



Church of Christ

December 8, 2002

204 Dix Road Jefferson City, MO 65109

Heart to Heart...

What an opportunity we have as a congregation standing before us today. You ask, "He must be speaking of a land purchase for the future of this congregation?" No! You ask, "He must be speaking of a building project?" No! I'm speaking of an opportunity to see if we have really grown spiritually. It's a testing of our faith to see how much we have grown in the likeness of Jesus. We are God's children that live on this earth, but our home, our real home is in the presence of God, where we wait to be with Him eternally. (Phil. 3:20-21) The determining factor of that is our walk while we are away from Him. How we react and what we do shows us where our hearts really are.

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." (Phil. 2:3) Children of God take on the image of Jesus. They are transformed into His likeness. Did Jesus do anything from His own selfishness while He was away from His home? How easy is it to be selfish? People, especially religious, don't think of themselves as selfish. Selfishness comes from self-centeredness. *"Empty conceit"* (some version use *"vain conceit"*) is the idea of standing on principles of pride in a person that have no foundation other than self! People with *empty conceit* will use Scriptures to their own personal advantage. Selfishness is rooted in our flesh and will destroy God's work. **"But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."** (Gal. 5:15-16) Where would God lead us in our daily walk on earth? Following our desires or looking out for others? Putting our desires aside for the betterment of others? If we don't, we will bite and devour each other with our fleshliness. **"Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are."** (I Cor. 3:16-17)

"Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:4) How easy is it to follow our personal interests? What if Jesus did that, where would we be? **"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."** (Phil. 2:5) We are to possess the same attitude that Christ possessed. That's where God is trying to get us to walk and change us into the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:29) In order for the image of His Son to affect our behavior, self has to go! Self has to be denied for the sake of others.

We need to allow the spiritual nature of God to determine what we do with things while on this earth. This is temporal but our attitudes in the temporal place will determine our spiritual destiny. Holding to Jesus with all our heart, having His nature and attitude within ourselves will only make us more and more into His Image. Think about it!!!

Brent