

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP ARE FERTILIZERS TO PRODUCE COURAGE

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BEN HOWARD

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FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP ARE FERTILIZERS TO PRODUCE COURAGE

Today I want to take a thought from the Book of Acts, Chapter 28, Verse 15. And I want to title this message Faith and Fellowship Are Fertilizers to Produce Courage. We find here in this chapter that even the Apostle Paul, in all his greatness and with all the revelations that he had, still had to take courage at times. I am sure there were those that might not have thought he was great, because sometimes he would have just a few people to preach to, and he was persecuted and beaten for what he preached. And even one time he was taken outside the city of Jerusalem and left for dead; but the brethren prayed for him, and he rose to his feet and was found preaching again. So he had much trouble to face while preaching his gospel. And the gospel that God gave him was to preach grace without the works of the law; and that gospel called out a group of saints and made them a virgin to any other gospel, and they were espoused by his message to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's gospel created this virgin that would later become part of the Wife of the Lamb, and he was persecuted much for doing so. Eventually, he was arrested in Jerusalem and was taken to prison and wound up in Rome. Paul was also a Roman citizen, so he appealed to Caesar to hear and judge his case. And on his way to Rome, he was shipwrecked, and many things happened to him that caused his courage to get low, but not his faith. See, his faith was still just as strong in the Lord Jesus Christ as it ever was, so of course it would be normal for him to begin to wonder, "Why is all of this happening to me? Lord, you showed me that I was born to be this. And you showed me that when you formed me in my mother's womb that I was to do this. But look where I am at now—in a shipwreck, tossed from one island to another. And I do not see any believers. Where are the believers?" Yes, he kept his faith, but his courage began to get low after going through much turmoil. God did not show him ahead of time things that were going to happen. But after being in the shipwreck, another ship was provided for them, and they started back on the journey towards Rome. And then they came to a certain island, a certain place where they were going to dock for a while before going on to Rome. unbeknown to Paul, some brethren had heard that Paul was on a certain ship that was to come that way, so they headed that way, hoping to meet him. And Paul no doubt was feeling forsaken, and was feeling that he was all alone, so his courage was a bit low. But his faith stayed with him. He still loved the Lord, and the Lord still moved with him, but there were no believers around to share his faith with. So his courage had gotten low. And there is where we get our text for our title, Faith and Fellowship Are Fertilizers to Produce Courage.

Let us begin reading in Acts 28:14-15. It says, "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." Notice, he thanked God and took courage when he saw his brethren. See, he got his courage back. So we see that even the great apostle was a bit discouraged because of loneliness on the ship with only the

prisoners around him and being out in the sea day after day and week after week. It was just not a good situation to be in, so his courage got low. And even one time, for fourteen days they neither saw sun nor stars as their ship was being tossed on the sea; and they began to throw overboard some of the things that were weighing the ship down, hoping that it would stay afloat. And that is where our thought for this message begins, where he had lost courage. He probably had begun thinking, "Am I the only one? Does no one care? Lord, I am forsaken out here. I miss the brethren. It seems like I am just by myself." Well basically he was alone there on that ship, as far as having any saints to fellowship with. Yes, he found favor with the shipmaster and talked some with the others on board, but there was no believers to fellowship with. But Paul did not know that God had something special for him; for when Paul's ship docked into the port, there were some saints waiting for him! He had brethren that had come from long distances away to be there to greet him and tell him how much they appreciated what he wrote, how they appreciated the ministry that he had and the stand that he had taken for the Word of God. And Paul thanked God when he saw them—"My goodness! Where did all these people come from?" He thanked God and took courage.

I remember when I first began to baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was many years ago (about fifty or sixty years back), that I had announced in a tent meeting that there would be a baptismal service the next day. Well, when we got there the next day, there were people everywhere! Some of them were even up in the trees, hanging out over the water (which was so they could get a real good view). And I asked someone, "Who are all these people? What are all these people doing here? We are supposed to have a baptismal service here. Where did all these people come from?" And they said, "They heard that you were having a baptismal service here, so they came to be in the service with hopes that you would preach to them a little bit." So that gave me some courage—"Hey, I might not be alone in this after all." So that is kind of like Paul, he saw all these brethren coming to meet him, and he knew where some of them came from, which was from long distances. They had heard that he was going to be there, so they made preparations and came. So God has His ways to encourage His children. And that is the way it is when God is in something.

I am sure there have been times when our courage got low and we felt just like Paul did. Christians that have been serving the Lord for a long time have gone through those certain periods; and God allows it. But now that we have become the Wife of the Lamb and have the fullness of the faith of Christ, *that* has given us a good boost! That has given us a 'leg up' on whatever conditions come our way.

When my wife and I were over in Zimbabwe, we were faced with conditions that were not very good. When we boarded the plane in Malawi going to Zimbabwe, we noticed there was only three other people on the plane besides us. Then when we landed at the airport in Zimbabwe, it was practically empty, except for a few workers, which were very glad to see us. There was a Cholera outbreak, and people were being warned not to travel to Zimbabwe. Also, their currency (money) had collapsed, and it was no good. So everything had to be paid with cash; and at that time, it had to be American money or South African Rand. So we had just come into

some bad conditions. There we were, and we thought, "Oh, my, what have we gotten into!" It looked like we were in a place that we did not need to be. But we went forward and had meetings, and some very large crowds came out. The people came to hear the Word of the Lord. And when we saw them coming, we took courage!

We stayed there about a week or so, and had several meetings, and the Lord blessed in all the meetings. We took courage when we saw the people that had come out. They came even though everything seemed to be in chaos; and the Lord blessed us all so much. We had such good times and met many good people. One brother drove all the way from the country of Botswana, which was a very long distance, just to hear me minister. My throat had gotten raw from all the preaching that I had done there in Zimbabwe, as well as in Malawi, so the brethren drove me around, looking for throat lozenges. We had a hard time finding them, as well as fuel for the vehicle, in which there was a shortage at that time; but the way things worked out, we had a wonderful time even though we were in conditions that were very bad. And when we left, we left with the joy of the Lord and knowing that He was in it.

See, we went there in faith. But our courage got a little low when we saw the conditions we were in. In some of the places we go, we have to go in faith! And that faith has to be anointed by the Spirit of God. And *now* it takes the fullness of the faith of Christ, which was given to us, the Wife of the Lamb, when we were married to our Lord Jesus Christ. And that keeps us going in the times when maybe our courage gets a little low because of daily difficulties that we might face.

Here in Acts 28:15, we see it did something for Paul when he saw all the brethren coming all those many miles, hoping to just get a glimpse of him, or just get to talk with him, or have prayer, or maybe hear him speak. So what happened there was worthy to put in the Bible. When Paul saw that they came all those distances, he thanked God, and he took courage! And that courage that he took, took him all the way to Rome! And then he began to preach daily in his own hired house. Instead of putting him in a regular prison, they just assigned soldiers to him and let him rent a house. And he was free to speak to everyone that came. The Lord made a way where there seemed to be no way! Oh, yes, the days were over with as far as Paul having the big meetings; we do not read any more about that, but he had a work to do, and he finished it, and he finished it with courage. And that high calling of the Wife of the Lamb that he was pressing for, he has received it by the sounding of this last trump of God.

Notice our title again, Faith and Fellowship Are Fertilizers to Produce Courage. Paul had the faith, but it took that fellowship. Do you see what that fellowship did? When he saw them, he thanked God and took courage! It did not say his faith was renewed, but it said that he took courage. He saw that his preaching had an effect in all those places he had been, and now it was showing forth! He probably left those places many times not knowing what happened after he had preached and left town, not knowing if some were converted and so on, because he may not have heard back from all of them. But it showed here that the gospel that he preached had indeed took effect, that they fellowshipped, and they wanted to know more about the

Word. And when they came and Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage!

So today we can thank God and take courage when we see what is going on. When we see what is going on in Israel, we can thank God and take courage because there is certain Word shown in the Book of Zechariah, Chapter 12, being fulfilled right to the letter. And it would look like a time to get discouraged, or say, "This is not happening right," or "That is not happening right." But we are the Wife of the Lamb and we are enlightened. We have the Spirit of revelation and the fullness of the faith of Christ, and our courage just keeps growing and growing regardless of what is going on out there in the world, because our faith and fellowship are the fertilizers that keep our courage up. And if you are a shouting person, you might begin to shout because of the things that God is doing, not only in Israel, but what is happening with the Wife of the Lamb, for the last trumpet message has already been brought to us, and we are hearing it; and not only that, but those saints of the church ages have already come and joined us in this final jubilee!

We see where the departed saints were, and now we see where they are. Paul told us where they were, for he said in the Book of 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Their bodies went to the grave, but their souls went into a spiritual house or tabernacle (a spiritual body), and they were in waiting. So they were in a special place in the heavenly realm beyond the earth's atmosphere. It was not on earth. But now we know where they are, for they came back to earth, as shown in the Book

of 1 Thessalonians 4:14; they came with Christ Jesus when He came to earth, for He brought them with Him, and they came to hear this message of the last trump of God. So what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 has come into fulfillment in our time, in Revelation, Chapter 10. Those saints came back to hear this message of glorified flesh and bones. They came to hear, and they are rejoicing over what they are hearing. They are hearing the same Word that we are hearing, and they have been taking on glorified flesh and bones as members of the Wife of the Lamb; and in this glorified flesh and bone realm, we are having fellowship with them and are all echoing this message of glorified flesh and bones!

Notice, we are no longer just members of the spiritual body of Christ, but now we are the Wife of the Lamb, which is the body of Christ in glorified flesh and bones. We are not a virgin anymore. We are not just the spiritual body of Christ; for we have progressed from being a virgin, the spiritual body of Christ, to being the Wife, which is the body of Christ in glorified flesh and bones. And we are going forth with courage. And we have absolute courage and revelational faith that all these things have taken place. And soon we will be seeing these saints in their physical glorified bodies as God ordains to bring them forth in a visible form. They are here, and they have been taking on glorified flesh and bones as part of the Wife of the Lamb just as our bodies are being changed into glorified flesh and bones. So because we have been taking on glorified flesh and bones, our having to take courage is less, and less, and less because this reality is more, and more, and more!

So we are thanking God today, and we are praising Him, and our courage is strong because the Lord Jesus Christ's

courage is strong. And we know that now, as members of the Wife of the Lamb, we are furnishing a physical body of glorified flesh and bones to the feminine part of the Christ Spirit that was taken out of the Lord Jesus Christ; for it came into us and solidified, thus manifesting us—the glorified Wife of the Lamb in the earth today.

Notice, the feminine part of the Christ Spirit that has become the Wife of the Lamb has existed all the way through time, but now She has taken on a physical body of glorified flesh and bones in us. And we are so happy to furnish Her with a glorified body. See, when the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected, He had glorified flesh and bones, and now because of our marriage to Him, we are joined to Him as His Wife, His Queen, which has given us glorified flesh and bones and the feminine part of His Christ Spirit. And all the members of the Wife of the Lamb are rejoicing together, and that is the Jubilee, glory to God, and, oh, what a wonderful time!

We are rejoicing in the Lord today, and we are thanking God for this new and pure language that He has given to us, the Wife of His Son, which are these revelations that have been hid in God since before the foundation of the world, and they are so numerous. If we start a subject, we never get through with it; it just blooms, and it begins to grow, and it gets so big! And it brings that joy to our hearts. So if we need to take courage, thank God today we have the books that we can read and the messages we can listen to. And when we begin to hear a message, soon we will be rejoicing in the Lord, praising God, and even dancing in the Spirit! So God has given us what we need to keep our courage strong.

God knew what Paul needed, and He gave him exactly what he needed. All those brethren came, and he tells how far they traveled just to see and hear him preach a little bit. They knew he was a messenger sent from God whom God had raised up to take the message to the Gentile world and to the Jewish world, because he was the one that took them from the Jewish religion to the message that God had given him to espouse a virgin, which began with the Gentiles. And the Jews that were among the Gentiles that were ordained to be part of the espoused virgin, it fit them just exactly right. So the group that he had espoused by his gospel was both Jew and Gentile.

So these are the things that God began to do, and now He is finishing up what He began to do. The marriage has taken place. First, He brought all those saints back, those that died through the church ages and so on who are part of the Wife. Yes, there is Christianity spread all over the world that is *not* the Wife; but we the Wife are the Queen and are part of the Godhead. We are the feminine part of the Godhead, as the Lord Jesus Christ is the masculine part of the Godhead, for flesh and bones was added to the Godhead through the Lord Jesus Christ and His Christ Wife. And the Godhead is expressing itself right here today. So we are holding our head up high, knowing that we are the Queen, and knowing that we are part of the Godhead part of God.

Notice, God is a Spirit, but flesh and bones was added to the Godhead part of God, first through the Lord Jesus Christ, for God's Christ (which was Spirit, and that Spirit contained both masculine and feminine) came into Him, manifesting the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And then His flesh and bones became *glorified* flesh and bones after His crucifixion and resurrection. And then in Revelation, Chapter 10, the feminine part of the Christ Spirit that had been in Him all through time was taken out of the glorified man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and was sent to us in the form of a little book and put into us, thus creating us Christ the Wife of the Lamb, making another member of the Godhead. And sometimes the devil might try to cause some to think, "Well, maybe I am not that. I am not good enough." God did not say we would be good enough, but it was by His choosing, it is what He ordained before the foundation of the world. And here we stand today the precious Wife of the Lamb.

Now notice, Paul had faith, but the fellowship that he once had was missing. Many times when Paul was talking about having fellowship, he did not mention the sisters, but just said *brethren*. But Paul was not leaving the sisters out; that was just his manner of speech. But then when he began to talk about certain ones in the Book of Romans, Chapter 16, he told about Priscilla and Aquila, a man and wife, and other brothers and sisters too, but in most of his writings he just says *brethren*. And we who know the Word of God, and know the mind of God and the plan of God, know that when Paul said *brethren*, he was including all the people of God, both brothers and sisters.

Notice, when Paul said 'Brethren, take courage,' it meant for both the brothers and sisters to take courage. That was his manner of speaking. And we know it was the language for that day. I know that when Raymond Jackson preached, he would always say 'brothers and sisters.' But I am saying 'the Wife'—because now we (and that 'we' includes Paul as well as Raymond Jackson) have a new language for this day because of marriage. God has given

us, Christ the Wife of the Lamb, a new and pure language. And it does not matter if we are male or female, we are a member of the glorified body of Christ the Wife of the Lamb, who is a group of people that are dressed in fine linen, clean and white. And now our language includes 'the fullness of the faith of Christ,' which is the perfect faith of the Wife of the Lamb that came by our marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ. And being part of the Godhead we have courage, knowing that we have special access to our Father and to our Husband the Lord Jesus Christ.

In our being Christ the Wife of the Lamb, that goes beyond what other Christians have knowledge of. And the only way to break through to this glorified realm of the Wife of the Lamb, who is the Word of glorified flesh and bones, is by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ. And when we receive that revelation, these books that contain this new and pure language that God gave us makes so much sense. You will say something like 'Where was I when that was preached! Look at this!' And we can shout and rejoice over it, and it will be as though we are just now hearing it for the first time. We are rejoicing, and we have courage in the fullness of the faith of Christ, and we are ready to go anywhere at any time the Spirit bids us.

Notice, Paul's journey was long, but it was very fruitful. And in reading about Paul, we can see the human side of him as well as the spiritual side. He did not talk too much about the fact that his body was going to be glorified, but he did speak a prophecy that we which are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord would be changed. And that coming was His Spiritual coming, which took place in Revelation, Chapter 10. And now Paul is here, because he is part of the Wife of the Lamb. Irenaeus is here.

John Wesley is here. Martin Luther is here. William Branham is here. Raymond Jackson is here, and all the others are here; and we are all rejoicing, we are praising God for it, and we all make up the Wife of the Lamb. And every member is dressed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the fullness of the faith of Christ that God gave to the Wife saints when we were married to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, there are other saints of God that are spread out all over the world, and they are dressed in white robes. Yes, they are born again, but they were just not ordained to receive this revelation of the Wife of the Lamb. But I tell you, those that are ordained to see this will see it. We cannot make someone be something they are not. So what I am saying is that we are the glorified Wife of the Lamb in human flesh, and we cannot help but be this because that is what we were ordained to be and born to be. There is no other gospel for us but this last trump of God, which is the Wife's ministry of glorified flesh and bones. There is no other gospel that thrills us, gives us joy, and causes us to feel like we are 16 foot tall. There is no other gospel that gives us a rapturing mentality, and tells us that we are no longer carrying a cross, but we are wearing a crown; for this last trump of God message is the only message that brought this revelation to us, and we received it. And after we received it, it solidified in us. We are rejoicing. We are praising God. And we are happy! We are part of Him as His Wife, Word of His Word, glorified flesh and bones of His glorified flesh and bones, Spirit of His Spirit—the same spiritual bloodline! Hallelujah!

The prophecy that Paul laid in the Word in Ephesians 5:30-32, which was the mystery of marriage, has come to

life in a people in this moment of time as the action of the twinkling of an eye is taking place in us. Yes, God made it a mystery; He hid it in Himself before the foundation of the world. Now if something is hid in God, we do not get it until God reveals it. And when He reveals it to us, nothing can make us doubt, for our faith will hold, for we have the fullness of the faith of Christ. We are married to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are 'members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones,' which means glorified bones of His glorified bones and glorified flesh of His glorified flesh. And we are joined to Him as His Wife, walking with Him, praising Him, and I will tell you what, the future looks good for us, the Wife of the Lamb! And we know there is nothing that can stop us or trip us up to the extent that it would hinder, because we the Christ Wife have a job to do, and He has provided everything we need.

Notice, the Bible says that He will meet our needs; and not only does He meet our needs, but many times He gives us our wants. But now that we are married and have His mind, which is the mind of Christ in marriage, our wants and His wants are the same. Our needs and His needs are the same. It is not that we have a want or a need and He has a different one. No, because we are one with Him, being part of the Godhead part of God. And we are rejoicing in the Lord, praising Him, and nothing can take away this joy. We love Him with all our hearts. And we thank Him because He has done so much for us. He is so wonderful. Wonderful, wonderful is He! And we could say how wonderful He is all day long, and we would just barely scratch the surface of how wonderful He is. He has so many wonderful ways; and sometimes we do not know it is a wonderful way right then, until later on when we look back and we say, "He was working His wonders in us all the time." I love this wonderful way; I appreciate it.

I had a man come by a few days ago, and he asked, "When did you know you wanted to be a preacher, Ben?" And I said, "I do not really know. When I was just a little fellow, I told my father that I felt like I was called to preach." I did not even know how to spell my name; and I did not know for sure what my name was, because we were often called by nicknames. And my father said, "Well, if you are called to preach, go get you a necktie, and get some preaching license, and head out doing it!" So I can look back and see that the thoughts were already in me; but there was a lot of immaturity there, so much immaturity that it is almost laughable. But it shows a thought-"If we are His, we were His before the foundation of the world." And we were ordained to be this, the Wife of the Lamb, and we were ordained to take courage. That is why this message is coming forth. These messages are not just pulled out of thin air or something. Go back to the messages from five or six months ago, and you will see how there is a link. And when I preach, I do not know how it is going to link up, I just preach how I feel led. And then later on I look back and say, "Hey, look how the message I preached back there fits with what the Lord has given today!" I love Him today, and I appreciate Him.

So here in Acts 28:15, "Paul thanked God and took courage!" And he rejoiced in the Lord! He thanked God for what happened. Do you thank God when He does something good for you? We need to thank Him every day. One time they asked General Stonewall Jackson, "How can you just keep on going when the odds are

against you?" He just kicked in the sand where he was standing and said, "I never take a drink of water unless I thank God for it first." God honors that. And today He is honoring the precious Wife of the Lamb as we are all going forth in the ministry of glorified flesh and bones and are echoing the Voice of the last trump of God with courage in the fullness of the faith of Christ.

O' Father, we come to you, praising you and thanking you for all these good things that you have done for us and for every battle that you have helped us win, where we were just the instrument and you were the one that did the winning. Father, I praise you for it. And, Lord God, I pray that you will do the same for Israel, just let the soldiers be instruments in your hands to get the job done; and I know that you will. We praise you and thank you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Sound Of Liberty 7286 Hwy 53W, Dawsonville, Georgia 30534 U.S.A.

> www.SoundOfLiberty.org TwoAnds@soundofliberty.org