

March 20, 1991 Island Pond

Alms Giving

Common Life

We have a common life together; that is what *fellowship* means. We're in the same boat together. (1 John 1:1-2:6)

We read it substituting *common life* for *fellowship*. Verse 3, common life is fellowship. This is why the church had to be a community.

The life of the community depended on everyone holding all things in common. When the first church stopped doing this, it had no more life. To provide purses in heaven was the only way righteousness was judged then. (Luke 12:32,33)

The state church made alms giving so convenient, especially in Germany, where they took it right out of your wages.

Nothing can be done by tithes alone, for that can just be obligation. Our taxes can't be paid by tithes alone; it must be tithes and offerings. If taxes are not the first thing we do, even before evangelism, then we are hypocrites, bringing people into a defunct community. We must pay our taxes to be a light to the Gentiles.

Walking in darkness is claiming to share a common life with God but not having one with your brothers and sisters. Alms giving was always done to those in need. Alms giving is the way for righteousness to be judged. The woman who gave her last two coins was righteous. the preparation for the church being built was laid in Luke 12 and Mark 12. He told his disciples to sell their possessions and give alms (Luke 12:33). If the church is not like this it will not be ready when He returns. (Luke 12:15,35)

The proper church that He builds will be greed-less. It will be continually on guard against every form of greed that would enter our heart. We know what greed is. We know when any of its forms enter our heart. Luke 12:15 is a command. All forms of greed will be judged in our lives or we won't be taken when He returns. We'll be left behind.

All forms of greed must be judged as the church can not exist any longer than its members share a common life together. (Luke 12:22-31) (the nation's behavior is strife) (Luke 12:32,33)

Every form of greed is checked in the community. The church can't exist beyond the point where greed is not checked.

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17)

Some of us may not have good eyes. We may not even see someone who needs shoes. (John 13:34,35)

This is how the world will know that we are His disciples, if we love one another. This is what distinguishes between those who serve God and those who don't. (Malachi 3:18)

How would it be possible for a church to go any longer than the Ephesians--whose lampstand was taken away for a lack of love? (Revelation 2:4,5)

How could any Christian church even conceive they were a church if they Ephesians fell away. The last thing Paul told them was that they would have grace if they loved our Master with an undying love. (1 Corinthians 16:22)

Paul said they broke that covenant. Look at the man in Luke 12:45,46. He was cut in two, he was disloyal and beat his fellow servants with his mouth. The same thing will happen to us as to the animals that were cut in two in Genesis 15. This is what Jeremiah 34:18 is about. (Jeremiah 34:18)

We break the loaf every week. We transgress the covenant by not loving our brother or sister. The man who doesn't love our Master with an undying love is also cut off. The community in Ephesus were told they would be cut off if they didn't repent. The covenant, the new commandment, is that we love our brothers and sisters with the same love as our Master has loved us. (1 John 2:3,4)

This tells us how we may be sure that we know Him. Some have even left the community thinking they know Him. If we are in the covenant, we will reach perfection. If we don't reach perfection, we are not in the covenant (or we will be disciplined). We can't just bear fruit; we have to bear *much* fruit to prove to be his disciples. The grape vine is the only thing pruned two times a year. It bears less fruit if it is not pruned.

How does the world know Christians are disciples? God is light and in Him there is no darkness. We can not claim to share in His life if we have even one form of greed in us. To commit sin is to break God's law. (1 John 3:4)

He came to do away with the works of the evil one. (1 John 3:8)

If we don't know Messiah's commandments and therefore we break His commandments, we can do nothing to make our life worthy of Him, to be a part of undoing the works of the evil one.

Loneliness

The Beatles sang the song *Eleanor Rigby* about all the lonely people. What was the church they were singing about?

Kharash: The last line of the song was, "No one was saved."

What will the person admit loneliness is? 1 John 1:3,6,7 brings loneliness out into the open. (1 John 1:3,6,7)

Loneliness is not sharing a common life. In the song, the preacher himself was lonely--*no one would hear* (his sermons). Dictionaries can't describe just exactly what loneliness is, making it sound as though there were relatively few lonely people. As if only those who reject society are lonely. Only the lonely can describe what loneliness is. Our Father makes a home for the lonely. Only the rebels continue to dwell in a dry and parched land. (Psalm 68:5,6)

Our Master suffered our loneliness.

Fellowship

Someday when we are called together for an appointed time it will be supremely important that all who come are walking in the light. We'll be eliminated if we come dragging ourselves to the table. Our fellowship must be centered around something greater than our natural life together. If you were called to a special dinner and goat was prepared, you'd think how good the meat would taste and how hungry you were. The goat would be the center of attention. If it were centered around potato patties, you might find reason to stay home.

Hebrews 10:25 was the sin of the first church. It was beyond remedy in this age. The loss of the love is tantamount to loss of the Spirit. The first church found Messiah less and less attractive and found other things more attractive. They didn't see and exalt Messiah as their center.

Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Messiah according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. (2 Corinthians 5:16)

1 John 1:3-7 describes our common life together as His Son is made pre-eminent in every occasion. So much of the Scriptures would be ridiculous, like alms giving and the Edah being a community, if the church is just a meeting once a week. Our meetings and our breaking of bread are no better than our common life together.

Sharon Harris: It has been really hard financially this winter, but we have had so much life because we are learning to give.

We must judge such statements as this, "As the church grew and expanded in the world, it naturally became more difficult to maintain in its life and vigor its spirit of brotherly love." This invalidates the words of our Master in Matthew 16:18-28. The church was to deny themselves and not reason as Peter did. If we are not rebuked as Peter was when Satan speaks through us then we keep on in our Satanic principle of reasoning. There is no excuse--we have to deny ourselves and our very lives as He did (verses 25 and 26). A man's life is more than his body.

Abeyance
The church of Matthew 16 is in abeyance--it is up ahead. We are groping for it; we are looking forward to it--the church He will build, not of our own doing. There has got to be someone who wants it, who longs for it with desire. Everything is in abeyance, everything is lapsed.

They will never get the land of their own doing. Someone else will give it to them. Someone is going to do it. When Yahweh and Abraham walked through the animals split in two, they made a covenant. It is going to take someone willing to pay the price of communion. We are here because we heard His voice like Abraham did. Circumcision is all about the promise made to Abraham. Genesis 15:18 will be brought about by the generation who obey Genesis 17:7,8. They have circumcised hearts. It is left to a generation yet to be born.

We have to understand why we were chosen out of the world. It was certainly not to be greedy or we will be singing about Eleanor Rigby ourselves if we forget our goal. We are to be self-less and greed-less. Our first love must not die.

The Edah and the Cahal

And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. (Exodus 12:6)

Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out. (Numbers 10:2)

When he returned later to take her, he turned aside to look at the carcass of the lion; and behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the body of the lion. (Judges 14:8)

Swarm is community or edah. The swarm refers to the beehive as the community or edah. They swarmed like the edah. A cahal is all or part of the community called together. Exodus 12:6 and Numbers 10:2 and 14:5 are cahals. The edah assembled is a cahal. The beehive is the edah. A meeting of a few or all the elders is also a cahal.

Fellowship, Continued

"As the church grew and expanded in the world, it naturally became more difficult to maintain in its life and vigor, its spirit of brotherly love." Although this is a true statement, it is no justification for the breakdown of community. The encyclopedia goes on to say that for generations the characteristics of brotherly love were more or less preserved in the churches. This is what Revelations 2 and 3 say about the churches. They left their first love (Revelations 2:4,5), but carried on their forms of life. "And many noble manifestations of nobility and generosity were shown from time to time..."

Later as the state married the church--formerly embraced it by evil enactments--the poor began to demand their right to share the wealth in the churches. The church which should have been a light to the world has now become a lifeless corpse. (1 John 3:11-13) The world hated the first edah--it was a sect everywhere spoken against.

The *Quran* says that prayers carry us halfway to God, fasting brings us to his palace, and alms giving procures us admission. In the spirit in which our Master spoke of it, alms giving is the most wonderful thing. (Matthew 6:1-4)

The first church got out of it. We will have to get into it.

Bonding with our Children

We need to help our children think. We need to tell them they have sexual feelings because they are developing physically, getting ready for marriage. If our children do not have an outlet and they become obsessed with sexual thoughts, they could become a vessel for the evil one. Our children should be able to tell us anything (see *Our Children* teaching). When you tell your child something they have never known, then there is a bonding.

Any child who does not want to call their parents *abba* and *emma* is proud. Our children should call us *abba* and *emma*. If someone makes fun of them, they should say, "Our Master called His parents this."

The bonding between parent and child is so necessary. You'd be surprised at what they think. We can help our children express themselves. We can initiate the conversation. We know what's on their mind because we've been through what they are going through.

Jonathan: If we don't talk to our children, we won't know whether they are obsessed or not. If they can talk to us they'll be released.