

## We Are A Family

### INTRODUCTION:

1. When the topic of family is mentioned, it can produce mixed feelings depending on one's personal experience.
2. But for most, family is a very special thing, a unique bond appreciated and enjoyed.
3. And most take pride, or would like to, in their families.
4. As Christians, Jesus wants us to know that **we are a family**—and in fact the most special and important family there is.
  - A. This family we are part of is so special that it trumps all other relationship, including our physical family (Matt. 10:37 – “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”).
  - B. And why it is so special is that as Christians we are of **Christ's family** (Mark 3:31-35 – “Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.” <sup>33</sup> Answering them, He said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” <sup>34</sup> Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, “**Behold My mother and My brothers!** <sup>35</sup> **For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.**”).
5. Though much could be said about Jesus' words in relationship to Jewish culture, what I want us to focus on today is that Jesus says we are family—**His family**—and consider what that means for us and requires of us.

### BODY:

- **I. We are God's children:**
  - A. That this is true is significant because **Jesus**, our **brother**, is God's only **literal Son**.
    - 1. He preexisted as God (**John 1:1-2** – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.”).
    - 2. And Jesus was **born** into this world **as God** in the form of **human flesh** (**John 1:14** – “And the **Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of **the only begotten from the Father**, full of grace and truth.”).
    - 3. And as God's only Son, Jesus is **the image and glory** of God, possessing the very **nature** of God, as a child possesses the image and nature of his/her parents.
      - a. **2 Cor. 4:3-4** – “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of **the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**.”
      - b. **Heb. 1:1-3** – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in **His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And **He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature...**”
  - B. How can we, those are rebellious sinners, be God's children?
    - 1. We are God's children by **adoption! God chose to make us His children**.
      - a. Our adoption was **God's predetermined plan** (**Eph. 1:5-6** – “**He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”).
        - i. God has always wanted us, even though we sinned, as His children!
        - ii. All His work in Christ was to make this happen.
      - b. Our adoption makes us **heirs with Christ** (**Rom. 8:15-17** – “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but **you have received a spirit of adoption** as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that **we are children of God**, <sup>17</sup> and if children, **heirs** also, heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ**, if indeed **we suffer with Him** so that we may also **be glorified with Him**.”).

- i. The truth of our adoption is assured by the **Spirit's testimony** in the word and **by our spirit** when we live according to what God's Spirit has said (8:16).
  - ii. And, since we are children of God, **we are now heirs with Christ**, rewarded with eternal glory for our faithfulness with Christ when He returns.
- 2. As recipients of God's great love (**1 John 3:1-3** – "See how **great a love the Father has bestowed on us**, that **we would be called children of God**; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now **we are children of God**, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that **when He appears, we will be like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who **has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself**, just as He is pure." ).
  - a. Note the great blessings of God's family—living in the **likeness of Christ** forever.
  - b. And there are results this hope is to bring—**purity of life**.
- 3. God offers this to all by His grace to all who will trust in Jesus and obey Him in baptism (**Gal. 3:26-27** – "For you are all **sons of God** through **faith** in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For **all** of you who were **baptized into Christ** have **clothed yourselves with Christ**." ).
- 4. Despite our sins and the great cost of Jesus' blood to cleanse us, Jesus is not ashamed to have us as family (**Heb. 2:10-12** – "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For both **He who sanctifies** and **those who are sanctified** are all **from one Father**; for which reason **He is not ashamed to call them brethren**, <sup>12</sup> saying, "I will proclaim your name to **My brethren**, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." ).
- 5. Maybe with these things in mind we can all look with a bit more amazement and love toward our holy God who loves us enough to make us, despite our sin, His children, His family, and reward us with eternal glory!
- **II. Like any family, there are rules for God's family** (1 Tim. 3:14-15 – "I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; <sup>15</sup> but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will **know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God**, which is the **church of the living God**, the pillar and support of the truth." ). There is a way we must live as God's family.
  - A. Our adoption demands that we conform...
    - 1. To God's holiness (**1 Pet. 1:14-16** – "As **obedient children**, do **not be conformed to the former lusts** which were yours in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but **like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves** also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup> because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." ).
      - a. Remember, Jesus said it was those who do God's will that are his family (Mk. 3:35).
      - b. So, Peter reminds us that life as a child of God is radically different from a life that follows 'fleshly' desires—that being His child means doing God's will, which is very often the opposite of doing what we 'feel like' doing.
    - 2. To Christ's image (**Rom. 8:29-30** – "For those whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, so that He would be the **firstborn among many brethren**; <sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." ).
      - a. Your calling, justification, and glorification include your conforming to, or becoming like, Jesus.
      - b. Conformity requires change (Rom. 12:1-2 – "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup> And **do not be conformed to this world**, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." ).
  - B. Being of God's family demands **oneness**, that we function as one.

1. Though as members of the church here at Colonial Heights we are *many* and *different*, in Christ...
  - a. We are **one body** (1 Cor. 12:12-14 – “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many.”).
    - i. By virtue of our **baptism**, we are all members of the same body—Christ’s body!
    - ii. So, whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, or in other words whether we were complete opposites in our lives before Christ, we **drink of one Spirit** and are **one body**.
  - b. We must work together as members of one body for the good of the whole body. **So...**
    - i. Each member must **know their value** and **fulfill their role** (1 Cor. 12:15-19 – “If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> **But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.** <sup>19</sup> If they were all one member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> **But now there are many members, but one body.**”).
      - 1) Your place in Christ’s body is by God’s hand. He has given you talents.
      - 2) So, value who you are in Christ and live it out to the fullest of your potential.
    - ii. Each member **values their fellow member** (1 Cor. 12:21-27 – “And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which **seem to be weaker are necessary;** <sup>23</sup> and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, **on these we bestow more abundant honor**, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, <sup>24</sup> whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, **giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,** <sup>25</sup> **so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.** <sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. <sup>27</sup> **Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.**”).
      - 1) Each of us need to do a self-check, a honest evaluation, of how we feel about each other and the place and role of each other in this body.
      - 2) Without a proper view we cannot grow, cannot be unified, and cannot show the love of Christ required of us for faithful service.
  - 2. To do this we must approach one another with the humility of Christ (**Phil. 2:3-8** – “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind **regard one another as more important than yourselves;** <sup>4</sup> do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”).
    - a. We are all followers of Christ and members of His family.
    - b. But, to remain in good standing, to be faithful, we must have the proper attitude toward one another that is founded on valuing others as better than ourselves.

CONCLUSION:

1. As the church here at Colonial Heights grows with new and varied members uniting with us to serve and glorify God in Christ, we need to **take heed to ourselves and our attitudes toward one another** to assure that we are living according to God's standard (**Phil. 1:27** – “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel”).
2. Each one of us needs to remember that:
  - A. We are **members of God's family**, brothers and sister of Jesus Christ himself by **faith, baptism, and the grace** of God.
  - B. We are **adopted**, chosen by God to be taken out of the world and engrafted into His family.
  - C. We are to **conform to the image of God and His Son** in holiness, grace, and love.
  - D. We are to **work together, function as one body with one spirit**, valuing others above ourselves and seeking the good of one another for the growth of the body.
3. Are there improvements that can be made among us in this and other areas. Absolutely!
  - A. But it is not going to happen unless you and I are willing to change, to conform to the image of Jesus, and love and receive one another as our Father has chosen to love and receive us.
  - B. So, we need to be asking ourselves what we need to work on, to change, to improve upon in doing our part for the growth of the body and the glory of God's grace in your life.
4. But let us not end without reminding each one here that Christ is calling you now, today, to sonship, to be his child, to become part of the family of God in Christ. And, if you desire this, you can answer that call today by F-R-C-Bp?