

GOD'S FAMILY

(Scripture: Ephesians 3:1-21)

INTRODUCTION:

A. The Song – “God’s Family”

We’re part of a family that’s been born again; Part of a family whose love knows no end; For Jesus has saved us, and made us His own, Now we’re part of a family that’s on its way home;

When a brother meets sorrow we all feel his grief; When he’s passed thru the valley we all feel relief; Together in sunshine, together in rain, Together in victory thru His precious name;

And tho’ some go before us, we’ll meet again; Just inside the city as we enter in; There’ll be no more parting, with Jesus we’ll be Together forever, God’s family.

B. Family is important to us

1. We treasure family relationships, memories, gatherings ...
2. That is why God chose the concept of “family,” as one of the ways He refers to His church
 - a. Ephesians 3:14-15
 - b. Paul speaks of the family in heaven and on earth
3. We often speak of our church family and how precious it is to us
4. Let us spend a little time discussing “God’s Family”

DISCUSSION:

A. DESIGNATIONS USED TO DESCRIBE GOD’S FAMILY

1. “Brotherhood”
 - a. 1 Peter 2:17 ... we are to love the brethren
 - b. “Brother” (or brethren) is found 319 times in the New Testament, where “sister (s)” is used 22 times
 - c. By and large, these terms define a physical relationship
 - d. These words are sometimes used in a spiritual sense

e. 1 Peter 5:9 (your brethren)

f. 3 John 10 (the brethren)

g. These verses stress a relationship between Christians – a relationship that places them as one concerning a standing in Christ.

1) Galatians 3:26-29 (you are all one in Christ Jesus)

2) By no means does this remove the distinction between the genders or their unique, God-given responsibilities, but it strengthens our understanding of the close relationship that should exist between siblings in the spiritual family – we are a family!

3) 1 Timothy 5:1-2 ... a family relationship is here clearly described

¹Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; ²The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

2. “Child” (or children) is used 168 times in the New Testament

a. About 80% of the time, the terms (child/children) are referring to a physical family

b. However, we are called the “children of God”

1) Romans 8:16

2) Therefore, when applied to Christians, the sense of the term reflects a paternal relationship with the Father

3) We are the “children of God”!

3. “Household of God” (or, house of God)

a. Ephesians 2:19-20

b. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 (to behave thyself in the house of God)

c. “Having a great priest over the house of God” (Heb. 10:21)

d. 1 Peter 4:17 (judgment begin at the house of God)

4. God as “Father”

a. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 (we only have one God, the Father)

1) Since God is our Father – we are His children

- 2) A family relationship is clearly seen
 - b. John 8:44 (the other father, the devil)
 - 1) There are only two spiritual families
 - 2) We are members of one or the other
 - c. God is our Father!
5. Jesus as “Son” – thus, our elder brother
- a. Hebrews 3:3-6 (we belong to the house of Christ)
 - b. Hebrews 7:25 ... as our elder brother, Jesus intercedes...
 - c. Jesus is our elder Brother!

B. TO ENTER GOD’S FAMILY THERE MUST BE A BIRTH

1. It is noteworthy that Jesus compares our entrance into salvation, and thus into the family of God, as a birth
2. John 3:3-5
 - a. A parallel verse ... Acts 2:38
 - b. Thus ... Acts 2:47 (we are added; we cannot join)
3. As one is born into a physical family, so must we be a partaker of the spiritual birth to be a part of the family of God

C. THE FAMILY CONCEPT IS A PERFECT PARALLEL TO THE CHURCH

1. It denotes a sense of belonging
 - a. Isn’t wonderful to know that we have a place in the family of God? That we can belong to the greatest family in the world
 - b. Belonging to a family bond provides:
 - 1) Comfort ... 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
 - 2) Strength ... Ephesians 4:11-16
2. It signifies relationships

- a. We have a unique relationship with the Father and with each other
- b. 1 Timothy 5:1-2 ... Good family relationships demand appropriate conduct
- c. John 16:23 ... We can approach God – as our Father – in prayer!
- d. Colossians 1:12 ... We have an inheritance from the Father

3. It draws a line

- a. Everyone is not in the family of God
 - 1) Our Heavenly Father designated certain entry requirements, and if these criteria are not met, one is not a member of the family
 - 2) Merely running with the family does not make you a part of the family.

D. ALL OF GOD'S FAMILY ARE IMPORTANT

- 1. In our physical families we all have different abilities and appearances – but all are important and loved
- 2. The same holds true in the family of God
- 3. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (many members but one body)

E. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD'S FAMILY

- 1. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 .. be separate from the world
- 2. Ephesians 5:1-2, 8 ... as God's children we must be like our Father and be children our Father would be proud of
- 3. John 13:35 ... we love each other so that others will want to be a part of God's family

4. Galatians 6:1-2 ... bear each other's burdens – lean on each other

5. Matthew 28:18-20 ... try to bring other into the family

CONCLUSION:

A. THE FUTURE OF GOD'S FAMILY

1. Romans 8:16-17 (we will glorified with the Father & Son)

2. 1 Peter 1:3-5 (we have an inheritance, reserved in heaven)

3. 1 John 3:2 (we shall appear like Him)

B. Invitation

1. Are you part of God's Family?