

The Family of God

Mark 3:20-35

Introduction

Family is the basic building block of society. Whether we admit it or not, that's a fact we've all been aware of for some time. You don't have to study sociology to know it. All you must do is observe and you will see just how important family is. One evidence is the preponderance of TV shows that are based on family. You may remember some of these: *The Addams Family*, *All in the Family*, *Family Affair*, *Family Ties*, and *Modern Family*, just to name a few. While they all paint a different picture of family, there are a few basics that are constant across the board. No matter what the family looks like, they love each other. They may not always like each other, but at the end of the day, they have each other's back. They, of course, are related. That is, they have a connection, something that makes them a family. This may be blood, adoption, or marriage. They live together, sharing life experiences. What affects one, affects all members of the family. Jesus gives us a new picture of family today. But these constants are still there. What does it look like to be **THE FAMILY OF GOD**?

Related by Adoption

First, what makes us the family of God? How are we related? (Read ***Ephesians 1:3-7***). By His grace, God has bought us with the blood of Christ and adopted us as His sons and daughters. Through the blood of the only begotten Son of God, we are adopted into His family and given every blessing. It's true what they say: "You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family." God has elected and called us to be His children. He has taken us out of the orphanage and given us a new home.

Love — "I've Got Your Six"

Then, there's the love a family has. The Greeks have a word for brotherly love – *philos*. They have a word for mother love – *storge*. They also have a word for the love that binds the family of God together – *agape*. Jesus says in ***John 13:34***, "*Love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*" The word He uses is *agape*. This selfless, sacrificial love comes only from God. As John says, *We love because He first loved us* (***1 John 4:19***). With this kind of love, we serve one another. Paul explains what this love looks like (read ***Romans 12:9-13***).

Togetherness – Koinonia

Family doesn't go well with distancing and isolation. Just as other families do, the family of God shares life together. While we've learned that virtual worship is more like watching TV than participating in worship, what really suffers when we isolate ourselves is fellowship. We can Zoom, Skype, Tweet, and Whatsapp until the cows come home. Fellowship is more than just chatting. The word translated "fellowship" in the New Testament is *koinonia*, which means "partnership", "participation", "benefaction". It's the word Paul uses in ***2 Corinthians 8***, where he is encouraging the Corinthian Christians to *take part in the relief of the saints* (***2 Corinthians 8:4***). How can we physically help each other out unless we come together? This is also the word Paul uses in ***Philippians 3***, when he says he wants to *share in [Christ's] sufferings* (***Philippians 3:10***). How can we share in sufferings from the

comfort of our own home? God's family comes together to worship, help one another out and share in Christ's sufferings.

Means of Grace

God has brought us together through the blood of Christ. He has knit us into a family, His family. He holds His family together with the means of grace, Word and Sacrament. When we receive the body and blood, we confess our unity in Christ. This unity is a reality because of what He has done for us. He has made us the **FAMILY OF GOD**.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
