Introduction

The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkien

The Fellowship of the Cross

The Fellowship of the Cross is open to all who will follow Jesus.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?

I. We know our mission. Luke 6:12-16

We are called to know him and to make him known.

“He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.” Mark 3:14-15

Jesus knew the calling and training of the twelve was crucial to the continuation of his ministry. He designated them apostles – his messengers – to share the good news of the gospel.

Who were the twelve?

- Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John
- Philip, Bartholomew (Nathaniel), Matthew (Levi), and Thomas
- James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas son of James (Thaddaeus) and Judas Iscariot

They were chosen by Jesus.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.” John 15:16

They were ordinary men.

“Our ordinariness makes room for his extraordinariness.” Kent Hughes

“God must like ordinary people because he made so many of them.” Abraham Lincoln

II. We need to understand our calling. Luke 6:17-26

The Sermon on the Plain begins with the Beatitudes and ends with the wise and foolish builders.
What we have here is a profile of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

We are poor, yet rich. Verses 20, 24

- The poor are those who recognize their utter dependence upon God.
- The danger of wealth is that people can have a false sense of security and self-sufficiency.

We are hungry, yet full. Verses 21, 25

- Those who hunger for God will be satisfied.
- Those who find their satisfaction in this world will be dissatisfied in the end.

We are sorrowful, yet glad. Verses 21, 25

- Those who are sorrowful weep over their own sin and the sins of this world.
- Those who laugh now and care not for God will weep in that final day.
- This isn’t saying that Christians shouldn’t laugh. “A cheerful heart is good medicine.” Proverbs 17:22 The difference for the believer is there can be a wholesome joy with no regrets.

We are persecuted, yet full of joy. Verses 22, 23 and 26

- Persecution can take many forms – hatred, exclusion, insults, defamation – all because of our faith in Christ.
- In its extreme forms, persecution leads to beatings, arrests, imprisonment, loss of jobs and property and death.
- How should we respond? “Rejoice and leap for joy!”

Conclusion

The Fellowship of the Cross isn’t easy.

But for those who walk with Jesus, there will be fullness of joy and great reward!