

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

February 12, 2021

Update: Worship Times & Format

We'll meet on Sunday, in the building, at 9:30, 10:30 and 11:30 AM (livestream at 10:30). Our format will be as before: opening prayer, Lord's Supper, song, sermon, song and closing prayer. We are working toward resuming Bible classes at the building for both children and adults. Stay tuned for more information on that.

“A like precious faith...”

If you've felt something is missing in your life in the last eleven months, that's a good sign. We need each other and the more “others” the better. There is no experience in life that can match the act of regularly meeting together with others who share a common view of the world and who believe that Jesus is their Mentor, their Lord and their Savior. It is unique. We've missed that.

Peter reflected on this when he addressed his second letter *“to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (II Peter 1:1). That's the King James Version of the verse and the NKJV retains that reading. I like it better than the ESV's rather clunky “a faith of equal standing with ours,” even if it's more accurate. I grew up on the pew, as many of you did, and I'm glad I did. Over those years, I've heard many godly men pray, thanking God that we were able to gather with those “of like precious faith.” At some point, I understood what they were saying. Then, at another point, I began to realize how truly precious that faith is. Later, I realized how wonderful it is to be able to share that faith with people everywhere, people I have the privilege of calling “brothers and sisters.”

I often reflect on this in the “worldwide” sense. Christie and I have not traveled the world as extensively as some of you, but we know fellow Christians in many parts of the world: in Ireland, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Prague, and, of course, all over the United States. We have a connection that is like no other. It's not a business or corporate connection. It's not just friendship and it's not a physical or family relationship. It's something much different and more precious, a connection held together by our “like precious faith” in Christ, a connection that extends into eternity.

Of course, the relationship we enjoy in the local church is the most precious because we are around each other more than with brethren in other places. That's what has made these last 11 months so difficult, at least for me. For someone who in the past prided himself on being a loner, “an island,” no words can adequately describe how much I miss seeing my fellow Folsom Christians more often than we're able (and I get to “see” them more than anyone since I'm usually at all three services. But it's different).

The Bible uses a word for this connection we have with each other; it's called “fellowship.” The Greek word is *koinonia*, defined as “that which is shared in common; a partnership” It's a precious, beautiful word but like the word “Christian,” it has suffered from misuse and overuse. Some apply it to coffee and donuts while others insist it is any “joint participation.” Without getting too technical, suffice to say that “fellowship” goes deeper than that. It is something we have been “called into” (I Corinthians 1:9), a state of being that either exists or doesn't, depending on our relationship with God. Two people are in fellowship with each other only if they are both in fellowship with God. The horizontal fellowship exists only in conjunction with our vertical fellowship. We are in partnership with each other to the extent that we are in partnership with God.

Of course, we don't always know the true state of another person, even a baptized believer. For example, Paul was in fellowship with God but the church at Jerusalem didn't know it and refused to extend the hand of fellowship until Barnabas spoke up for him (see Acts 9:26-27; cf. Gal. 2:9). We'll deal with that in more detail at another time. My point here is simply that what we've been missing by not being able to meet together all at the same time is not just the things we like about each other. It's the shared experience of a “like precious faith” that we miss. I know, when I come to an assembly, that I am gathering with people who have a like mind — not necessarily in preferences and in tastes — but in the most important matters of the human experience, matters of the heart and soul. We are all “soul-mates” although I'm aware that term is often used in a romantic sense. But it simply refers to people who are ideally suited for each other. We are soul-mates because our souls, or spirits, are aligned (in fellowship) with Christ and his word. We are all different but we are all alike at the same time. And that's the most beautiful sight in the world. Psalm 133 says it well:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
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