

# Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

**Date** : 7 July 2024

**Sermon Title** : Authentic Caring Community

**Speaker** : Rev Kenneth Huang

**Text** : Acts 2:42-47

---

## INTRODUCTION

Today's passage reminds and challenges Faith Methodist Church (FMC) to be and continue to be an Authentic Caring Community of disciples of Jesus, if we are to truly be the church God wants us to be. We learn from Acts 2:42-27 how after the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost suddenly increased the number of believers from their original 120 to 3,000, the early believers implemented and experienced the True Inner Church Life of the church. This True Inner Church Life formed the basis of real or authentic caring amongst the believers in Jesus, thus helping the early church to truly be an Authentic Caring Community.

4 points that we need to remember today:

1. **The BASIS of Authentic Caring within FMC is, as the early church had, one where FMC faithfully must always have right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer (vv.42-43), for these constitute True Inner Church Life.**

From vv.42-43, we learn that the early believers were humble, God-fearing and God-dependent:

- In v.42, they were singularly-minded, meaning "devoted" to the right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer in wanting to learn as much as they could about their Lord Jesus – what He taught about God's person, values, ways as well as the state of Mankind and people's value to God and their sinful state - as they listened intently to Jesus' original disciples, who knew Jesus well.
- They also were very intent on giving encouragement and support to one another in fellowship according to the principles Jesus taught. They were in addition participating together in the breaking of bread to remember Jesus' love and death (i.e. the Lord's Supper) and finally, caringly praying for one another to God, as they learnt of Jesus' teachings.

As they were focused on growing in their faith in Jesus and their knowledge of Him, they lived out their beliefs in community together with fellow Christians, helping the community to have the proper foundation by which they would be an Authentic Caring Community founded on godly principles and practices.

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

We at FMC must also be humble, God-fearing and God-dependent, to have this True Inner Church Life of right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer for us to be an Authentic Caring Community.

We could liken these 4 essential aspects to major internal organs of the human body, which if are not functioning properly, would cause the person to not be able to have and live life as intended. So, maybe right teaching would equate to the brain, fellowship to the stomach, sacraments to the heart and prayer to the lungs – if any or all malfunction, living a proper and full life would become inhibited, not so possible, and in some cases, even, fatal.

Looking at v.43 again, we read about the many wonders and signs being done by the apostles and 2 questions that we may be asking are:

- i) “Does the quality of the True Inner Church Life of a church seen in v.42 depend solely upon the faithfulness of its leaders, or upon the power of God working through humble, God-fearing and God-dependant leaders, such that there would be “awe” expressed as Christians were authentically caring for others in their Community”?

The answer is obviously the latter! The quality of True Inner Church Life of a church depends upon the power of God working through humble, God-fearing and God-dependent leaders! While there may be church leaders who want to claim credit for the “awesome” work they are doing, whatever they are capable of doing in ministry, is really only due to the grace and power of God working in and through them, so, a grave reminder, a serious warning to myself, to all pastors and church leaders, God forbid, that we ever dare to claim credit for the work done in church, that we build our own little kingdoms and make people loyal to us rather than to Jesus. That would be sinful.

- ii) “Was this perfect expression of “devotion” or singlemindedness to right teaching, fellowship, sacrament and prayer – the essentials of the True Inner Church Life – as stated not only in vv.42-43 but also from vv.44-47 which we will be considering shortly, just a “one-time utopian experience” because Pentecost had happened, or was it the beginning of a “daily” reality that every Authentic Caring Community in church was and is to live out?”

Surely the answer is that it was the beginning of a “daily” reality that every Authentic Caring Community in church was and is to live out, which enabled the church to truly be a Caring church!

## **2. FMC must have a COMMON FAITH and LIFE in JESUS: a COMM-UNITY mindset of Belief in God and Practice of Christian Stewardship and Living (vv.44-47a) to keep on living as an Authentic Caring Community.**

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

Verse 44 talks about believers in Jesus in community/in church having a COMMON FAITH and LIFE in JESUS. It is not that the early Christians did not own personal belongings or property – they did! But as they understood that they were a “spiritual community” founded in Jesus, their FAITH AND LIFE in Him was also understood as communal. As such, members were aware of, and concerned about, how fellow members were faring and coping in daily life, especially as likely, there were economic sanctions placed on these early believers by both Roman and Jewish authorities who were not so comfortable with their existence. In light of these needs, we read in v.45 of how those who had more responded to help those who had less. They were able to do this because they surely had the “not mine, but God’s” attitude regarding their possessions. It was easier for them then to say to themselves, “Let it go, let it go”, for the well-being and benefit of their fellow believers, as needed (v.45b), instead of being “frozen” into inaction as to whether to help out or not.

Their desire for an Authentic Caring Community was again seen in vv.46-47a. As Jews who had become Christians and who were still much a part of the Jewish community, they spent significant and meaningful time together on spiritual matters at the temple as the place of worship and learning. For us, it would be FMC, our church. But because at that time, there were no church buildings yet for them to gather on their own, they would break bread and remember Jesus’ sacrifice as well as share a fellowship meal instead at their homes. What is most inspirational is that they were doing all this “*with glad and generous hearts, praising God*”. In other words, they were selfless and grateful to God for the opportunity to be able to be so – because they were truly caring of each other in an Authentic Caring Community.

The early Christians really gave each other “time of day; everyday”. They shared three important things – faith, fellowship and food (hospitality). They were indeed CARING toward each other for, once again, they had a COMMON FAITH and LIFE in JESUS: a COMM-UNITY MINDSET of Belief in God and Practice of Christian Stewardship and Living, which help them to live as an Authentic Caring Community. Yet, we all know that having a COMM-UNITY MINDSET is not so simple, as there are Challenges to having such a mind-set, which is the third point we must remember today:

### **3. Challenges of SELF-FIRST-NESS to REAL CARING in FMC**

When we put ourselves first before all others in the community, we hurt the community that seeks to be authentic. We describe this kind of person as selfish because he puts his “self” *first* before all others. He does so as he thinks himself as better than, more important than, others in the community. Instead of “gladly and generously” sharing with others what he has, this person will only share “grumbling-ly and grudgingly”, if at all, and probably only when he is forced to. When believers behave like this, there is an utter, fundamental failure to do as described in v.46. There is instead an utter, fundamental, disobedience to what Paul stated in Phil 2:3-4, “*Do nothing from*

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

*selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves' do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*" However, it does not mean that Christians become doormats for all to walk on and clean their dirt on and cannot pursue our own interests. It just means that we do have to look after and be responsible for ourselves, but we are not to do so at the expense of others by disregarding or not caring for their concerns.

One thing about sharing is that we always do benefit from it ourselves, for while we may "give away" something – money, time, possessions, etc – we "get back" and are blessed with so much more – a touch of good pride, affirmation, self-regard, accomplishment, and most importantly, a sense of the sharing nature of our God, who is always giving of Himself to others and to us, for our benefit. Now to help us not be people who are always "Self – First", we do well to remember the "UNITY" in the word "COMMUNITY" means "yoU aND ! Together, Yo/Yes/Yay!" In other words, we need one another to really be united, be in unity, for there to really be community. To help this happen, we need to also develop certain aspects of life that will help develop the UNITY in the community that start with "COMM", namely:

- a. COMMONALITY – a sharing of similar beliefs, concerns, interest
- b. COMMITMENT – a loyalty to group members and their well-being
- c. COMMUNICATION – a willingness to listen and understand others in the group, especially those different from us
- d. COMMUNION – a deep sense of trust and sharing of what is heart-felt, even if what is shared is really not what we hold as important
- e. COMMONSENSE – an essential attribute that will help us do what is good and right by others and ourselves

These 5 aspects play their part in helping us to battle the 'Self-First-Ness' that we all have. But of course, the most important tool we have to overcome our love for self is obedience to God's word such as Philippians 2, a deep appreciation of God's love for ourselves and for others, and a commitment to the truth that as a true disciple of Jesus, we must not only love God fully, but we must also sacrificially love others as Jesus loved them.

We all know that Sacrificial Love for others is utterly attractive and convincing. That is why HEROes are admired and emulated. Look at Jesus on the cross. Sacrificial Love for others confirms that action speaks louder than words and that those who love sacrificially are authentic (good, righteous and trustworthy), just as Jesus was on the Cross! As a result, who and what they believe in, should also be likewise believed in. And so, we come to the fourth and final point that we need to remember today, which is:

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

4. **When FMC keeps growing to truly be an Authentic Caring Community, and we show TRUE CARE FOR EACH OTHER, we will enjoy the goodwill of the people observing us and the blessing of God in terms of our winning people for Jesus (v.47b)**

The eager and loving manner by which the disciples cared for one another in their community, how they gladly and unreservedly met the needs of the less fortunate led those observing them to extend “goodwill”! What a wonderful reaction and response by those who were observing the 3000 or so believers in Jesus love each other and be connected and caring. Not just mere tolerance, or even distant admiration, but active blessing (goodwill) by those outside of the early church community to the Christian community!

This is proof that when we at FMC are really being and growing as an Authentic Caring Community, founded on a true inner church life, others will see how we truly love another and treat each other with sincere care and be attracted. But we are to help them be attracted not to us, but to whom we believe in – Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, His values and ways.

This is one way of making disciples intentionally. For when people ask us why we care for each other and them so authentically, we will say that we do so because God first loved us.

In John 13:34-35, we are reminded that we will be winning others over by our love for one another. As others are attracted to Jesus, we are doing our part in making disciples intentionally.

The result of our sacrificial love for one another is that God, by His Grace, will indeed help these persons attracted to Christian beliefs and values to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus and continually be added to the family of God, whether at FMC or elsewhere. Praise God and all glory to Him alone!

## **CONCLUSION**

To be a truly Authentic Caring Community, the basis is the True Inner Church Life (of right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer) and having a Comm-UNITY MINDSET of Belief in God and Practice of Christian Stewardship and Living. When we truly love and care for one another sacrificially, we witness to others that Jesus is real - we are making disciples intentionally when we are an authentic caring community. May we at FMC continue to be and grow as an authentic caring community by God's power to the Glory of God! And we can do so, as God is with and for us.

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **A. Review Sermon Application**

***Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.***

- 1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
- 1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Since hearing the sermon, how have you been reflecting on contributing toward an Authentic Caring Community?

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

3. Read Acts 2:42-47 slowly and reflectively.
  - a. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least and 5 the most, rate yourself and your Life Group on being an Authentic Caring Community. Share the reasons behind the score you have given.
  - b.
    - (i) Which of the 4 aspects: *right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer* that constitute True Inner Church Life which forms the basis of an Authentic Caring community, is lacking in your Life Group and our church?
    - (ii) What is one thing your group can do to overcome this lack?
  
- 4a. Have you been building your “mini kingdom” in your home, work or ministry instead of crediting God’s work to God’s power?
- 4b. What is one way you can reduce your ‘Self-First-Ness’ and grow a ‘not mine, but God’s’ attitude toward your possession?
- 4c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4b. above?

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

## **C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action**

***Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.***

5. Share your testimony on how your authentic caring for someone in the faith community has attracted 'goodwill' from onlookers to want to know more about Jesus, giving thanks to God for His grace and power working in and through you.

OR

Brainstorm on some concrete steps you or your Life Group would like to take for this coming week to be a more Authentic Caring Community. Take time to pray as a group, for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you to the steps to be taken and His power to enable you to fulfil them for His glory.

6. Spend some time to bring before the Lord areas of concern in FMC that hinders us from truly being an Authentic Caring Church. Pray for one another, our Life Groups, ministries, church leaders and pastors to be vulnerable and respond in obedience to seek True Inner Church Life (of right teaching, fellowship, sacraments and prayer) and have a Comm-UNITY MINDSET of Belief in God and Practice of Christian Stewardship and Living, so we may truly love and care for one another sacrificially and witness to others that Jesus is real, and in doing so make disciples intentionally.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. Hymn of Heaven – Bethel [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-i4VcRjEtY&ab\\_channel=BethelMusic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-i4VcRjEtY&ab_channel=BethelMusic)
2. The God I Know – City Harvest Church [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u42Jr11mrv4&ab\\_channel=ForGodSoLoved777](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u42Jr11mrv4&ab_channel=ForGodSoLoved777)
3. One Voice – Robert Gay [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fozt8j8-VdM&ab\\_channel=SingForHim](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fozt8j8-VdM&ab_channel=SingForHim)

---

*For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7*