**FCOC Study Group**

March 16, 2016

**What do you expect? Why do we gather?**

Different people have different needs and different desires when they come to gatherings like this. Whatever yours might be, let us come to agree that our primary aim and focus is progressing in our discipleship to Jesus. Some immediate goals may be to learn more about the Scriptures, to spend more time with church friends, or, perhaps, to “do more” as a Christian, but may they all be fueled by a desire to become more like our Master. He is the fullness of humanity, and He shows us the kind of people we are meant to become as we live the Kingdom life. He shows us our purpose and how to fulfill it.

**The Word ● The Spirit ● The Body**

We can become like Jesus. He promised! It is God’s intention to make us like His Son (Romans 8:28-30), and He has provided the three essential means of our becoming Christ-like: Jesus’ Word, Spirit, and Body (the Church). The Word and the Spirit have been planted within us in order to give us life, and we are in the Body in order to be built up ourselves *and* to use our gifting to build others up into maturity. We need all three in order to progress towards our goal, and that is why these times together around the Word, filled and overseen by the Spirit, are so important.

**The Danger in Diligent Study:**

“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” *John 5:39-40*

We must be careful not to miss the Man who gives life as we look carefully at the text that is meant to point us to Him. The Scriptures bring life only by pointing us to the man Jesus. *He* grants life. His abiding words and Spirit, His example, His death and resurrection, and His reliable promises – these bring abundant and endless life. As the Apostle Paul wrote to His young coworker, Timothy:

“…from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” *2 Timothy 3:15*

If it does not lead us to trust and obey this Man, the message is “of no value” to us (see **Hebrews 4:2**).

**How do these statements strike you?**

* We are not students of the Bible; we are students of Jesus.
* We are not “people of the Book”; we are people of the Man, Jesus.

Studying a book is more comfortable and easier to control than following after a real and living person who is constantly moving, challenging, searching, commanding, and training us. We can easily maintain some level of control in Bible study; we relinquish all control to our Master in discipleship to Jesus.