

THIS AMAZING FELLOWSHIP - PART 3

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Romans 8:35,37-39

In the last two Communion meditations we saw how the church is an Amazing Fellowship because it conquers

The Differences That Would Divide Us

and

The Difficulties Of Life That Would Defeat Us.

This morning, I am going to limit my comments to a simple story which illustrates for me, at least, another reason why the church may be properly called: This Amazing Fellowship. It conquers

The Distances That Would Detach Us.

In 1950, Lucille and I made a four-month Evangelistic tour of Europe. It took us into ten countries. We travelled over 10,000 miles. Lucille sang and I preached 147 times in 120 days.

Most of the time I spoke through an interpreter, which was a new and sometimes trying experience for me, so when we got to the British Isles where we could both hear and speak our native tongue, it was a great relief.

Among the places to which we ministered was Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland. This is one of the great, free churches in Europe. William Graham Scroggie, author of numerous bible study books, was the esteemed pastor for many years. The current pastor is our beloved friend, Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter who is, in the estimation of many church leaders, the greatest living bible teacher of our time.

We had met Dr. Baxter when he and his wife, Ethel, were on one of their early missions to America. He very kindly arranged our preaching schedule for the British Isles. Included in that

itinerary was a week in his own church, Charlotte Chapel.

It's a wonderful preaching place seating something in excess of 1,000 people. Because of it's construction, which includes a spacious U-shaped balcony, the congregation is close to the pulpit.

We, of course, were new to these people and so, to introduce ourselves I said,

“I'm sure you are wondering why we have come so far to be with you this week. To help you get to know us and our ministry better, I have asked Lucille to sing a song which will explain why we are here.”

She stood and, in her gracious and gifted way, sang this song:

“I am a stranger here within a foreign land.
My home is far away upon a distant strand.
Ambassador to thee from realms beyond the sea.
I'm here on business for my King.

“This is the message that I bring.
A message angels fain would sing.
Oh be ye reconciled, thus say our God and King.
Oh be ye reconciled to God.”

They were enthralled as she sang and smiles filled their faces as she expressed why we had come all the way from California to Edinburgh.

When she finished, the man who was leaving the service stood up and said,

“Now that these dear ones have explained why they have come, let us sing back to them our welcome.”

And they sang! Oh, how they sang!! A thousand voices expressing the hunger of their hearts:

“Tell me the story of Jesus.

Write on my heart every word.

Tell me the story most blessed.

Sweetest that ever was heard.”

And I could but bow my head and thank my God for the Church.

This Amazing Fellowship

which conquers the vast distances that detach us. That leave us feeling

disconnected,

estranged and, yes,

alone in this struggle with sin.

A little girl walked into a great cathedral and, seeing the cross at the center of the chancel, she said,

“Look Daddy, they have a plus sign in this church.”

And she was right.

The cross is a plus sign that adds together the Christians in Africa and Egypt,

India and Pakistan,

America and Russia.

For in Christ there is no distance to be measured in terms of yards and miles.

“Lo, I am with you always,” he said (Matt.28:20).

This morning, as we gather around this table, we do so with the blessed assurance that there are fellow Christians in many lands who even now

bend their knees and

bow their heads in remembrance of Him.

As we eat the bread and drink the cup, let us thank God for the Church,

This Amazing Fellowship

that knows no boundaries of time and space and which conquers

The Distances That Would Detach Us.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or
famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?”

“Nay, in all these things we are more than
conquerors thru Him that loved us. For I am
persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels,
nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,
nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any
other creature, shall be able to separate us from the
love of God, which is in Christ our Lord” (Romans
8:35, 37-39).