

The New Testament Church – Resurrection Sunday

Preparing for Change #2 – Koinonia

April 28, 2024 - Pastor Paul Jehle

- I Preparing for Change – God is bringing a correction, reset, adjustment, to our nation/culture...
- A. There is great change coming and most Americans are aware something must happen...
 - 1. You can't keep spending money you don't have – an economic reset is coming
 - 2. Evil boldly manifests everywhere – elites, media and entertainers appear possessed...
 - 3. This nation is so polarized, no wonder many see signs of a dreaded civil war...
 - 4. *Consider Chris Enloe's analysis (quote) – the greatest need today is community*
 - B. Consider what that first century church faced...
 - 1. Government bankruptcy, evil was the norm; no concept of justice, health (20 yr)
 - 2. Polarization - no equality – men over women, 40% were slaves, no rule of law
 - C. In spite of having no buildings, finances, and only 20 believers, the early church had...
 - 1. They had a simple strategy given to them by the Lord in their house churches...
 - 2. Acts 2:42 – *steadfast apostolic doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread... prayers.*
 - a. We discussed *apostolic doctrine* as universal truths of the kingdom – Peter's sermon
 - b. God is Sovereign, we are sinners in need of a Savior; Christ is that Savior
 - c. We are to *steadfastly* (devoted, attentive, unremitting, persevering) rehearse truths:
 - 1. *God is the first cause of all, allowing secondary choices – sinful and righteous*
 - 2. *He has final say – and thus He can and does work evil choices out for good*
 - 3. *Violence, immigration, globalism... see the silver thread of God's providence and good, He is preparing His people to rebuild the waste places!* (Is. 58:12)

II Fellowship and the Breaking of Bread – *agape love in action!* (quote from Nuttle report)

- A. Greek word *koinonia* – “joint participation, share what one has, gift jointly contributed”
 - 1. It is translated “communion” and also applies to the bread and the cup sacrament
 - 2. People need to belong, participate, do the work of the ministry – no matter how small
 - 3. *No “fellowship” of light with darkness – true fellowship exposes when to separate*
 - 4. *To do good and to communicate (koinonia) forget not... – Hebrews 13:16*
- B. The Roman culture was void of an *evangelistic, exclusive, and total* cohesive faith!
 - 1. Gospel spread by word of mouth relationally to neighbors, co-workers (quote Hinson)
 - 2. By 170 AD Christianity was mocked *because* it grew among the uneducated and poor
 - 3. What made Christianity so attractive to the common people? *A tightly knit community*
 - a. They cared about slaves, women, fools, illiterate – Ehrman p. 132
 - b. Called “atheists” they cared for strangers, graves of the dead, poor – p. 136
 - c. Cared for sick, costing them their lives, but evidenced the miraculous – p. 138-140
- C. Rehearsing the *agape love of God* (communion) – Johnston p. 169-170
 - 1. A loving God – there is nothing like Agape love – with no expectation of return!
 - 2. A Loving People in community – all have each other's back, though different
 - 3. A Powerful Benefactor – the risen Jesus – our hope is in the resurrection of Jesus
 - 4. A New Life – the change in our own character is the key to convincing others
- D. Consider the story of Pastor John Fawcett (1739-1817) of Wainsgate (poor and barren) as we close with singing *Bless Be the Tie that Binds...*

The degree to which we walk in fellowship within the Church will be the degree to which we are ready to reach our neighbors and shift our culture to one of agape love!