

## **This is Us: We Are a Blended Family**

Pastor Kevin Donoho

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### **Opening Discussion**

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

### **College Church's Mission**

To Lead every generation into a growing relationship with Jesus so that all may experience God's goodness and grace.

Core Value #1:

We are a blended family: We are a diverse family with unique backgrounds and stories that God has brought together. We want everyone to experience the belonging that comes with being a part of the family of God.

### **Thought #1: Adoption is a Beautiful Thing!**

Romans 8:14-16

*"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So, you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his children. Now we call him, Abba, Father. For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children."*

As you reflect on the passage above, what words stand out to you most? When you think about God adopting us as His own, what does this mean to you? That without having to do a thing, you belong. Jesus cleared all obstacles for true adoption into the family of God, we must simply say "Yes!" Are there any group members who

would like to share their "adoption day" story? (Testimony of coming to faith)

### **Thought #2: Jesus Breaks Down All Barriers**

Ephesians 2:11-14

*"Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke the wall of hostility that separated us."*

With Jesus, outsider/insider language comes to an end!

Recall a time you felt like an outsider. How were you made to feel not included? What did that feel like? Have there been times when you were part of the "included" and extended a welcome to those on the outside? How did you help them feel they belong? (This may be in church, work, family, etc.) Have you experienced a time when being a part of the family of God stretched you? Share this experience with your group. How can you help others feel included and welcomed on a week-to-week basis at College Church?

### **Thought #3: We are Uniquely Put Together**

1 Corinthians 12:12-21

*"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand, that does not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it only had one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, I don't need you. The head can't say to the feet, I don't need you."*

Pastor Kevin reminded us that we all have different gifts and different talents. And this is not only beautiful but necessary in the family of God! As a part of that family, it is important to recognize the unique gifting in others AND yourself. Take a moment to recognize the talents and gifts that make your group members unique. Share what you see in one another with the group. (Group leader: this may be a great place for you to go first.)

#### **Thought #4: We Belong to One Another!**

Romans 12:4-5

*"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."*

Reflect on the word "belonging". What does this word mean to you? When have you felt this the most? Have there been

times you did NOT feel a sense of belonging? How did that shape your overall experience? How can you be a part of helping others feel that they belong?

Remember:

- Belonging speaks that you are loved!
- Belonging says you are a part of the family!
- Belonging says let's do this together!
- Belonging shapes our primary identity!

As a family, we get to experience this AND be a part of helping others experience the same. How will you intentionally seek to do both this coming week?

#### **Thought #5: We Look Out For One Another!**

Acts 4:32-35

*"All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need."*

When we are a part of God's family, it means we are loved by God. It also means we are loved by our brothers and sisters. And as siblings, we have each other's back. Has there been a time you felt the family of God looking out for you? Going to bat for you or stepping into the gap in a time of need? Share this with your group. Is there someone God brings to mind right now who needs you to help them know

