

The Reunion Community Church

A community of worship and ministry

We Love God and teach His truth, we care for one another in fellowship, communion and prayer...

The Reunion Church - Biblical Foundations

Our Vision

Acts 2:42-46, Matthew 22:34-40

Our Values

Matthew 20:25-28, I Peter 4:7-11, 5:1-11

Our Veracity

Ephesians 4:1-16

Our Victory

James 4:7-12, 5:13-20

Love God

The greatest thing in all our life will be to love God the Father our Creator. This is also the most important commandment given to all of God's people. As a Christian to not understand the implications of this command would be a great loss. When we prioritize our love for God it is evidence that we are putting first things first (Matthew 6:3-34) and starting to mature as believers in our faith.

Keys

- Learning the joys of openly loving God to the point of obedience grows a willing and joyful response to God's Word that will eventually replace the performance based "have to" paradigm. (John 14:23-24)
- Discovering an understanding of God's meaning and purpose for our life. (Acts 17:24-28)
- Walking the path in our spiritual journey that is sometimes more difficult, answering the longing in our soul only found in relationship with God. (Psalm 42)
- Loving God is the fulfillment of our eternal destiny and of scriptural prophecy. (John 17:3)

Teach His Truth

We practice faithful fidelity in communicating and studying God's Word. We teach and believe that His Word (Holy Scripture) has answers for all of mankind's eternal questions, as well as truth and hope for our lives today. True teachers of the bible must maintain a devotion to rightly dividing and preserving scriptural and historical

context as they instruct and teach others from God's Word. The responsibility is overwhelming and requires humility more than pride. Before instructing others, teachers should pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide the instruction they give others. Bible teachers should not be afraid to regularly ask themselves if what they are teaching is indeed God's truth for God's people. Bending, manipulating, or exploiting scripture is not acceptable. The Christian community matures and grows in grace through teaching God's truth. Faith and the revelation knowledge of God the Father comes by hearing God's Word. We are called to teach His truth (John 14:6, Acts 17:24- 28).

Keys

- Believe God's Truth in the highest sense to be the knowledge of the beginning and the end of things in the dimension of the absolute. Also believing that all things good are found in the person of Jesus Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit. (Colossians 1:15-20, John 16:12-15)
- Remember God's Truth is eternal, not bound by time, tradition or the creations of men. God's truth is unchangeable and yet is given to create change in the lives of His creation. (Hebrews 13:7- 8, John 1:1-14)
- Contemplate God's Truth while making a conscious decision to not only believe and talk, but to obey His word. (Matthew 16:24- 26, I John 1:5-10, 2:1-8)
- Trust God's Truth as our personal and divine journey towards an eternal destiny in the Kingdom of God. God should know that we are willing to face

the successes, failures, victories, obstacles, triumph, and suffering that the journey offers. (I Corinthians 1:26-31, John 8:31-32)

- Speaking God's Truth as Christ Himself would speak it. This integrity must be preserved. The re-telling of the gospel of Christ must be accurate and consistent. (Ephesians 4:1-16, Matthew 12:1-8, John 8:1-11)

Care for One Another

Caring for one another is the practical application of the command of our Lord to love one another. As we grow and learn this truth it can reveal an even deeper meaning and purpose for our life on earth. Caring for others becomes one of the substantial answers to the question, "why am I here"? Caring for others certainly is fruitful evidence that validates our claims to our love for God Himself. This is how Christians really "get it done" – by caring and loving one another.

Keys

- Applying the love of God to the community that God has called us to serve.
- Offering a genuine gospel, by touching people just as they are, giving hope to where they can go through Christ. (John 14:1-4, 16:33)
- Working as a community in support of one another, seeking together to answer the questions we all have. (John 6:32-40, Romans 12:9-21, 15:1-13)
- Mobilizing loving responses to friends (at risk) disabled by emotional distress, and life's difficult challenges. (II Corinthians 5:16-21)

Fellowship

Fellowship is the practical application of personal and meaningful interaction within Reunion or any genuine Christian community for that matter. Sincere and Christ-like fellowship provides a support system of unconditional love, and a deeper connection to one another that stimulates us to mature and become more than we are through Christ. This kind of fellowship is what Christ calls us to. It is part of His purpose for us. He calls us to walk with one another; to watch and learn, and to listen and grow. God's calling is for us to journey together and not apart, to help each other and to be helped by others. True Christian fellowship is a reward that is given to us by God while we are here on earth. Heaven is the reward given to those who understand divine fellowship and to those who are willing to help others make the same journey. (Ephesians 5:1-21)

Keys

- Eliminate all false pretense; accept one another as members of the same body.
- Keep short accounts with one another; address misunderstandings with open and honest dialogue. Do not internalize or interpret loving correction from those over us in the Lord as a personal attack or ill will on their part. Loving correction from the right person can help eliminate error and sin in our lives and will help us move beyond those things that are causing us to stumble.
- Consider personal change and correction as the opportunities to build and maintain the most important relationships of our lives.

- Affirm and acknowledge the personal strengths and spiritual gifts of others within the Reunion community.
- Be responsible and conscious of sharing with the community your strengths and gifts.
- Celebrate among the community that we are all creatures made in the image and likeness of God Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Communion

“We must awaken to the central thing; we walk with God under his eye, confident that he is looking at us and searching our heart, our soul, and all that is within us. Knowing then, that all he sees of us and all that He knows about us did not stop Him from loving or choosing us.” That is grace... and that is sweet communion! (Psalm 139, Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 5:6-8)

Keys

- Right Relationship – Loving, trusting, and believing in Christ... offering Him our lives as ones who will follow Him to the destination prepared for us.
- Seek Understanding – Read and pray that the Holy Spirit will make known the truth of His Word to us. We should make extraordinary effort at learning to listen to God’s voice. We should be determined about preserving time for stillness and quietness in God’s presence.
- Express Genuine Sorrow – Maintain a willing heart with which to repent for our sins, transgressions, and most bitter failures. The humility that comes from this will restore our spirit and grow our faith.

Communion as Sacrament

We see communion as the sacred meal of a spiritual mystery. A sacrament is simply an outward symbol or sign of an inward work of God's grace. Communion is a provision where the soul can unite and be nourished with the divine Word of God.

It is a moment in which the past, present and future are joined in the presence of all of God's saints, angels and cherubim. It is a moment of eternal truth which remembers all, reveals all, and celebrates the passion, power, and promise of our reunion with the Holy Christ... our most precious Jesus. Read (I Corinthians 11:23-25, 10:16-17, John 6:35-68). Four central themes of communion should remain in place. They are; repentance, remembrance, proclamation, and thanksgiving. Each theme points us to Christ Himself who is the fullness and significance of communion. There are several terms and actions used for communion that are common to most Christian Churches. These terms should be familiar and be understood by us all.

Pascha – celebration of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

Eucharist – the thanksgiving

Sacrament – a revelation and observance of the realm and dominion of God

Eight Actions of Communion

- Preparation – Everyone should prepare for worship and communion (Luke 22:7-8). If you believe the words of Jesus "given for you" (Luke 22:19), or

“poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28), then by faith and in obedience we prepare for communion. We prepare ourselves by continued examination of our own conscience and response to the needs of others. We prepare with an expectant attitude and thankfulness for Christ’s mercy and victorious grace. (Hebrews 10:19-21, I Corinthians 2:9-10)

- Gathering – A Christian community gathers in response to the promise of Jesus, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20). The significance is not the number of people who show up but rather in the presence of Christ who has called us to come and worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Gathering reminds us once again of the spiritual pilgrimage of Christ Himself- He came from heaven to earth... We gather together as a community of Christians ever moving towards God the Creator as led by the Holy Spirit. (Colossians 2:20, 3:2)
- Listening to Scripture - The contemplative attention that is given to divine truth in forms written, read or spoken. In communion the stories of our faith from God’s Word are told again and again so that the spiritual heritage of our past is renewed, and essential Biblical traditions are passed on. The Word of God is intended to invoke a response in all who listen and hear (Isaiah 55:10-11). We must do more than simply receive information. Listeners are learners, and true learners apply to their life what they have heard. When we listen intently to Holy Scripture we are challenged and stirred to the depths of our being. It sometimes shakes our faith, and yet listening always helps us build new foundations. The word of God is indeed life to us. We are taught by Christ in communion to “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). When we listen, hear and remember Christ (the Word), we affirm that He is present with us. During the Christian liturgy we often say, “Praise be to You Lord

Jesus Christ", or "Glory be to You O' Lord God." Believe then that we are saying these words to Christ Jesus (Emanuel) who is really present here with us.

- Praying – In Christ we learn of God's kingdom and of His will. Christ, the eternal high priest continually intercedes for His Church and for the lost in this world (John 17:1, I John 2:1). Understanding this helps us to set the pattern for our own intercession and prayer. When the whole Christian community prays with compassion and love, we join with Christ in His intercession, asking for continued mercy and for the gifts of God to be given to all creation. By praying these prayers we extend our arms, imitating Christ whose arms were extended on the cross to embrace the concerns and pain of all humanity. Consider this ancient prayer; Remember all your creation for good, visit the world with your compassion... and have mercy upon all O Lord. In communion we pray to touch God Almighty, whom we love. We pray for Him to touch us, and for those with whom we journey in this life. We pray during the sacred meal, for communion with our Creator. Our souls cry out for His embrace.
- Offering – We now take action on not only ourselves but with all that we have. According to scripture we are to be an offering to God (Romans 12:1-2). If we ourselves are an offering, then what we have must be as well (Hebrews 13:15-16). We make offering to God for God's use, everything we have and everything we are. Our temporal offerings to God are always given in response to the eternal graces God has given to us. Then there is an exchange of eternal offerings that takes place at times of communion. We are offered to God through Christ and God is offered to us in Christ.

- Thanksgiving – a central theme of communion. We commemorate with high thanksgiving our perfect redemption through Christ and we pray for Him to come by the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives. In the prayer of thanksgiving the past is renewed, the present is transformed, and the future is already made present. Thanksgiving is the generation of hope through remembrance of His past mercies.
- Eating and Drinking – this of course refers to the bread and the wine at communion. The significance is in the presence of Christ during the process. This is the age-old struggle (John 6:35-69). Where is Christ? Is the wine really His blood and the bread really his flesh? We believe that since we worship God the Father in spirit and in truth that all Biblical worship must have a deep and eternal significance as it is offered to God through Christ. So, Christ is in the bread and wine only as spiritual sustenance (He is the bread of life) that feeds our soul and lifts our spirit towards God. It is not His actual flesh or blood transubstantiated. Yet we do understand that it is the eternal Christ, feeding our eternal being (soul). And we believe this and do this because He said, “The spirit gives life; and the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Later when Christ shared the last supper with the disciples we modeled the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine as the symbol and reminder of Christ as the center of our being, the source of our strength, and the promise of our hope (Luke 22:17-20).
- Going out to Serve – is the fulfillment of the people of God to the commandment of God; “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Fulfillment is the obedient response to the expectations of God Himself. We go in Christ, to live in Christ, to share Christ, because of Christ. When we are instructed at

the end of communion or worship times, to “go in Christ (peace) and serve the Lord”, we should go and do just that.

Prayer

“True prayer to God the Father is prayed in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. True prayer is when the created connects with Creator, where the fullness of love, compassion and divine purpose are completed in ways impossible for man to comprehend” (Psalms 46:10, Matthew 26:36-46).

It is often alarming to read, or have it told to us that the scripture (1 Thess 5:17) tells us to pray without ceasing, or that we should pray the way Jesus taught us to pray (Matt 6:5-15). Usually the responses to this biblical command range from, “wouldn’t that be wonderful” to an almost immediate digression and critique of how the context of the scripture is not literal and not intended that anyone pray all the time, or that we pray just like Jesus. It certainly crosses all of our minds that the request to pray without ceasing is impossible. As a result, we simply dismiss the possibility of doing as it says. On the other hand, what if we did take it literally? What if we were to pray and believe in His power and His nature to do the impossible, not just for us, but in us? What if we started with the assumption and the attitude that the command to “pray without ceasing” is not only possible but it is indeed the truth?

And, it is not only possible and but the expectation is that we pray as the scripture says, “always and everywhere.” We then could ready ourselves for a journey of faith and spiritual revelation that might very well radically change our lives and set a

course for meeting our divine destiny. Our relationship with God could change from that of a “pessimist and self-promoter” to that of a “seeker and worshipper.” It would then be logical for us to become students of our faith and mature individuals desiring to learn and be taught the ways and word of God.

This would allow us to find the joy of really opening our hearts and minds to the presence of Holy Spirit and the deeper truths God’s word in our lives. In this process faith is built, and the impossible becomes possible. In the process of seeking God - we learn to pray.

We learn that we must pray with a pure heart and mind. We also learn to pray with great desire; fear and reverence for God, and that true prayer must be sincere and offered in humility - void of all pride.

Our next discovery is that at times we all fall short of this goal. As we evaluate our prayer time, we should work at correcting our tendencies to be reactive and somewhat self-centered. That type response and behavior during prayer is certainly not evil, but it is a mark of one who has not fully matured and grown in prayer. It is also an indication that we are not praying often enough.

We should remember to not be discouraged when we cannot keep our thoughts and hearts pure enough during prayer. “The thoughts of man are evil from his youth.” But, “God alone gives another heart and another spirit, for both to will and to do are of God.” During these struggles we should persist, recite and read God’s

Word. Our constant desire should be to discover and learn ways to fulfill our common call to prayer. I believe that we need to step out in faith and begin to do what we know God in His wisdom has asked us to do. He has asked us to be faithful and obedient; so, we should take to heart that divine request and respond to all biblical instruction for prayer. We must learn to be faithful in the quantity of our prayer, and then God by His Spirit will be faithful to increase the quality of our prayer. We must begin today to practice, persist, and believe in prayer. This is the heart of God the Father.

Keys

- Stillness – It is important to begin prayer with moments of stillness. This leads us in our relationship with Christ, a relationship in which we need to hear from Him and acknowledge His Lordship over our lives.
- Watchfulness – Discovering the biblical truth of watchfulness develops the spiritual gifts of discernment and knowledge. These are needed to guard our souls from the deception of darkness, creating in us a keen sensitivity to the things of God and His voice.
- Humility – God has always required a humble and contrite spirit from those that serve Him. Humility is not defined by something we do, but rather should define who we are. In true prayer it is the spirit of our will and the attitude of our minds that must bow down to God the Father. This is how Christ has taught us to pray.

Biblical Map for Prayer

- The place and conditions for prayer – Matthew 6:5-15
- How to succeed in prayer – Matthew 7:7-12, Ephesians 1:1-16
- Frequency and repetition of prayer – Mark 14:32-40, Luke 11:5- 14
- Faithfulness in prayer – Luke 18:1-8
- We pray to – John 4:5-25, 16:25-26
- Benefits of prayer – Acts 4:31, 16:25-26
- Need for prayer – James 5:13-16
- Help in prayer – Jude 20-21, Romans 8:26
- Pray in the Spirit – Ephesians 6:18
- Gentleness and peace in prayer – Philippians 4:5-7
- Continuous prayer – 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- Unselfish prayer – 1 Timothy 2:1-5

Our Biblical Foundation Values

Matthew 20:25-28, I Peter 4:7-11

Values

The true Christian community should look no further than the words of Jesus to find its values. Matthew quotes the Messiah, “the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” His challenge to the disciples was a divinely valued principal of which he expected them to embrace and to act. Because of the spiritually immature request of the mother of James and John, the disciples had argued over a kingdom position, and eternal status.

Christ conceded to them that kings of the earth have their favorites and they are elevated or given high position, but He said, "not so with you" (verse 26, chapter 20). Recognition was not what Christ valued. He valued mission and purpose, especially when they are joyfully completed in humility and done in the service of others. Christ was not speaking metaphorically when he said, "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant." His values were centered upon offering oneself to others. In fact, serving others is where we can find a genuine sense of purpose and fulfillment. There should not be much doubt in the age-old theory that says, "we give our time and resources to

those people or things that we value most." This is why the Christian community should be very biblical and practical about its values. The apostle Peter writes his epistle to Christians of his day who were geographically scattered. His instruction and encouragement was that they not be scattered also in those things that they valued as believers in the kingdom of God.

Peter believed that those values should start with leadership, as evidenced in his introduction of verse one of chapter five, "To the elders who are among you, I appeal as a (Grk; *sumpresbuteros*) fellow- presbyter." What should be noted is Peter's kind and constant exhortation. Looking closely at verses two and three of this chapter we can see clearly that Christian leaders should value the flock (Christian community), value the opportunity to serve them, value what you have been given without being greedy, and finally value the responsibility of being a leader who leads by example. Do you remember the question Christ asked Peter three times as told in John's gospel chapter 21:15? It was "Simon son of John, do you

truly love me?" Peter was not hard of hearing He was just not listening. His initial response was of course, "yes Lord, you know that I love you." It is clear that Jesus wanted the value of loving one another to be a priority and to be established in our hearts; then we go and feed the sheep. (We should also read John 10:1- 18.) All Christian leaders primarily elders, bishops, pastors etc; should embrace these divinely valued principles and act on them. Without this we cannot righteously fulfill any of God's purposes for us.

Peter continues his exhortation to other community members such as the young men. Verse five; he begins "be submissive to those who are older." This is intended for those who are aged by years, and

for those aged by spiritual authority and office. It is of great value to support and respect those who serve the community in various offices and capacities that provide Christ-like leadership and care. So he says - value those who are older, value humility, value self-control and alertness, and finally value the sufferings and sacrifices of others. These are biblical passages that the Reunion community embraces. These values are not intended to close us out from our world, but will truly prepare us to serve and form right relationship with those whom the Lord calls to walk with us.

Our Biblical Foundation Veracity

Ephesians 4:1-16

Veracity

Webster defines veracity as – devotion to the truth. This is not only key in understanding who Reunion is, but who we as individuals are as well. Verses 1-11 are characteristic of the sound instruction of the apostle Paul to practical and doctrinal truths. This is a must for any community or group of people who expect to reach a goal or desired destination. There will not always be complete unity on methods, modes and perimeter issues. However, there must be deep levels of commitment to the common ground of what is valued and believed by our community as God's truth and His purposes for our lives and the lives of our children. The Bible says that Christ is truth. This is why Paul writes, "live a life worthy of the calling (Grk; tees kleeseos – an invitation to a feast) you have received." He called himself a "prisoner for the Lord." At first glance Paul's response does seem a little radical or extreme. Or is it? I believe Paul was communicating a veracity that would be needed to reach the journey's end. He was communicating that he was bound to divine truth, as well as serving the Lord and His people. Is this prison or is this the freedom that leads to real purpose and destiny? One thing is certain; "veracity will always create a journey and the journey eventually reveals a destiny.

How do we become more veracious? The answer can appear obvious... "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks,

the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8). Words such as these seem to be the ones needed to invoke in us the tenacity, boldness or relentless faith, so that veracity is inspired among us. But they are not necessarily the virtues called for or needed in this instance. Instead, they come from Paul's writings, when he says, "Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love." But, you ask: how does this inspire and motivate the masses to such a divine virtue as veracity? The answer is in Christ. He is the truth, He is the path, and He is life itself. He was the living expression of a gentle tenacity, of bold humility, and relentless patience. Are these contradictions? Does it sound impossible? To be veracious we must find those virtues for ourselves and then set out to become the Christ-like expressions of them. This begins with knowing the heart Christ had for unity of the Spirit (John 14:9-14). Unity is fulfilled with a bond of peace. Verses 4-6 reveal what we are bound to. Devotion to this type truth by everyone, can establish peace among all. If you are uncertain, or even a little cynical then look again, "One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." On these truths there should be no division only unity. Then there is peace. We all seem to want the same peace, but only our version of truth. This is not veracity. It is delusion. Christ did not come to redeem churches divided by sectarian ideas and twisted or deleted truth. He will redeem but one Church; the universal body of Christ of which there are many parts and members.

He did not come to redeem just the red, yellow, black or white, but that He might collect into one community a gathering of every complexion, from every land and unite them on earth in Christ. Then He ultimately assembles them all into one heaven.

There are gifts of grace, apportioned by Christ that provides the assistance and tools needed to get us all to this place where we must go (verse 7). The divine accommodation of Christ goes as follows: Because of Christ and living in Christ we are equipped to become and accomplish that which He has called us to. He knows what is needed for us and gives to us accordingly. Yet He gives to us not just for the express purpose of meeting our own needs, but amazingly so that we can meet the needs of others (verse 12). The question is, “do we get that”? We cannot just race past this. It is an essential truth to which we must be devoted in our thoughts, words and deeds.

We need to see the divine “principles of inclusion” which again is simply God’s grace. Before Christ ascended, He descended. The apostles were witness and devoted to this truth. As we serve the Lord and others, our own needs and purposes are then graciously included. We serve others with gifts (graces) apportioned to us by Christ. They are to build up others and not ourselves (humility). At Reunion we do believe that the gifts of the Spirit are at work among us. However, we strongly believe that it is the “fruit of the Spirit” evidenced in our day to day life that validates the work of any gift of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.” In this truth we find the fullness of Christ and unity in the faith among us.

Veracity in the Lord's service is the next level of not only the maturing Christian but a purposeful Christian as well. In Christian ministry and serving we should not stumble on titles and position but rather we should be devoted to the function of ministry. In the New Testament Church the function of ministry was much more significant and needed than the vanity of having been bestowed a title. There were certainly titles and offices of ministry which held authority in the Christian Church, but under extreme persecution the function and influence of ministry was what at the "end of the day" stood the test.

Let's look at the titles and functions of the leaders of New Testament Church –

Apostle; one that is sent.

Function –sent to preach the gospel of Christ.

Prophet; to proclaim.

Function – bold proclamation of God's word.

Evangelist; a messenger of the "good news."

Function – defined primarily by spreading the gospel abroad.

Pastor; shepherd (Grk; poimenas).

Function – to watch and care over the human soul, and to teach scripture and minister the sacraments.

Teacher; one who instructs or communicates knowledge.

Function – teaching the doctrines of Christian faith and religious history.

Just because someone calls themselves a prophet, or apostle, or even a pastor does not make it so. It is the evidence and fruit of the practical and Christ-like function of ministry in their day to day life that tells us the truth. There must be a great deal of veracity to one's calling from God. That should then be followed by a greater commitment to serving the One who has called him. Men give titles but God gives influence.

Our Biblical Foundations Victory

James 4:7-12, 5:13-20

Victory

Read the passage in James 4:7-12. There is no more clear or concise instruction for victory in today's world than this. First things first; verse 7, "submit yourselves then, to God." Logic tells us that submission to God is always a response of obedience on our part. We should yield ourselves completely to what He has determined as

necessary and significant for our lives. God knows what is best for the arrangement of our life, so we should confidently move forward to faithfully surrender to it. While we are yielding to God in everything, we are yielding to the devil in nothing. We resist Him through the strength of our submission to God. In doing this we can find the strength to resist allurements, worldly fascinations, delusional intrigue, temptations of the flesh, and even threats from the powers of darkness. It is important to remember that all action or movement of Satan is without virtue (it is evil). He makes his way with us by art (creatively), by cunning (mind games), in deception (lies), and threatening (intimidation) – but certainly never by any form of virtue. The only way to meet him is by head on resistance, never by argument or negotiation. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” This is the principal instruction for spiritual victory in our lives here on earth.

Verse 8 contains the next great principal for Christian faith. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” This is both elemental and yet profound. If you want the favor and presence of God, then you must come to Him. We ask, “Is He not already there”?

Indeed, He is always around us. Yet the promise for victory commands movement to Him. In the spiritual sense we must continually move to Him. This movement requires faith. The act of faith in the lives of those who follow Christ pleases the Father. His divine motion is then directed at us. He comes to us. This is profound. This is victory for life at its deepest levels both temporal and eternal. We come close to him in prayer or in the meditation of His character, and even closer by

joyful obedience to His Word. But one thing must be clear. We do not find victory or His closeness at a distance. We must move towards Him.

So, it is right that we put away sinful habits and with Godly sorrow make effort to cleanse our lives (verse 8-9). But it is also right that we endure and embrace life's difficulties and hardships thereby recognizing and living in God's amazing grace. We should firmly commit ourselves to humble and sincere responses before God. In our humility when we look to God for grace, we find that He already is lifting us to the victory that we have need of (verse 10).

Finally, we do not taint or destroy our victory by wrong words and attitudes towards other brothers and sisters in our community. Jesus said the judgment of men is reserved for the one Lawgiver and Judge which is God the Father. The 5th chapter of James reinforces the descent towards victory. Verse 13 offers the practical instructions and the true tools that build victory. "Is anyone among you afflicted (Grk; kakopatheî – suffering any kind of trouble)? Let him pray. Is any merry (Grk; euthumeî – cheerful and sound mind)? Let him sing psalms." Verse 14, "Is anyone sick among you?" Let him call on the elders of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." We must come to fully understand that our victory is in the person of Christ, and that Christ has given to us the instruction and truth that establishes and allows us to live in Him. The apostle James instructs us to pray, to sing, to repent, and to serve each other. These are the biblical keys that will open the doors of victory.

Conclusion

It is clear that the Church of Jesus is to be like Jesus. After all... it is His Church. We want to be an accurate and sincere reflection of Him who saved us and above all we value right relationship with Christ and true worship of God the Father. We find that we are also driven by God's purposes for our life here on earth and that faithfully doing the

ministry of His son Jesus pleases Him. We believe this journey is a mission of faith and destiny and that we are called by Him to walk together with those that come our way. The greatest obstacles before us are in and of ourselves. From the beginning of time until now it is pride that has always gone before the fall of man. If we are ever going to complete our part in God's kingdom, we must overcome that sense of pride and self-interest that keeps us from humbly and diligently caring for and loving those that are around us. It is the only way that we can truly validate our claims to the gospel of Christ Jesus.

At Reunion we are called to walk with each other – of that we are certain. As we walk, we learn to love and care for those we are walking with. We allow those around us to build an expectation that we can be counted on when it counts the most. This makes life on earth hopeful and do-able. Since it appears that we have a journey to make together we should get going! Our prayers are with you always.

- **Pastor Steve**