

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

**Sunday July 1, 2018 "Relationship Series: This is Us".**

### **A. Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message on Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still go thru it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

### **B. Sunday.**

Families, what a difficult journey to navigate...right? Like the old saying goes: *"you pick your friends, but you're stuck with family"*. Love them or...whatever the difficult side may be, families and relationships in general present all sorts of challenges for us. Our families are made up of people we absolutely love, but there are those moments and times in life where figuring out what our relationship with people in our family is just tough. This is why Thanksgiving and Christmas can be so difficult. We have to face people we still have an unresolved past or situations with, stark differences in politics or religion, (don't even think about going there), different views of parenting and more. And it seems that our boundaries are less defined with family members than with our friends, so those difficult areas just seem to rub more and cause more friction than do our friendships.

It's because of these challenges, that Lamar began this past Sunday a five-week look at relationships, *"This is Us"*, and how to deal with some of the stickier issues in our relationships. He kicked it off Sunday with kind of an overview of what family is, how essential it is to get this right, and a good foundation for what lies at the heart of strong, healthy, life-giving relationships.

So...as usual, let's begin with some questions, and we'll make these a little less threatening...for now.

**Who was your favorite non-immediate family member? Why?**

**What was one tradition your family had growing up that you can remember fondly?**

**What tradition did your family do as a kid that you still do now?**

Lamar hit the scripture; Ephesians 1:5 Sunday and talked about the importance of having a scriptural, spiritual, understanding of family and relationships. Read this one verse, and then we'll talk about it. In this passage, Paul is talking about the act of adoption. In those days, adoption was purely functional and what you could bring to a particular family. It was a business/ transactional decision based on the specific needs of the family and how you could contribute.

Paul is using the term adoption, not in a business/transactional way, but rather God being what we need, and then those of us who are adopted into his family then **begin the good work of being the right person**. Not in a functional/business what we can 'do' way, but rather to craft our life to work on what we could become... or 'be'.

There is something beautiful and divine, like a painting weaving everyone into a single picture, that portrays what family was designed to be. And the idea of adoption is to **help us be more 'we' oriented rather than 'me' oriented** in how we relate to our families. We know this does NOT happen overnight. We tend to be selfish by nature, so this is continual work of recognizing when we make our family relationships about us, and what we can get, rather than who we can be and what we can give to those important relationships in our life.

So...let's get a little personal here.

**What are some of the difficult issues you face with family?**

**Where do you sometimes find it hard to show love or compassion in your family?**

**Where do you think some of the responsibility falls on you to explain the strain in your relationship with that family member?**

Most states have what they call 'percentage culpability' laws when it comes to traffic accidents. Very rarely in a multiple car accident is one person completely at fault and the other completely innocent. Most often each person owns some of the culpability, or fault, for the accident.

The same can be said for strains in family relationships. No matter what has happened between you and the family member we have issues with, we still at the very minimum own our response to, and how we old the hurt, in that relationships.

As Lamar said, we have the choice, the power, to decide how we will be in those relationships. We can either choose the small, petty, response in those difficult relationships in our life. Or **we can intentionally choose, and actively work, to be bigger than our own individual wants and needs.** And then we know even more so that the **strength and nature of our relationships with those important people in our lives will DIRECTLY affect our relationship with God.**

This inescapable truth is taught all thru scriptures, and in order to experience that vibrant, vital relationship with God, we have to continue to work on those relationships in our life.

Wrapping this all up a few more questions.

**Where could you choose 'better' in how you relate with others?**

**Where could you set aside your own wants and needs for those family members in your life.**

**Where could you possibly make those first few steps towards making amends with some of the broken relationships in your life?**

Let me encourage and challenge you to start this journey of rediscovering the joy of healthy family relationships and how it can grow your relationship with God.

It will be more than worth it!