

8.4.2024

Opening: This world we live in can be a very difficult and lonely place for many people. In scripture Jesus is referred to as the good shepherd and we are called the sheep of His pasture. Being alone can be dangerous in a world full of adversity and adversaries. God has provided a family called the Church to provide a place of nourishment, relationships, fellowship, and encouragement in this broken world.

Key Scriptures:

Ephesians 2:18-19 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

John 17:20-22 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

Galatians 4:6-7 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

1. Our Father’s answer for this broken world

- a. The Church was established with the hope that humanity would be unified under the banner of love in Jesus Christ.
- b. Every tribe, tongue and nation can gather together in faith. We are a faith family.
- c. Forming the Church would give the body of Christ the opportunity to grow in unity, recognizing the power of diversity, all while experiencing genuine life-giving fellowship with other believers.
- d. For every wound the world can give the human soul, God intended that a Church would be a healing ground for those experiencing trauma.

2. Blood is thicker than water.

- a. Christ has set us free, by giving us a new identity through blood. We have been born again into a new life, with a new purpose and a new family.
- b. Our connection to each other is deeper even than that of this carnal world we live in. Natural families are connected together because of similar DNA. We are connected because of one Spirit.

- c. **2nd Corinthians 4:18** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen(carnal,physical,natural), but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- d. **Key Point:** Many Churches are good at getting people to connect in natural ways, through social and fellowship gatherings but weaker in gathering people together in worship, in prayer, or in service.
 - i. The connections we share are life giving and meaningful because of the connections we make in the Spirit more than in the natural world.
- e. We all have the same Holy Spirit living in us. The Holy Spirit creates in us a far stronger unity that is built on the eternal values of Heaven. The blood of Jesus has released the Holy Spirit into our lives to tie us together in faith.
- f. When is the last time you had a meaningful experience with your family in prayer, worship, growing in the service of God or in the knowledge of God. The “spiritual” experiences knit you together with your Church family in a deep and profound way.

3. Different and yet the same

- a. **1st Corinthians 12:12-13** [12](#)For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. [13](#)For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to **drink of one Spirit**.
- b. Each one of us has different experiences, different giftings, different upbringings, different strengths, different weaknesses.
- c. Our bond of unity is centered around our understanding of Jesus Christ. Since we esteem and value Jesus so highly, we are able to accept and receive the many different parts that make up His body.
- d. Humanity is pretty much the same around the world, culturally they may do things differently, but all humans have the same basic needs. Jesus Christ satisfies the needs of every human but not necessarily the culture of that human.

4. Lean on me

- a. **1st Corinthians 12:26** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.
- b. We are Family, and we are not meant to do life alone. Far too many who belong to a Church are still isolated from the rest of the body.
- c. To lean on someone, you have to have proximity to that person. If you are keeping people at an arms distance, it is indicative of a wound that has not yet been healed.

- d. While no Church is perfect and some guards are put up initially, as we grow in relationship with each other our self-protection mechanisms we use in the world should not be necessary in the Church.
- e. **Life Lesson: The world teaches us the opposite of the Kingdom of Christ. What we have learned to do to survive in the world we must let go of so that we can thrive in God's Church.**

5. I, me, you cannot but we CAN!

- a. **Ecclesiastes 4:12** A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.
 - i. We are easily overcome as lone sheep, but when we stand together, we are not overcome.
- b. **Matthew 18:19** Again, I tell you truly that if two of you on the earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
 - i. God designed that those in the Church could gather together with others in the Church to agree in prayer for His will to be done.
 - ii. You don't need everyone to agree with you in prayer in the Church, but powerful things can be accomplished and released when we agree in prayer together.
 - iii. The answer to your prayer has not come yet because you have not found someone to truly pray the prayer of agreement with you.
 - iv. The prayer of agreement requires the two parties to have mutual understanding, mutual faith, mutual love, and mutual respect for God.
- c. **Life Lesson: The more mature we get, the more we will seek corporate intercession, knowing the true power that can only come when we agree in prayer together.**

6. Common issues of families

- a. **Matthew 5:23-24 ESV** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has **something against you**, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First **be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and offer your gift.
- b. All families can experience opportunities to see things differently and resort to divisions.
- c. All families can experience moments of conflict, trial that bring pain.
- d. All families can experience seasons of loss, transition that bring sorrow.
- e. All families can experience opportunities where kept secrets threaten the trust between people.

- f. All families can experience the delay of hoped for things that bring a sense of confusion and bewilderment.
- g. The Church is the same as other families, and different in that we have the greatest Father the world has ever known. Our Heavenly is working to help His people through the conflicts and difficulties that can arise within the family of God.
- h. **Key Point: We can experience God's intervention and help for the Church processing through its issues if we come together to seek His help and guidance.**

7. The power of God's family

- a. **Revelation 22:5** And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and **they will reign forever and ever.**
- b. The Family of God will rule and reign with Christ for all ages to come. Not just I or me, or you but we together will be given power and authority to rule with Christ for all eternity.
- c. Never forget what importance the Church of Jesus has in the world. Though we may suffer, and experience hardships here and now, our present sufferings cannot compare to what God will bless His Church within ages to come.

8. Go deeper with your true brothers and sisters.

- a. **Luke 8:20-21** He was told, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You." 21But He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and carry it out."
- b. It is good to be those who come to Church, to hear the message and agree with it, but Jesus says those who carry it out, who walk in the message, who live it and put its desires in to action are His true family.
- c. Join with your fellow family members carrying out the purpose and mission in the word of God. Become a co-laborer with your fellow family members and strengthen the bond of fellowship with God's people.

Conclusion: It is really true; a place is only as good as the people you know in it. A Church is family no matter where you go. God has given you the opportunity through real fellowship to flourish in this life. Join the family and enjoy the best of life.