THE BOND OF FAITH
(Col 3:8-11)

A. Obvious topic sometimes forgotten.

1. The bond of faith between all Christians.

Rom 6:4-5 – Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if \textbf{WE HAVE BEEN UNITED TOGETHER} in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Rom 6:17-18 – But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

B. Local church autonomy is God’s design (1 Pet 5:2).

1. Self governing under One Head (Col 1:18).

2. No other organization authorized.

3. However...

I. ALL CHRISTIANS SHARE A BOND

A. “Common Faith” –

Tit 1:4 – To Titus, a true son in our \textbf{common faith}: Grace, mercy, & peace from God the Father & the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

1. “Koinos” – \textit{shared by all or several}.

2. Though different in some ways, Christians \textit{share} the faith in common

B. “Mutual Faith” –

Rom 1:9-12 – For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established--12 that is, \textit{that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith \textit{both of you} \& me}.

1. “Allenon” – \textit{with each other}. 
2. We come to the faith individually, but we depend on each other to maintain it.

C. “Common Salvation” –

Jude 1:3 – Beloved, while *I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation*, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

1. We not only share the faith, & help each other maintain it; we also shared the *reward* of faith.

D. “Fellowship” –

1 John 1:1-3 – That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, & our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--2 the life was manifested, & we have seen, & bear witness, & declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father & was manifested to us--3 that which we have seen & heard we declare to you, *that you also may have fellowship with us; & truly our fellowship is with the Father & with His Son Jesus Christ.*

1. “Koinonia” – *partnership, participation.*

2. We have a partnership that works in two directions.

   a. Board of Directors partnered with Employees & Investors (shareholders).

   [This bond was most noticeable in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44; 4:32).

   Their sharing of material things was a reflection of their common or shared *faith, salvation & fellowship.*

   Let’s make this more personal.]

II. CHRISTIANS HAVE A PERSONAL BOND

A. “Brothers” (Rev 19:5-10; 22:8-9) – angels too
Rev 19:10 — And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, & of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (22:8-9)

III. CHRISTIANS DEMONSTRATE THAT BOND

A. Praying For Saints We Don’t Know –

1. Why care about Paul’s work in Judea?
   b. Brothers, Fellow Workers & Laborers.
   c. Because it was the will of God!

   [We have such a bond of faith with those we support to preach & those who receive their message.
   We demonstrate that bond by prayer.]

   Rom 15:30-33 — Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, & through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, & that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, & may be refreshed together with you. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

B. “Fellow Workers (helpers)” (3 John 3-8)

C. “Fellow Laborers (same Greek word)”

   1. “In the gospel of Christ” (1 Thess 3:2).
   2. “In the kingdom of God” (Col 4:11).

1. “Brethren” is used numerous times to describe the personal bond between Christians.

2. “Adelphos” denotes “a brother, or near kinsman”; in the plural, “a community based on identity of origin or life.” (Vine’s)
B. **Assisting Saints We Don’t Know** –  

**Rom 15:25-27** – But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia & Achaia to make a certain **contribution** for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, & they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been **partakers** of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

1. What was the reason for such great concern?
   a. Bond of faith.
   b. Both groups demonstrated it by offering to the other what was needed.

   *We could share many examples of this principle.*

   **American** churches may find themselves in the same position as the Jewish churches someday; we hope not.

   **Finally**, we demonstrate that bond of faith by making it possible for the gospel to get to the places it will be received.

C. **Supporting Preaching To People We Don’t Know** *(Phil 1:12-14; 4:15-18).*

1. The Philippian church had “fellowship” with Paul from the time they first met him up to his time in prison.

2. While in prison he taught the gospel to the Palace guard & Caesar’s household.

3. Paul was preaching to strangers, so far as the church in Philippi was concerned; they didn’t get any work out of him on the home front.

4. Before that time, Paul had never met the Christians in Rome, but he longed to help them *(Rom 1:9-12).*

   *It’s really a test of our faith, to **prove** that we believe there is a bond of faith that exists between Christians.*
What does a lesson like this teach us?

- We are not alone on an island called “Green Meadow”.
- We share a common & mutual faith, salvation, partnership, family & labor with Christians of strange backgrounds – strange to us (Col 3:8-11; Gal 3:28)

[Barbarian] Uncivilized, & unpolished in his manners.

[Scythian] The people who lived on the north & northeast of the Black & Caspian seas, a region stretching into the unknown countries of Asia. They occupied the lands now peopled by the Monguls & Tartars. The name was almost synonymous with barbarian, for they were regarded as a wild & savage race. The meaning here is, that even such a ferocious & uncivilized people were not excluded from the gospel, but they were as welcome as any other, & were entitled to the same privileges as others. No one was excluded because he belonged to the most rude & uncivilized portion of mankind.

- Those differences should not alienate us from them, or cause us to consider ourselves superior to them.
- Through the gospel of Christ we have all come to the same place, & share the same privileges.

Heb 12:22-24 – But you have come to Mount Zion & to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly & church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, & to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

- Because of our bond of faith, we should show not only an interest in each other, but also more interest in our brothers & sisters in other places.

[Imagine] that great day when God’s Kingdom is called together, & our Lord our guiding force stands before us.

On that occasion we will worship together with saints we have never met, & with many dear ones who died first, & with many who left us because of time & circumstance; united eternally in worship with those who shared the bond of faith with us.

THAT WILL BE THE GREAT DAY.

Reworked from a lesson by Kyle Pope [http://kmpope.home.att.net]