- • TRANSCRIPT
- November 8th, 2026 "***Intentional Community***
- Guest Speaker: Pastor Larry Swartz
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We're going to start our reading in verse 14 We're going to read through 47 so it's kind of a long passage, but I want to get the background of where we're going to We're going to spend some time in 242 but the background here was a time of pentecost when Um Well when the church started when the holy spirit first indwelt believers when peter preached a great message there and we see according to luke that uh, there was 3 000 souls that were saved at the preaching of peter and It was just an amazing amazing time. The inception of god's church on earth was was just Accompanied by signs and wonders. There was the The apostles were doing miracles they were uh, they were speaking in other tongues they had Peter preached a message and 16 different nations heard him while they were there visiting in jerusalem And it was just an amazing time.

This is a whole the book of acts is a is a It's a history of the church the inception of something brand new to jerusalem brand new to the jewish economy And uh something that was just that we're still enjoying today It's lasted, you know Jesus said he would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it and it's not it'll never Prevail against jesus because he promised first of all and if he's going to build it He's going to build it and it will get built. And so let's do take our reading from verse 14 Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice and he said unto them ye men of judea And all that dwell at jerusalem be it known unto you And hearken unto my words For they for these are not drunken as you're supposed being it is but the third hour that he's referring to the fact that they were Speaking and there was 16 different Nations represented and they said how do we all hear him in our own language? They said go they these guys are drunk. They're they so so he's he's giving an answer These are not drunk in the verse 15 as you're supposed seeing it's only the third hour of the day But this is he which was spoken by the prophet joel and it shall come to here's joel It shall come to pass in the last day say of god I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh your sons and your daughters shall prophesy Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams and on my servants and on my handmaids I will pour out in those days of my spirit and they shall prophesy And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke The sun shall be turned into darkness the moon into blood Before that great and notable day of the lord come And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the lord shall be saved verse 22 you men of israel Hear these words jesus of nazareth the man approved of god among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you And as yourselves also know him being delivered by the determinate council and the foreknowledge of god You have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain Wow That's pretty heavy preaching He's telling him right at what happened right at what they did in a large Group there were no doubt part of it When they when he rode into the city and they praised him and then a couple of days later They said crucify him.

No doubt. A lot of that group was there peter's speaking to them And he says here whom god had raised up seeing he could not loose the bands. Uh, he he could God having loosed the bands of death because it was not possible that she he should be holding there of verse 25 For david speaks concerning him.

I foresaw the lord always before my face for he's on my right hand that I should not be moved Therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad moreover Also, my flesh shall rest in hope because thou will not leave my soul in hell Neither will thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption Thou has made known unto me the ways of life thou shall make me full of joy with thy countenance So he's david there is prefiguring jesus And he says here and that was in the psalms verse 29 men and brethren Let me speak freely to you of the patriarch david He is both dead and buried and his sepulcher is with us unto this day Therefore being a prophet and knowing that god had sworn by an oath unto him That the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up christ to sit on his throne Seeing this before he spake of the resurrection of christ that his soul was not left in hell Neither did his flesh see corruption this jesus had god raised up wherefore we are all witnesses Therefore being at the right hand of god exalted And having received of the father the promise of the holy spirit, which he had shed forth this Which he had now seen here for david is not ascended up into heavens But he saith himself the lord said unto my lord sit down on my right hand until I make thy foes Thy footstool. That's one ten one therefore Let all the house of israel know assuredly that god had made this same. Jesus whom you crucified both lord and christ Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart and they said unto peter and the rest of the apostles men and brethren What shall we do? Then peter said unto them repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of jesus christ for the remission of the sins And you shall receive the gift of the holy ghost Therefore or for the promises unto you and your children and to all who are far off Even as many as the lord our god shall call and with many other words did he testify and exhort saying Save yourselves from this untoward or crooked generation Then they gladly received his word and were baptized And the same day they were added unto them about three thousand souls and they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and in prayers And fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles and all that were believed Believed together had all things in common They sold their possessions their goods and they parted them to all men as everyone the man had need And they continuing daily in one accord in the temple breaking bread from house to house Did they eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart? praising god and having favor with all the people and the lord added unto the church daily as Such as should be saved And so that's the reading.

Let's pray and ask the lord as we look at verse 42 in particular father We thank you for this opportunity to read your word today We thank you for the history of the new testament church as recorded by luke Lord as he had written this epistle to this man theophilus And he addressed the same in the gospel of luke And we we we know that luke was there and he witnessed all of these things. He was one that saw Jesus and he saw the he witnessed the crucifixion the resurrection and he was there at pentecost and he's He's giving us a great in detail account of the power of holy ghost Pentecostal preaching and we see peter was filled with the holy spirit as he opened his mouth and he preached And people turned and they they called out and said what should we do? And his answer was plain and simple repent and be baptized in the name of jesus christ for the remission of sins And so lord as we look to this This day this great day in the history of the church this beginning day of the church We see there is something that they continued in and that we are to be continuing in as well and that is continuing in having fellowship and having Teaching and having breaking of bread and in prayers and so we ask your blessings on the message in jesus name. Amen so this passage uh breaks itself nicely this one verse breaks itself nicely into a four-part, um Four-part message if you will and I I just wrote this for For marks of true christian fellowship and when I say true christian fellowship because there is Untrue christian fellowship in the world.

There are churches that just are churches And they become social clubs and they lose the fellowship in christ and it's very problematic And so here we see there is true fellowship. They continued steadfastly

notice verse 42 In the apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayer So there's four marks of real community real community in the christian church These are things that we practice. These are things that and if you notice here, this was spontaneous Because they got saved They weren't commanded by the apostles right away to do this.

They they just banded together Because they had a common denominator and his name is jesus They were saved they were baptized and they said okay Let's meet and so I believe and it's quite clear in the scripture when we are saved We're going to want to continue in fellowship And in teaching and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Amen It's a natural outcome of the new birth when we're born again We have new desires and one of the desires is to be collectively with god's people And so that's what they did. They continued steadfastly in the apostles Doctrine his message was simple verse number 36 Therefore let all the house in israel know assuredly that god had made this same same jesus whom you crucified both lord and christ Jesus is the christ.

Jesus is the messiah. Jesus is the king of kings the lord of lords and Peter wanted that group of mainly jewish people many jewish people to understand that jesus was lord Jesus was the christ the christ means the messiah the anointed one. He was the one that they had waited for and so again today, we'll look at God's grace and we notice four marks of true christian community.

First of all, it's marked by truth The christian community is marked by truth and when I say community, I mean Togetherness, I mean the fellowship. I mean the church I mean having community one with another and we should be intentional about that community We should be intentional about partaking of it fostering of it being a part of it, um, and so forth and so First of all, it was marked by truth and teaching notice here They continued steadfastly some other. Um, some other Versions, I think it may be the niv.

It says they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching. That's good I like that they devote they were devoted They were devoted to the teaching. They were devoted to the reading.

They were were devoted to the Exhortation of the word the preaching of the word they were devoted and they continued steadfastly It's marked by truth first timothy 4 13, uh And I I if you don't you don't have to turn if you don't want to It says this until I come and this is paul writing to the to timothy He says until I come Give attendance to reading to exhortation and to doctrine And he's writing to timothy and I was thinking about this when I was reading Wouldn't you love to have been the recipient of one of his letters? Until I come Wow, he's coming again to visit with me amazing, right paul The greatest apostle right the apostle to the gentiles Perhaps beside jesus And john the baptist the greatest preacher that ever walked Because paul led this young group of men that he was with To as the they're recorded in the book of acts to turn the world upside down with their teaching They turned the world upside that they were accused of that I would like to be accused of turning the world upside down because of my preaching And that's what they did. They were they were continued Continually involved in it. So anyways, it's marked by truth first timothy 4 13 until I come give attendance Always be in attendance Hebrews 10 24 and 25 says that we're not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together Because when we get together, we're there for teaching Doctrine, we're there for fellowship.

We're there for breaking of bread and we're there for prayer these things continue They they never change and we need to be uh steadfast in in those second timothy 2 15 Writing to timothy again paul said this Study to show yourself approved a workman Approved of god rightly dividing the word of truth So we have to rightly divide the word that that that has the idea in the greek Of being a biblical lapidary a stone cutter And if you ever have seen how they cut a diamond They'll take a big piece and

they'll keep cutting and they'll find and they'll cut and they'll find and they'll come up with something That is spectacularly beautiful Just by chipping away at it and that's what paul is telling timothy and us to be involved in studying Discerning the truth of the scripture by the way We have the holy spirit to give us discernment and we can understand what the truth is By the way, if you want to find out if you're reading a scripture and you're not sure Look for it somewhere else in the bible. The bible will interpret itself. Always it'll always interpret itself We were reading there Back here when it said david, uh said you won't leave my soul in hell if we keep reading we'll see David was talking about jesus.

So what was he talking about that psalm? He was talking about jesus He's talking about jesus being put in the grave hell was the grave and being lifted up not the hell Where people are cast for eternity, but jesus went to the grave for sure For us and so paul tells him to timothy to study the show yourself approved A workman that needs not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth as god's people. We should work at understanding the scripture Because there's a lot of false doctrine in the world And people are swayed by false doctrine very easily And I had an opportunity to give a class at our church On wednesday and we spoke about this and I said be careful of youtube Be careful of watching christian videos on youtube because there's a pile of garbage out there and paul commended a church in berea Because when he preached they went home and they took the word and they said we're going to find out if this is true So this is what we go for this is what we go after we always want to check everything with the word of god Just be careful. There's a lot of charlatans out there There's a lot of people that would like to lead you down a bad path because the devil has not done with his lie Yea hath not god said he's still running the same game He hasn't quit and there's liars out there and you have to be careful You have to know what you believe and it's very important you have to know what you believe as a believer and so we we are the christian community is is known by Teaching by their giving attendance to the teaching doctrine the apostles doctrine Simply is what paul and the apostles taught and what they taught was very simply jesus and the resurrection Amen It doesn't have to go too much deeper.

I mean I was mentioning to peggy on the way here that this message right here continuing in the apostles doctrine the first point The second point fellowship the third point breaking and bread and the fourth point prayers you could preach that message for a year You could preach the first one Until well, that's what we do every every time we meet We preach the apostles doctrine Or we take doctrine from the old testament That's what we do every time we meet and of course we could take each one of these These things that they practiced and we could we could make a huge series That we could literally preach until jesus came home because that's what we're supposed to be doing These four marks of a christian church of a christian community have to be in place. They have to be practiced They have to be revered and we have to understand that's what keeps the unity That's what keeps the purpose of christ going forward in the church having truth Because truth is always first before fellowship Truth has to be there. We don't have fellowship with the works of darkness We don't have fellowship with foul doctrines.

We have fellowship with the truth and so Paul and in our scripture luke is telling us that we have um the the church or true community and I say true because there's false community don't be Alarmed and don't be fooled Because there's a lot of people that sit in our churches that are just unregenerate Don't be surprised Don't be surprised And there's because there's why we have at times and many times in churches all over the world We have trouble because there's unregenerate people in in the church And so we have to know the truth. The truth is that jesus died for you And he gave himself for you And if he did live for him Amen And that that's the truth and we stand by it notice luke's word they Again, and I want you to understand this they continued steadfastly They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. Are you devoted to reading the word? Some people didn't jump up and say yeah Let me tell

you something.

This is what you need Is it that simple you it's that simple It is that simple. You mean you could put all your psychology here. Yeah, I could put it right here This is what you need.

You need the word of god Man does not want he doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word you don't live until you're in the book And you're dying if you're not reading because you're not feeding the spirit man And if you're born again, you are more spirit than you are carnal You have to just mark it down you've got because you will live forever And by the way, whether you're born again or not, you're going to live forever in one place or another either in heaven or in hell You're going to live forever. But if you're born again, you need to feed the spirit paul said as newborn babes Desire ye the sincere milk of god that you may grow by we should be intentionally growing Anybody thank you my wife Very good We should be intentionally growing we should be intentional about scripture reading about Attending to the preaching and about being involved in the meetings of the church. We should be intentional about it So they they they again the word they and look at verse 46 and they continuing daily They it was a group thing.

They all did it. They didn't split up into little groups and splinter things here and there They got together that it was community. It was real true community and they had all things in common and so That was the first mark.

It was the teaching it was the reading it was the exhortation It was the preaching come and listen to the preaching when the church is open Come when there's a bible study come and don't come because you should Come because you need to I I I wake up and read my word and i'm not bragging. I'm I'm believe me. I'm nobody special But I have to read the book.

I have to get up and have my bible I I have two things that are a must in my morning and it's coffee and the word Without coffee. I'm a mess I can't even understand the word but now when I have a little caffeine then things loosen up a little bit. I feel okay Now I want to read the word because this is my spiritual meat for the day This is what we need.

So they continued daily in the teaching and Anything that they did was profitable for them You know you you you shouldn't be constrained to read your bible if you feel like i'm Constraining you well, then by all means don't do it But if you hunger for it And you thirst after it by all means do it amen Get in the book and read and you will find that it's the most comforting thing It's the most enlightening thing you'll find out you can check what's happening today in the world against the book constantly You can always find out what's going on. You keep reading the book because nothing's new under the sun And people are the same people And we can see you just read the word and you will be filled the more you know about jesus The more you'll fall in love with him. Can you say you love jesus? If not, keep reading the book Keep reading the gospels because there you'll find him You'll find great pictures of him of his love towards people in the way he worked.

So they were marked by By the continuing in the in the in the word in the teaching in the the apostle's doctrine secondly fellowship They were marked by fellowship And in our verse again Chapter 2 verse 42 of acts they continued steadfastly steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and so Fellowship with one another and with jesus in first corinthians 1 9 This verse is is wonderful. It says god is faithful By whom you were called unto the fellowship of his son. Jesus christ our lord.

Isn't that nice? Has called us into fellowship with jesus That's what they're getting at here having

fellowship not just with one another but with god The father the son the holy spirit and inviting him into everything that we do Collectively fellowship and a couple of verses I had written out for that. Well christian fellowship As a result of reading this verse god's called us into the fellowship of his son Christian fellowship is therefore holy And it should be treated and exercised in that manner. It's a holy thing when we get together Because we're having fellowship with the father and the son and the spirit amen We're his body on earth We are his body here on earth I have a quote i'll get to it soon By phillips um Well, let me read Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness I meant i've i've read that before look at second corinthians chapter six and we'll read a few passages Talking about fellowship.

What do they do continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine? They continued steadfastly in in fellowship second corinthians 614 and I hope that I am right Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers for what fellowship? Has righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion? Is light with darkness the word fellowship and the word communion there are the same word in the greek Koinonia koinonia koinos or something like that. I don't read greek But I have a couple of great books that show me that these words are the same thing. They come from the same root He says what concord has christ with baal or belial or what part? With he with a that believes with an infidel What agreement has the temple of god with idols for you? You're the temple of the living god as god has said I will dwell in them and I will walk in them I'll be their god and they'll be my people wherefore come out from among them and be separate says the lord Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you I will be a father unto you and you will be my sons and daughters saith the lord I said fellowship is a holy thing you see It's a holy thing Be careful, uh fellowship, uh young people be careful if you're a believer and you're looking to for a mate Don't don't go after somebody who's not safe because they'll drag you down a bad path

There'll be, there'll be this immediately. There'll be a war immediately because two different ones the Holy Spirit is in dwelling one and the spirit of world is dwelling in the other and there'll be a fight whether they Know it or not. There's a fight There's a spiritual reality that happens all the time and those of us who are in the church We need to understand spiritual things.

We've got to be careful of hanging around with people who are unbelievers We love them We want them to come to Jesus, but we have to be careful of hanging with them. How about for Psalm chapter 1? Blessed is a man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly Nor sits in the seat of the scornful sits, yeah or Stands in the way of sinners There's a threefold progression. Am I right there Bonnie? Is that how it went walking sitting standing? First of all, you're walking with an unbeliever.

Not a healthy practice what it leads to is Stopping and hanging with them standing and then then you're now you're sitting with them You get it. It's it's dangerous. It's very dangerous.

Don't think that you are so Spiritually powerful that you can overcome the world no stick together That's why God has the church so we would stick together because there's power in numbers There's power in numbers and there's protection in numbers and that's why we have fellowship That's why they continue together. By the way at this point in time. These people were being harassed by the Roman government They were being harassed by Jews They were being harassed by everybody and they stuck together out of necessity because the world was against them Why because they prophesied they professed Jesus Christ as their Savior.

That was the only thing they did wrong By the way, it wasn't wrong According to the world it was wrong But they they they all believed in the Lord Jesus and they were they were I hate to say it They

were forced into fellowship, but it's a good thing The persecution Forced them to leave they had to leave their homes They had to leave the things they knew they were ostracized from their community They couldn't go to the temple any longer many of these Jews had a very very difficult time. So they banded together now What are we going to do? Well, here's what we're going to do. We're going to listen to Paul.

We're going to listen to Peter We're going to listen to the Apostles. We're going to get together. Amen.

We're going to have fellowship that means getting together with other believers and doing the things that the church does and We're going to get through and by the way, God blessed it abundantly He blessed abundantly verse 43 fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles and So because of this great great outpouring of the Holy Spirit this great Community of people that were getting together. It was all kinds of things that happened, you know, I Believe that God does miracles and if you don't I'm sorry Because you're limiting what God can do God can do anything He could do anything he ever did and he could do more than he's ever done Amen, don't put him in a box Don't ever do that because you'll limit yourself Perhaps from a blessing. Oh I know God could heal Yeah, yes, he can And don't give a reason as to why he didn't that belongs to him and God can and he will when he chooses he can do anything Amen, I Believe what happened here can happen today.

I Believe people can come in droves to Jesus If they're pricked in their heart and they find themselves Wanting when the preaching happens and they understand that they are out. They're out of this community They don't they're not steadfast They don't love the brethren They don't love the Word of God. They don't love coming to the table on Sunday and not just Sunday whenever we have a meal together and So here we have to understand these people they did many things Of the community it was marked by Christian fellowship 244 it said they had all this is here's part of the fellowship 244 they all that believed were or together and they had all things common in other words They they shared the commonality whatever they had they saw if someone had a need they helped They had everything in common.

There wasn't this is mine and and that's yours and I got mine and you'd be okay No, no, no, they they cared for one another They found out what one another's needs were and they came as best as they could to meet them And that's what we want to do. That's what fellowship is fellowship is not going downstairs after church and just having a meal That's just that that's that's a communal meal. That's all well and fine, but fellowship is a lot more than that fellowship many times in the scripture is Translated.

Well, here's one 2nd Corinthians 8 for Distribution communication giving Being involved in the offerings that's fellowship. What do we do when we give an offering? we're having fellowship with the church and That money is going to the gospel to be preached if we have missionaries Which we should and in our own towns and so they had all things in common notice verse number 45 They shared what they had Let's read it here 45 and they sold their possessions and their goods and they parted them as every man had need Well, I'm not suggesting that you should sell everything you have But if God put it on your heart knock yourself out I'm not saying you should do that but we should model the steadfastness of the whole concept of having fellowship and Being involved in giving and being that that word they that Paul wrote to a church and he said no other church Communicated like you guys did Philippi. He wrote to that meant they gave to him They sent him on his way.

They gave and fellowship is is more than just having having bread together and And having you know

having a meal they continued verse number 46 again Continued daily in one accord and that's not a Honda They didn't have cars back then. I'm sorry. They did not have cars as much as My I had a pastor that said that about 30 years ago and I'll never forget it every time I read this.

I'm like, oh man That was so that was way out there pastor Wilkes Peggy our pastor from New England They continued in fellowship Look they were praising God and having favor with all the people and And that's what we ought to be doing. We ought to be praising God when we come here. We shouldn't We should be done with factions be done with divisions be done with heresy be done with fighting be done with it And we ought to be praising God Because that's what they did.

That's what we do that's what we'll do to continue to see growth in the New Testament Church, and we are Proud to be a part of a church in New Bedford right now. That's going gangbusters We have over 2,500 people that come every Sunday morning There's over 400 teenagers on Thursday night. They feed 400 people on third 400 Excuse me 100 families that may translate to five six hundred people.

I don't know how many on Thursday night We now have a full-size gym and pastor was so happy He put it up on the thread the other day and it's packed with kids from the city The gym is going to be like a boys club for the city Because they want they love children and they want children to come in and they want to bring them into a safe place They have started a and this is fellowship. This is what it's all about This is getting involved in the ministry and and and having community and getting together and everyone's behind it And it's just it's just wonderful They have a daycare now an early learning center for kids and they have tons of little children that are coming in and if the Mom can't afford daycare you come and drop your kid off and we will tell him about Jesus We'll love him. We'll take care of him and we and watch over him.

It's just amazing now He has and I'm bragging because I am he has a vision that I didn't have now We're going to get another building to have a middle school and a high school for God's glory in New Bedford Amen, and that's the way to do it. Don't be afraid Don't be dismayed at their faces and my pastor is very cool. If you don't like it, just go on There's lots of churches find yourself somewhere But we're gonna do what God wants us to do and many people are running with it Many of people are behind it because you can see the fruits We have baptisms We had another church in the park this summer and they baptized 87 people again We had a baptism two weeks ago and baby dedication.

They they dedicated ten babies two weeks ago and We had baptisms and there was about 15 in our certain first service and I don't know how many the next service People are the testimonies are beautiful. They're just people from all walks of life in the city I was beaten. I was drugged.

I was raped. I was had in a bad thing Whatever these women these guys drug addicts drunks coming getting cleaned up getting saved and being loved by the community and Then testifying before before everybody and being publicly baptized. It's just beautiful It's wonderful to be a part of brothers and sisters.

That's what we need here Amen, you need to be praying for it We need to be praying that we would be steadfast in the things of the church Now this early church should be no different than the church today Because we still have the same teaching We still have the same people We still have the same opportunities. By the way, we have bigger opportunities than they ever had They thrived under persecution. We are failing because we are not persecuted we're failing because we are so Comfortable in Zion.

It says woe unto them who are comfortable in Zion and We're comfortable and that's why things kind of go wonky with the church because we're we're not pressed But if you read your word, you'd be pressed the times we're living in are pretty tough We need to wake up and understand that God The judgment that we may have seen whether it was a judgment or not a few weeks ago or on the third God is still running this whole thing God's running the whole thing and if that's a judgment then then people better get ready because he may be coming By the way, we believe that he can come in any minute. We had to get right with God And then we're just throw down and get right and say Lord Jesus forgive me Because I have not been steadfast. I Have not been steadfast.

I have not been devoted And so I mentioned pastor's book last last time I was here Be intentional look for it on Amazon. It's $10. It's a great book He talks about these points that we're getting out here today and different things.

It's we need to be intentional Christians We need to be intentional about Reading we need to be intentional about fellowship Romans 15 26 for it pleased them at Macedonia and Achaia to make a Contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem that word contribution is fellowship. You see how When that's part of the fellow fellowship We have a bad concept fellowship is not sitting down stairs and eating and getting fat and having a good time Having food and coffee. That's not it Fellowship is getting involved in the working of the church whether it be offerings whether it be prayer time whether it be Communion together whether it be the table and we'll talk about the table in a few minutes But it pleased them of Macedonia Macedonia, I believe Philippi and and Corinth to make a contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

We want to be all about giving to people Thank you We want to be all about giving look communism I'll take Christianity I'll give big difference The communist system wants to take everything you have Give it to other people mainly to themselves In Christianity, we want to give what we have. We want to bless people We want people to come into the community. We want people to come into the kingdom We want to be about this steadfast fellowship with one another and there's nothing like it brothers and sisters when you come into the church We should be Vibrantly in love with the concept that we are called out of the world to be here today called by God Into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ That's what we are.

We're called by God to be here. And so it pleased them of Macedonia and first Corinthians First Corinthians 1016 the cup of blessing which we bless is not this the Communion of the blood of Christ that word communion is fellowship once again fellowship I'm saying again is not just stuff in your face and having a good time Fellowship is doing the things that the early church did that's what they meant by fun. Hey, we're having a fellowship Oh, yeah, what kind of food you having? No, no, no.

No, we're taking an offering We're going out to visit the poor We're going out to help people we're gonna go visit people in prison and do those things And so fellowship is very it's a mark of true Community and I say true and by the way brothers I'll finish up with this. I have a few more minutes I'm not finishing yet, but I want to I might as well jump to my to right now. These are marks of a true conversion Yeah These are marks of a true conversion you continue steadfastly in the word why you have a new hunger For the Word of God That hunger never stops.

Do you ever get hope say do you ever get tired of reading the word? Do you get tired? Are you sorry when you picked it up after you read a while? ever Okay We love it. Amen. We do these things and and we don't do it by constraint.

This is a mark of a conversion if You're converted to Jesus you will want to read his words He left you his word the New Testament of Jesus Christ our Lord it says That's what it is. This is the New Testament of Jesus. This is his last will and testament of the church Lord have mercy we ought to read it This is the last thing he said to us We ought to read it and it's marked down for us and it's beautifully separated out in many books and we should be Involved in the in all of these things in reading.

So this is a mark of true Christian conversion and when I mean conversion, I mean being born again. I mean being saved I mean being regenerated Whatever word you want to call it because when you're regenerated by the Spirit of God, you're gonna want the things of the Spirit of God and You're gonna thrive in the things of the Spirit of God And you're gonna want to foster the things of the Spirit of God The fellowship the community together you're gonna want to get behind there Baptism so they had two ordinances basically Baptism shows our death with Christ, you know that breaking a bread shows his death for us and we we we do that the next thing that they did mark of a of a great New Testament Church or the early church or a true church is They continued in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread. Are you still on the same verse? I told you I could do it until the cows came home and And I hope not boring you because there's so much in there.

Some of these verses are just so full I mean, it's just so full breaking of bread You know the the table of the Lord is is just a wonderful thing to be a part of Jesus said this do in remembrance of me When you break this bread you show my body being broken for you this do in remembrance of me Man, we should never want to neglect that service that opportunity to come and remember his death He asked us it was the last request on earth before he went to the cross Guys please do this above all do this in remembrance of me And why do you think he said do it in remembrance of me? Because you could forget him Uh-huh You could forget what it cost for you to sit in that pew right now you for you could forget that it cost his death on a Cross for you and the shedding of his blood and the shame that he bore on your part You could forget all of those things if you didn't redo it Month after month week after week how often and and and Jesus said as often as you eat this bread There was no set time to do it or how to do it or when to do it as often as you will He said as you break this, but you do show his death until what? till he comes When is he coming? Yeah, well, then we better get together Amen God help if he comes and we're just out of sorts He's coming and he won't be late He will be right on time and it'll be in a time when we least expect it Yeah, the thief came at night They did they weren't ready that the five virgins were foolish because they didn't have the Holy Spirit. They didn't have their lamps filled They were not anticipating we need to be living in holy anticipation of Jesus Christ's return and one way to do that is to be steadfast in the teaching Around the teaching teaching one another amen in Psalms and spiritual songs and in hymns teaching and having favor with one another and Being involved in the fellowship and doing whatever the church does. That's real fellowship.

Whatever we do. That's fellowship We ought to be involved because thank God if he showed up and you were involved in one of the great works of the church Wouldn't that be wonderful? Wouldn't it be wonderful and I always pray, you know, I I hope that if he comes and I'm preaching that I ain't said anything wrong That's why we pray First and we asked the Holy Spirit to guide us and we compare scripture with scripture and we don't We don't read too many people. I don't read too many people I read lots of books, but not for my message.

I like I like to Yesterday, I worked on this message for a while because Barron said asked me if I could come But yesterday I had the best time just comparing these scriptures with other scripture and I was just having it I was having it and I even started myself what you're having a great time I was sitting in my office by myself and I was just this is so cool. Yeah, it is The Word of God is alive and it's active and It's amazing and it translates itself. It interprets itself It speaks for itself.

If you don't understand what it says keep reading look somewhere else you'll find it by the way read your notes in the center where it has cross-referencing and That's what I was doing. I have a one this one wonderful Greek It's a New Testament in English, but it has every word Numbered in the Strong's numbers underneath of it for those of you who have the Strong's It has a Strong's number underneath of it and the Greek word. So it has a dictionary in the back of it It's Zodiac is Greek Bible.

It's beautiful So when you read a word when I read fellowship That's why I could tell and I can remember preaching when we had faith promise. I was preaching Communication. Well, that means fellows that means giving.

Oh, yeah, that means giving Why because it says in that verse then in that number 42 28 Whatever in the Greek it means giving it means doing these things. It means having community Anyways, I just at times I get jazzed When I read the word and I hope to God you do because this book is powerful This book is life-changing It's changed the world It has changed the world. It's changing the world And we need to just continue to pray so they had good fellowship they enjoyed the Lord's table It wasn't just a communal meal, although it was and they had a good time with that They met from house to house.

It says they met in the temple and from house to house in verse number 46 It's a reference to the Lord's table and And Finally number four the fourth mark of a true Christian community was prayer corporate prayer individual prayer Do you know prayer is the most exciting thing that you have on earth you get to? shut out everything and talk to the CEO of Heaven and Earth Amen The great God that formed everything You get to speak directly to him Now at this point in time, it was a new and living way that the Jews were speaking to him They didn't have to go through a priest any longer Jesus opened a way When he died on the cross cross the veil of the temple was ripped Signifying that anyone could get in there and it says in Hebrews that we're to boldly to come before the throne of grace That we may obtain help in time of need we can boldly go into God's presence Because Jesus made a way for us They didn't have that opportunity in the Old Testament They needed a priest to go into the Holy of Holies. You have the opportunity to get an audience with God. How's that? And remember that when you go to pray that's what you're doing Take time to be holy Think for a minute before you run your trap Amen Think for a minute.

He's not just some some some someone up there that's gonna cast out, you know, give you what you want No, no, don't come with everything you want. Come and tell him how awesome he is How wonderful he is how amazing his love is that he would give his son to die for us that we might have the opportunity to speak with him We would have the opportunity and then brothers and sisters corporate prayer is powerful Don't forsake the assembling of corporate prayer. It's powerful That's what changes nations That's where revivals come from people banding together in the Apostles Doctrine in fellowship in breaking of bread and praying Praying for our country praying for our churches praying for people praying for children.

We pray Constantly for children because children are under a big attack. We pray for the unborn because the unborn is the most unsafe place in the United States the womb I Heard a statistic last week at church and my pastor is not afraid to stick it up there There was a man who was saying and it's a true statistic One third of Gen Z people have already died You know how they died They were aborted They never lived one third 25 million people who were Gen Z is from night late 1990s to the early 2000 25 million were were taken just taken away So corporately corporately we need to get together on this Amen, we need to get together and band together as a group. And if anything just pray for the unborn Pray for that pray against this this bill that they tried to pass 188 and by the way, did you did you guys

get any solicit solicitations to sign a petition against it? We had it at Archer good.

Some of you seen them. Some of you had it very good They needed 49,000 signatures, you know what they got over a hundred thousand people signed up and said, do you know what 188 was? you could abort up until the ninth month and After that's what this group wants It's an ungodly group But we're commanded to pray for them not hate them Second Timothy you read what Paul said pray for all leaders in authority pray for them That we may live a peaceable life pray that God would touch their hearts Pray that God would would do something. They'd understand what they're involved in

I just, it blows my mind that there was someone that was, you know, running for office, had been in office and was saying that this other group, this other guy wanted to take away their right to abortion. Right? You have a right to murder? It's insane or what? You have a right to murder? It's insanity. And they wanted, they were, they were beaten down on this guy because he wanted to take away your right to do that.

You haven't got a right to kill. Thou shalt not kill. I don't care what, I don't care what the circumstances are, if there needs to be a choice between one or the other, let the doctor and the family decide.

But don't just discard a baby because you don't want one. And that's what's happening. And I'm sorry.

Look, I know this is, this is broad and it's wide and it's happened to many of us, but we have to just stand up and throw down and say, okay, I repent, I'm sorry, I got involved, but I'm not going to just do nothing. I'm going to stand up, I'm going to at least pray for the unborn. 25 million Gen Z gone.

Gone. You showed this woman, she was on the street and she was interviewing young people. Well, would you believe that one third of your people are gone already? Oh, it must've been from drugs, it must've been from fentanyl, it must've been from suicide, it must've been for this, they listed all these things.

She goes, would you be surprised if I told you it was from abortion? And they just shut up, they couldn't even, they just were like, oh my God. It's really crazy. Sometimes I think we're just, we got the TV on and we're just in la-la land.

Things are happening, we got to wake up, become involved. It's tragic out there, that's why you're here. God wants the church to push against that.

God wants us to band together. He wants us to love one another. He wants us to be involved in Christian fellowship.

He wants us to be involved in the breaking of bread and in prayers. And we can boldly come to the throne of God because of what God has done for us. I'm gonna read one passage of scripture, and then I guess it's 11, it's 12? What time is it? I can't see, 12, wow, did I go long? Didn't think so, it was only four points.

It's only four, 1 John and this. So the whole thing has to do with the community. This message is about community.

Community in the word, community in fellowship, community in breaking of bread, and community in prayer. 1 John, and I think it's three, I'm not so sure, it may be three. Yeah, 1 John 4.13. I said before,

these are marks of true conversion.

Steadfast in the word, steadfast in fellowship, steadfast in the table, and steadfast in prayer. They're marks of true conversion. Let's notice what.

1 John 4.13, hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he's given us of his spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the father sent the son to be the savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwells in him.

And we know we have known and believed that the love of God is unto us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love loves God and God in him. Here is our love made perfect that we would have boldness in the day of judgment and so we are his in the world.

1 John, and it must be 2 John. Anyways, I'm going to recite the verse from memory. If we don't love the brethren, we're not, look, if you love Jesus, Jesus is the mystical body.

The church is a mystical body of Christ, am I right? And we're the members. If you love Jesus, you have to love the members. If you love me, you have to love my brethren.

He that love, if not his brother, abideth in death. I didn't say that, God said that in the book. We have to mark it down.

If we have a problem with the brethren, then we have to just throw down and get right with God and ask him to help us, ask him to forgive us. If we don't like to read the word, we have a problem. We just may be flat out unregenerate.

If we don't like the community of ourselves together, if there's something that bothers us when we get together, we have to figure out what's going on and come to God. And first, you know how revival starts? It starts with one person, himself, confessing his sins before God. Not trying to get everyone else along with him, each one individually.

And if God spoke to you today about your time in the word, your steadfastness in fellowship, your steadfastness in the breaking of bread, and house to house, and communal things that we do in the church, and also your steadfastness in prayer, I don't know what night you have a prayer meeting, but I would suggest everyone got down here. It's a blessing from God to be able to get together and pray, right? Brother Steve's brother needs prayer. We all need to be here to pray for his brother.

Other people are sick in the churches. An older man that you mentioned earlier, now he can't even walk, Dave, George. We need to be praying for him on whatever night is your prayer meeting.

We need to get together and band together and do as they did. Then we may see the blessing of God in Bellingham. Amen? That's all we want.

We want to follow Jesus, and if we follow him steadfastly, if we're devoted to these things, we will see big changes here. Amen? We'll see great changes. Let's stand to our feet and pray.

Father, we thank you for your goodness. We thank you for the word, Lord. We thank you for the record of Luke the apostle as he recorded the great, great day of the acts of the apostles.

The day of Pentecost, when Peter preached with holy boldness, and he told them, you crucified the Lord. You killed him and hung him on a cross. They were pricked in their hearts, and they said, what should we do? And he answered and said, well, just believe and be baptized.

And Lord, we see what great happened there. There was 3,000 that were saved as a result of the preaching. And Lord, I believe that your spirit is still working today through the preached word.

And I just pray, if there's anyone here who was found wanting, who has found himself in a straight and in a place that wasn't right in his heart, that he would confess it before you. There's anyone here who's not sure that when you come, you would be in Jesus's list of those that he's coming for. If you're here and you don't know if you're regenerated, if you don't know if you're saved, if you don't know if you're born again, I pray if God spoke to you, you'd understand that he loves you, and he died for you, and he wants you.

He wants you to give your life to him. It doesn't matter how old you are, how long you've been here, how young you are, Jesus loves each one of us. And if you're here, you can pray and ask the Lord to be your savior.

We thank you, Lord God, for this time. I pray your blessings on the meetings that happen after. We pray for our brother Barron, that you bless him and bring him back to good health, please.

We thank you in Jesus's name. Amen.