

Sermon Big Idea

The community that costs you the most transforms you the most.

Read the Text

In your group, read the passage(s) out loud, with each person reading a verse.

Head: Grasping the Text

Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of the text.

- 1. The weight of *koinonia*:** Luke borrowed *koinonia*, which is translated as fellowship from the everyday Greek-Roman world, where it described a business partnership — two people who shared assets, risk, and profit equally. It carried the weight of:
 - Mutual investment — both partners fully committed
 - Shared risk — if one suffers, both suffer
 - Binding obligation — not casual, not optional
 - Consequential participation in a shared reality

When the early church formed in Acts 2, what new rhythms did they adopt? Why were they costly and sacrificial in terms of the social, familial, and political costs within the Roman and Jewish ways of life?

- 2. The vertical foundation:** Reflect on what 1 Corinthians 1:9 says about being invited into fellowship or partnership (*koinonia*) with his Son. Why does it matter that we don't create or earn this fellowship, but rather we are invited into an eternal, self-giving relationship that predated creation within the Trinity?
- 3. Explaining Conversion:** If a non-Christian friend asked you what it means to be a Christian, you might naturally say, '*I accepted Jesus into my heart.*' But Paul flips that script saying that God actually *invited you into fellowship with Jesus' life*. Why is it important to explain this aspect of what it means to be born again?
- 4. Walking in the Light:** What contrasts does John make between "walking in darkness" and "walking in the light"? What does this passage teach us about God's character when we fail? Why is forgiveness connected to God being both "faithful and righteous"?

Heart: Grasping the Internal Transformation

Goal: Examine how the text reshapes our identity, affections, and motivations.

5. Usually, we think of darkness from 1 John as secret, scandalous sins, but the message points out that darkness is actually anywhere we live a contradiction between our outer image and our inner reality. Why do you think we are tempted to hide or minimize sin? How does honesty and vulnerability about sin and struggle deepen your fellowship with God and with other believers? Can you recognize any specific “fig leaf” strategies in yourself that you use to play it safe and protect the ‘real you’?
6. How does the promise of Jesus' cleansing blood give you the courage to stay in the light before God and others? How can you incorporate the rhythm of forgiveness, honesty, transparency, and vulnerability in your personal, family, and communal life?
7. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* stated:
"He who loves his dream of community more than the Christian community itself becomes its destroyer — even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial." Written from an underground seminary in Nazi Germany, 1938.

Bonhoeffer means that the single greatest enemy of genuine *koinōnia* is not persecution, not conflict, but the “wish dream,” the idealized version of community we carry in our minds that the actual community of broken people can never match. How can you relate? What does your personal “wish dream” of community look like? How does holding onto that dream tempt you to become a critic rather than a participant in your actual church community?

Hands: Grasping Your Next Step

Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out as a disciple.

8. Simply understanding *koinōnia* is not the goal; rather, it is learning to live it out. Discipleship is always a community project, and community projects require action. What is a step you can take in the vertical realm of fellowship (*koinōnia*) with the Lord that can help shape the horizontal dimension of fellowship (*koinōnia*) with others?
9. To experience the ongoing cleansing and renewal of Jesus, we have to move past the idea of confession and move into areas of actual, specific times of confession in our week. When we step out of hiding, what gets seen by the community gets covered by the blood of Jesus. End your group time praying and confessing together as the Lord prompts and leads.