

## Sunday Morning Message

December 1, 2018

### *Maintaining Biblical Relationships*

Text – Acts 2:41 - 47

Congregational Reading – Acts 2:44 - 47

### Introduction

Notice the phrases in v. 44 and 46:

*"And all that believed **were together**, and **had all things common**;" (Acts 2:44)*

*"And they, continuing daily **with one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and **singleness of heart**," (Acts 2:46)*

*"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast **in one spirit, with one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel;" (Philippians 1:27)*

One of the things that I enjoy most about the Christian life is the unity that we share as we worship the Lord together, and as we grow together in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), and as we strive to serve him together through the communication of His gospel to the world around us.

The friendships that we have developed through the years within the churches where we have served and even within our fellowship with likeminded churches around the country and around the world are strong friendships, and in many ways surpass the strength of the relationships that we share with extended family members who are not of like faith.

The reason why we enjoy such strength of unity in our relationships with one another is because we have many things in common:

We are saved.

We love the Lord.

We love His Word.

We love to see people saved.

As long as this church and the majority of the people in it continue to love the Lord, love the Bible, and desire to see people saved, the unity that we enjoy will continue.

*"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)*

The reason that we enjoy such unity is because we are in agreement in many important areas.

This morning, I want to discuss ways to strengthen and maintain relationships. Though in the context of our passage, we will be discussing relationships within the local church, many of the principles that we discuss will apply to any or all relationships.

### **1. Be careful to maintain a priority in your relationships.**

In other words, don't let your primary relationships get out of their biblical order.

Your primary relationship is your relationship with the Lord. **(Father)**

Your next priority is within the family unity. **(Family)**

Your spouse and then your children. For children, your parents, and then your siblings.

Your next priority is with your friends. **(Friends)** Your close friends should be those with which you share a common bond or a common goal.

Sometimes friendships elevate to the place of family.

Illustrate – Justin and Sami were friends that shared the same love for the Lord and His Word, and the same desire to see people saved. Ashley and Issan.

We have had many people in our lives who have become like family to us because we have many things in common.

Note – there is a level of intimacy in each relationship which needs to be maintained within each relationship. I should be most intimate with God; then my wife; then my children and grandchildren; then my friends. Be careful about being more intimate with friends than you are with your family.

Note – don't let the friends that were drawn with you to God pull you away from God.

Note – when you fall away from your love for God, the Bible, and the Gospel, you will begin to have problems in your relationships with people who still do; and you will begin to get attracted to people who have also fallen away.

Illustrate – Two families who didn't like each other when they were here, but they became united in their dislike for the church and ended up moving away together to another state. They are "agreed" now in their dislike for the things they once claimed to like.

People who get out of God's will, will have problems with people who are still in God's will. Remember, their problem is not with you, it is with God:

*"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."* (John 15:18-20)

## **2. Be careful to practice forgiveness within the relationship.**

Every once in a while, there will be a glitch within the relationship. Something happens, and there is disharmony, discord, disagreement, or disunity.

*"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**"* (Ephesians 4:32)

*"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: **even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**"* (Colossians 3:13)

Your forgiveness of others should be based upon Christ's forgiveness of you.

Illustrate – Man that was forgiven 10,000 talents and would not forgive someone that owed him a hundred pence (a few bucks - Matthew 18).

If you allow unforgiveness and bitterness to develop in your relationship with somebody, you will lose focus on the things that you loved – God, the Bible, and the Gospel – and you will become obsessed with whatever wrong was done to you.

## **3. Be careful to follow God's procedure for settling disputes.**

*"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."* (Matthew 18:15-17)

*"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so,*

*that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)*

The church at Corinth was a carnal church. They had no glue to unify them. They lost their first love. They no longer were drawn together by their love for God, the Bible, and seeing people saved, and they were no longer striving together for the Lord; they were fighting each other over earthly stuff.

This won't happen to us as long as we understand and keep our focus, our desire on the things that matter for eternity – God, the Bible, and the Gospel. We need to keep the main thing, the main thing.

## **Conclusion**

I got saved 30 years ago this month. I have been a member of five different churches during those thirty years. I was baptized in 1990 at Ocean County Baptist Church by Pastor Earl Thompson. We help start the Christian Bible Church in South Toms River with Pastor Rick Wedemeyer. After several years there, we left to serve in Gloucester City where I was a youth pastor at Lighthouse Baptist Church. From there we went to Bible College in Longview and we served at Longview Baptist Temple. For the past eighteen years, we have been serving here.

I have many great relationships here. There are people here who we love dearly. There are people here who love me and love my family.

From each one of the churches that we have been a part of we have people that we love and that love us.

Illustrate – Kim Wedemeyer was here on Wednesday evening.

We also have dear friends from other churches around the area and around the country.

We are kindred spirits. We all love the same things.

We love God. We love the Bible. And, we love to see people saved.