

Class #5: With us in community

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...
I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20)

With Us in
God’s
Presence

With Us as Advocate



With Us
as High
Priest
and
Mediator

With Us as
Intercessor

With Us in Community

Question From Last Class

- “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid [*boēthéō*] those who are tempted.” (Heb. 2:18)
- *boēthéō*: “properly, to run to the cry (of those in danger); hence universally, to help, succor, bring aid” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*)
- Used twice of children in dire distress
 - woman of Canaan, “Lord, help [*boēthéō*] me.” (Matt. 15:25)
 - father of ill child, “have compassion on us, and help [*boēthéō*] us....Lord, I believe; help [*boēthéō*] thou mine unbelief.” (Mk. 9:22, 24)
- Context of Heb. 2
 - Verses 13-14 “Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...”
- Christ’s Focus on Community
 - In his ministry

- Now
 - (Heb. 2:11-12 NKJV) “For both He who [g]sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’”
- Christ: Symbolized in Community
 - The symbol of vine/branches
 - The symbol of the body
 - The symbol of the temple
 - The symbol of marriage
- *mesos*
 - “I walk among [*mesos*] the seven gold lampstands” (Rev. 2:1 ESV)
 - “Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with [*mesos*] you.” (Matt. 18:20 CEV)
 - “...he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst [*mesos*] of the church [*ekklesia*] will I sing praise unto thee.” (Heb. 2:11-12 KJV)
 - Heb. 2:12 quotes Psalm 22:22, note that the context (verse 23) is about the family of God:
 - Psa. 22:22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23 Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
 - Emphasis on the family of God (seed of Jacob, seed of Israel)
- Christ Working with the Ecclesia
 - “...he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst [*mesos*] of the church [*ekklesia*] will I sing praise unto thee.” (Heb. 2:11-12 KJV)
 - “...after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them [*synergeo*] and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.” (Mk. 16:19-20 NKJV)
 - “...makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together [*synergeo*] for good to those who love God...” (Rom. 8:27-28 NKJV)
- Last day we talked about Christ’s work as High Priest and how he gave gifts and offered sacrifices
 - “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” (Eph. 4:8)
- It is interesting to note that what Paul calls a “spiritual gift” has nothing to with the spirit gifts of the first century
 - “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established...” (Rom. 1:11)

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- The gift that Paul talks about is encouraging each other's faith
 - "...that is, that I may be encouraged together [*sumparakaleo*] with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." (Rom. 1:12)
 - We see the importance yet again of *parakaleo*; a hallmark of Christ being with us in community is mutual encouragement
- Paul Acknowledging Christ's Work in the Ecclesia
 - "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed." (2 Tim. 4:17 NIV)
 - "I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits." (1 Cor. 16:7 NKJV)
 - "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly...But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly" (Phil. 2:19, 24 NKJV)
 - "Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you." (1 Thes. 3:11 NKJV)
 - "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work." (2 Thes. 2:16-17 NKJV)
- Community is the Point
 - "Yahweh or Yah, as a noun, and signifying 'He who will be,' is the memorial name the Deity chooses to be known by among his people. It reminds them that HE will be manifested in a multitude, and that, in that great multitude which no man can number, or all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, which shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb..." (Bro. J. Thomas, *Eureka*, vol. 1)
 - God's character being manifested in community is the essential quality of God's plan and purpose.
 - We see this emphasis in Hebrews, where community is used as a motivation to fix our eyes on Jesus at God's right hand
- Community: a Cloud of Witnesses
 - "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses..."
 - "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ***looking unto Jesus***, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and ***has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***" (Heb. 12:1-2 NKJV)
- The power of Christ with us in community runs throughout Hebrews
 - "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered

in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (Heb. 12:22-24 NKJV)

- “registered” = Book of Life = God’s Family album
- “...but Christ as a Son over His own house...” (Heb. 3:6 NKJV)
 - We know that “house” in this context doesn’t mean a physical structure; it means a family
- Specifically, Family is the Point
 - “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:29)
 - “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Rom. 8:16-17)
- Christ’s Ministry Focused on Creating Community
 - With Divine guidance through prayer (Lk. 6:12-16), Christ was intentional in creating community (Lk. 8:1-3)
 - Loss of community was impactful to Christ (Jn. 6:66-70)
 - Even on the cross, Christ was creating community (Lk. 23:39-43)
- “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20)
 - The context of Christ’s statement in Matthew 18 is very interesting because it is so focused on how we relate to each other.
 - Don’t offend the little ones (v. 6)
 - Lost sheep (v. 10-14)
 - Reclaiming your brother (v. 15-17)
 - 70 X 7 (v. 22)
 - “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.” (v. 35)
 - How would we treat each other if we always remembered that Christ was in our midst?
 - Romans 14, Paul took this approach, exhorting us, “But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of [c]Christ. For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.
 - We honor Christ, to which every knee shall bow, by honoring Christ’s sisters and Brothers
- Christ Taught They Way We Treat Members of Our Community is the Way We Treat Him

- “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (Matt. 25:40 NKJV)
- “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’” (Acts 9:4-5 NKJV)
- On the Night He Was Betrayed Christ Was Focused on Community
 - A new commandment/mark of discipleship (Jn. 13:34-35; Jn. 15:12)
 - Community characterized by inseparability (Jn. 14:20; Jn. 15:4)
 - “...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” (Jn. 17:26)
 - Christ Prayed For Us to Join Him in Community
 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for ***those who will believe in Me through their word***; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” (Jn. 17:20 NKJV)
- Christ is with us as a community (Rev. 1:13, 20; 2:1)
 - “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary...But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”(Rev. 2:2-3, 6)
 - (Rev. 2:5) “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”
 - A Community at Risk: Falling away From Grace
 - “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from ***where you have fallen***; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and ***remove your lampstand from its place***—unless you repent.” (Rev. 2:4-5)
 - “You have cut yourself off from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by the law; you have ***fallen away from grace***.” (Gal. 5:4 Mounce)
 - One of the most commonly used phrases in the NT is “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” be with you
 - Rom. 16:20, 24; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor.13:14; Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thes. 5:28; 2 Thes. 3:18; Philemon 25; Revelation 22:21
 - “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
 - Grace of Christ is the foundation of the Gospel (Gal. 1:6)

- Symbol of Community: Christ is the Vine, We are the Branches (Jn. 15)
- Symbol of Community: God’s Temple
 - Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:9ff; 1 Pet. 2:1ff; 1 Cor. 6:19
 - Christ the Cornerstone
 - Isa. 28:16ff; Psa. 118:22; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:6; Eph. 2:20
 - The Cornerstone
 - Stability, Strength, Alignment: Horizontal and Vertical
 - Christ aligns us with God and with each other
 - (Isa. 28:17 Holman) “And I will make justice the measuring line and **righteousness the mason’s level.**”
- Symbol of Community: Christ and the Church (Bridegroom and Bride)
 - Eph. 5:22-32; 1 Cor. 6:13-20; 1 Cor. 11:2; Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 21:1-4
- Symbol of Community: The One Body
 - Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 12:12ff; Col. 1:18; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:11ff; Eph. 1:22; Col. 3:15
- A Story of Christ With Us in Community (Mk. 16:12-14; Lk. 24:13-36)

The Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus	Disciples in the Last Days
Disciples together at the end of the age (Mosaic)	Disciples together at the end of the age (Gentile)
Time of trial (Matt. 26:31)	Time of trial (Matt. 24:21)
Together on the way	Together on the Way (Acts 24:14)
Christ with them but they can’t see him	Christ with us but we can’t see him
Scripture connects them to each other and to Christ	Scripture connects us to each other and to Christ
Christ guides their understanding of Scripture	Christ guides our understanding of Scripture
Transformed from despair to purpose	Transformed from despair to purpose
Asked Christ to abide with them	Asking Christ to abide with us
Christ known to them in the breaking of bread	Discerning the Lord’s body in the breaking of bread
Encouraged other disciples	Encouraging other disciples

- “Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him...He was known to them in the breaking of bread” (Lk. 24:30-35 NKJV)
 - Clearly we are supposed to connect the Breaking of Bread, which Jesus had instituted just a few days earlier, an event that Luke really focuses on.

- Eyes Opened
 - What is our focus in the breaking of bread? Shouldn't it be that we rejoice that God in his loving righteousness has saved us by providing redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
 - Shouldn't it be that God has blessed us with brothers and sisters who share our struggles and who share our victory through Christ? Our shared brokenness and our shared victory through Christ creates a community that glorifies Christ and His Father
 - In his next action, Christ turns the attention of each disciple to each other
 - "...and He vanished from their sight..."
 - "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom **he has seen**, how can he love God whom **he has not seen**? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also." (1 Jn. 4:20-21)
- The two disciples' next action is strengthen Christ's community by sharing the good news of their interaction with Christ.
 - Even though it was night, the two disciples hurried back to Jerusalem (7 miles!) to encourage the eleven and those gathered with them
 - "So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together...And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. Now as they said these things, **Jesus Himself stood in the midst** [mesos] of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.'" (Lk. 24:33-36 NKJV)
 - When we recognize that Christ is with us---even though we can't see him---we, like the two disciples, naturally encourage the community
 - When we acknowledge his presence, we are moved to connect with our spiritual family.
 - When we do these things, Christ is in our midst saying "Peace to you"

