

The Blessing of Community

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; John 15:12-17

Online Sermon:

www.mckeesfamily.com/sermons/

Stepping into this world of unknowns fills us with both excitement and joy, yet also stirs a deep fear of isolation and potential suffering. We find comfort in life's blessings—the celebrations of birthdays, family gatherings, new homes, and



The Blessing of Relationships

abundant meals. Yet, even with all the joys of this world, we remember that, according to Scripture, this place is not our true home (Hebrews 13:14). The world remains under the Curse and is decaying, as Romans 8:20-21

reminds us. Many have rejected the evidence of God's eternal power and divine nature, revealed through creation's beauty and order (Romans 1:20). Consequently, they've been handed over to depraved minds, following Satan, the prince of this world, and rejecting God's children with hostility (John 15:18-19). Although we strive to put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20), we often find ourselves vulnerable to self-doubt, anxiety, and sorrow as we navigate life's valleys. Today's sermon is a

call to recognize our need for God's love and comfort, shared not only by Him but also among our families, friends, and church communities. We are not called to walk this Christian journey alone; we are called to walk it together.

God is Relational

In the opening verses of the Bible, we read, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Through His spoken word, God brought forth light (1:3), formed the sky on the second day (1:6-8), and created dry land, seas,

**Let US make
mankind
in OUR
image,
in OUR
likeness**

Genesis 1:26



plants, and trees on the third day (1:9-13). On the fourth day, He placed the sun, moon, and stars in the sky (1:14-19), and on the fifth day, He filled the waters and skies with living creatures (1:20-23). On the sixth day,

God brought forth animals and then declared, "Let us make mankind in our image" (1:26). Forming man from the dust, He breathed life into him but seeing that "it was not good for man to be alone," God created a "suitable helper" for him, forming woman from his rib as a companion and wife (Genesis 2:18-22). This creation story is a powerful reminder that relationships and companionship were integral to God's design from the very

beginning—our need for connection with others was always part of His divine plan.

This divine truth shines even more brightly in Jesus' final testimony before the cross. When God said, "Let us make mankind in our image," He revealed the eternal communion of the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit—a unity we call the Trinity. In John 17, Jesus states, "All I have is Yours, and all You have is mine" (v.10), emphasizing that they share all things in complete unity. Their wills, actions, and purpose have always



been perfectly in sync, free of any division or strife, bound by perfect love and harmony. In His final prayer, Jesus extended this divine unity

to believers, asking that they be included in this holy relationship. Just as God is united within Himself, He calls us to a similar unity within His body, the church. Aware that the Devil would "prowl around like a roaring lion" to harm God's people, Jesus prayed for the Father's protection over them, securing them with "the power of His name" (John 17:11). Imagine—the same power that spoke creation into existence now guards us, His children! This protection is received not only by joining in the Trinity's fellowship and being "sanctified by the truth" but also by uniting with other believers (John 17:11). Christians are called to be one body, for we share "one hope when [we] were

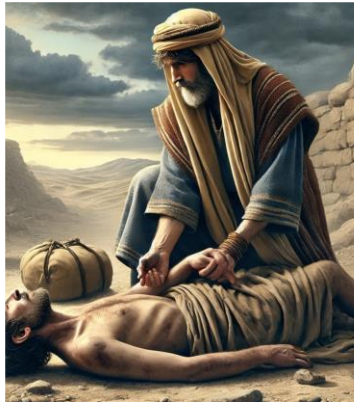
called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). So, we rejoice, knowing that even as we walk through dark valleys of trials and tribulations, we are led by our Good Shepherd and strengthened by one another in unity.

Reflection. Imagine going to a funeral, getting bad news from a doctor, facing bankruptcy, or losing one's job without the tender loving care and support of both the Good Shepherd and His sheep! Living in a broken and decaying world with joy within one's heart is far from easy! We are not meant to carry the burdens life throws our way alone. We are truly blessed to have continual access to God's throne of grace and the invitation to trade yokes with Jesus, who offers us a burden that is light! Let us remember to lean on one another, as well as on Christ, who carries us through life's heaviest trials.

Relations Help us Bear our Burdens

As we seek to live faithfully in a world that often feels distant from our true home, we rely not only on God's love but also on the strength of community to bear the weight of life's trials. When Paul exhorts the Galatians to fulfill the "law of Christ" by carrying each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2), we see this principle echoed throughout Scripture. Moses, overwhelmed with the task of judging Israel alone, heeded his father-in-law's advice to appoint trustworthy men to share the load (Exodus 18:13-27). Similarly, in the story of the Good Samaritan, it is an unlikely helper—a Samaritan—who stops to

care for an injured man, reminding us that compassion transcends social and cultural boundaries (Luke 10:25-37). Nehemiah inspired unity among the people, encouraging



families, priests, nobles, and tradesmen to rebuild Jerusalem's walls together, relying on each other's strength and God's protection. And even as Naomi felt hopeless after losing her sons, her

daughter-in-law Ruth showed unwavering loyalty and love, choosing to stay by her side. These stories reveal that, driven by love for God and others, we are called to lift each other up, knowing that God's comfort flows through our acts of kindness and support.

Reflection. Having seen these examples of God's comfort and how others have borne one another's burdens, let us look inward and remember we cried out to Christ in our needs, and He met us with comfort. He lifted you, led you, and sheltered you through storms you never thought you could endure alone. Imagine how much harder those dark valleys would have been without His presence. Now, consider: who in your life might be feeling isolated, burdened, or overwhelmed? How can you offer them the love and support you've received from God? I challenge each of us this week to look around and consider those who may be struggling. Who needs a word of encouragement, a

listening ear, or a helping hand? This call extends beyond just family and friends—even to those who may oppose us. Are there people you find difficult to love, perhaps those who have hurt you or whom you don't understand? How might God be calling you to show grace and mercy toward them? How can we cultivate an awareness of those around us, actively seeking ways to bear their burdens and be vessels of God's comfort? Did not Christ die for all? Just as the Good Samaritan extended mercy to a stranger, let us carry each other's burdens as Christ carried ours. As we go forth, may we be known by our love and compassion.

Relationships Help us Build up our Faith

As we carry each other's burdens, we are called to walk side by side, encouraging and strengthening each other's faith. King Solomon reminds us, "as iron sharpens iron, so one person



sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). Recognizing the signs of the times and the approaching Day of the Lord, we heed the author of Hebrews, who urges, "let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24-25). With news of

wars, earthquakes, famines, and persecution filling our world (Matthew 24:6-14), it's easy to become indifferent to others'

suffering, yet now, more than ever, we are called to love and support those in need. Jesus reminds us that whatever we do for “the least of these,” we do for Him (Matthew 25:31-40). Our care should extend beyond physical needs to the spiritual well-being of others, for living in a fallen world brings many temptations. We are to teach and admonish each other (Colossians 3:16), confess our sins to one another (James 5:16), pray, and give generously. Above all, let us partner in sharing the Gospel (Philippians 1:5), not only by learning the Word but by living it daily—through our words, actions (James 1:22), and generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)—so that Christ’s love is evident in us.

Let me give you a real-life example of how love, kindness, and giving can make a difference in the spiritual lives



of others. Mother Teresa’s life was a powerful testimony to the impact of selfless generosity in service to God. Born in Albania, she joined a convent at a young age and later moved to Calcutta, India, where she encountered extreme poverty and suffering. Deeply moved by the plight of the “poorest of the poor,” she felt called to devote herself to caring for those abandoned and forgotten by society. In 1950, she founded the

Missionaries of Charity, a religious order focused on serving the destitute, sick, and dying. Through her acts of kindness—

feeding the hungry, caring for the lepers, and comforting the dying—she became a living example of God’s love and compassion. Her impact was profound, not only in bringing tangible relief to countless suffering people but also in inspiring millions worldwide to see Christ in those who suffer. Through her humility and faith, Mother Teresa exemplified how living out God’s love can transform lives and serve as a beacon of hope, showing the world the power of generosity rooted in faith.

Call to Action

As we’ve seen, God designed us not to walk alone but to build each other up and carry each other’s burdens. Every act of love, gift, and encouragement strengthens the whole body of Christ. Life is brief, and what we do in this world truly matters,



especially as we remember it is not our true home. Each of us has something to give—whether to meet physical needs or to uplift others spiritually. If you

are blessed with abundance, don’t hoard it for a “rainy day,” but instead, trust God and give generously to those who are hungry, thirsty, homeless, or in need, as though you are giving to Christ Himself. If you are gifted with wisdom and teaching, teach with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength—not for human praise but to build up and edify the saints in their faith. If you have

survived trials and, by God's grace and strength, found shelter in Him, share your testimony so others might find hope in their struggles. When you see sin in others, approach them in prayer, gentleness, and kindness, encouraging them toward repentance and holiness. Stand alongside those facing depression, reminding them of God's undying love and how precious they are to Him. And if you feel called to share the Good News, do so boldly, undeterred by potential criticism or persecution, rejoicing that God has chosen each of us, ordinary as we are, to do extraordinary things in His kingdom.

As we step out to serve, let's remember that each act of love, each gift, and each word of encouragement isn't just helping an individual—it's strengthening the entire body of Christ. When we share our resources, offer our wisdom, and lift others up in their struggles, we're fulfilling our calling to carry each other's burdens and walk this journey together. Every time we give or serve, we're not only supporting a brother or sister in need, but we're also building a community that reflects God's love and unity. Let us go forward as one body, united in faith and compassion, bearing witness to the world that we are known by our love for one another.

Prayer. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that You love, lead, protect, guide and support us in both our good times and in the valleys of tribulations. May we keep our eyes fixed on You, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith and strive to draw nearer too and become more submissive to Your will for our lives. And for all those who are with us in our journeys of life may we strive to

feed them when they are hungry, give them water when they are thirsty, clothe and home them when they are homeless and never stop striving to build relationships with other believers built on the truth, trust, kindness and a genuine desire to build each other up in the faith.