection & Support through specific relationships!)

- **My Need for Others IN SPITE of My Access to God**

- Understanding your "2 Dimensional Design" .... THE 2 GREAT COMMANDS — Love God .... Love Neighbor

- Access to God in order to EFFECT Others ....

**v. 24** .... "let US consider how" — Who is Responsible to Stir Up The Church to Love & Good Works?

*"I urge you to hear God's word in Hebrews 10:24. When you get up in the morning, Consider - think about, ponder, deliberate, meditate, mull over - other people, with this conscious goal: what can I do today so that they will be stirred up to love and to good deeds? Now there is a reason to live and a focus for every day that will never be boring. Every day is new and different. People change. Their circumstances change. You change. But the call remains the same: consider, consider, consider these people you will be around today. What are they like? What am I like? What will the situation be like? What helps a person become loving? What is the origin of genuine good deeds? This is a reason for living that is focused enough to be practical and big enough to last a lifetime."* John Piper, "Consider Each Other, How to Stir Up Each Other"

## **BIBLICAL REVELATION OF "HOW" FROM V. 25:**

- Meet Together (don't neglect this)

*"So I ask you to take stock of your life: where are you in verse 25? There are two groups: those who gather to encourage each other, and those who have formed the habit of not gathering. See that little phrase in verse 25: "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some." Non-participation in a small group can be habit-forming. How are you doing?"* John Piper, "Consider Each Other, How to Stir Up Each Other"

- Encourage One Another — Do You Know How to be an Encourager?

ENCOURAGEMENT = paraklesis ... para = to come near, alongside

*"The ministry of refreshment involves genuine concern, willingness to take risks, and persistence in service. It requires being alert to the needs of others and seeking to provide relief from the pressures that burden them." .... (p. 75) "Encouragement is 'pouring courage into someone who needs it.'" David Jeremiah, The Ministry of Encouragement, p. 52*

*"Yet this is where we often get stuck. We want ministry that doesn't demand love that is --- well, so demanding! We don't want to serve others in a way that requires so much personal sacrifice. We would prefer to lob grenades of truth into people's lives rather than lay down our lives for them."* Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands, p. 118

*"the bottom line in why God designed us for relationships—which he did!—is so that we would help each other live by faith in future grace. Faith means "being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus." So all Christian relationships have this as their goal: to help each other stay satisfied in God."* John Piper, "The Mission and Vision of Bethlehem Baptist Church, vol. 8"

**v. 24** .... INSTRUCTIONS: Add the Holy Spirit and Human STIRRING. — Why is Stirring Needed?

*“ when I look at the church, I see a hospital full of people in various stages of dealing with the disease of sin. ... The church is full of people dealing with the effects of sin, people who are not fully formed into the image of Jesus Christ. The church is full of people who have lost their way and don't even know it, who haven't made a connection between their daily problems and the transforming grace of Christ. Everywhere you look, you will find couples who are struggling to love, parents who are struggling to be patient, children who are attracted to temptation, and friends who battle the disappointments of imperfect relationships. This is 100 percent of the church's membership!”* Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, p. 116

## 2 FACETS OF FELLOWSHIP

### (1) We Each Need to be Protected & Supported

### (2) We Each Need to Protect & Support Others

*“ And love means that you have a heart to lighten people's load as you get to know them. Love means that your desire is to be a load-lifter, a burden-bearer, a helper, a strengthener. ... It's true that we need all these things ourselves. But if you go into a relationship mainly to use the other person to meet your needs it will very likely collapse. You will be most blessed if you live to be a blessing (Acts 20:35). Relationships thrive when we try to outdo each other in supporting not in being supported.”* John Piper, *The Mission and Vision of Bethlehem Baptist Church*, vol. 8”