

# Family, Faith, and Friendship

9/14/03

## *Ephesians 3:14-19*

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup>from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup>that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—<sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

## Introduction

God created the heavens and earth for humanity. God created Man and woman, and from them the first *family* was made.

## **Why?**

For fellowship, friendship, and relationship with God.

- Satan's desire from the beginning was to destroy God's best creation: the *family*.
- Satan divides, deceives, confuses, and destroys. His target is the *family, the faith, and the fullness of friendship* of humans with God and one another.

**Jesus** came to save, deliver, unify, bring peace, and restore the *family, faith, and fullness of friendship*.

## 1. Family

A **salesman** who had been away from home for several days, walks into a diner, slumps into a chair, and says to the waitress, "Bring me some burnt toast, watered down scrambled eggs, and some weak, cold coffee."

The waitress said with some doubt, “Yeah sure, what else do you want?”

“Just sit across from me,” the man pleaded, “and nag me. I’m homesick.”

- **Families** are not perfect, but they are wonderful, necessary, and of great value. **Family is where you belong.**

A **family** is where you are born, loved, nurtured, grow, receive acceptance, and develop into a productive, well-balanced citizen.

So it is in the **family of God.**

**vs17. That you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup>may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—<sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

- Rooted, grounded, comprehend, to know the love of Christ and be filled with fullness. **This can only happen in a family!**
- **God’s family** is the same, only better! God’s family includes all. God’s family is filled with more than human love, rather God’s love. God’s family is forever.

While Jesus was teaching the multitudes, His family desired to speak to Him.

**Matthew 12:48-50**

**<sup>48</sup>But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” <sup>49</sup>And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup>For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”**

- Jesus was not excluding His family. He loved them and cared for them. Note His care for His mother while on the cross.
- He was not *excluding* them; He was *including* us.

There is a *family name* in Heaven and in earth: **Jesus**. By His name sins are washed away in baptism. By His name your past is erased. Through faith in His name you can stand before God and man whole.

**“God will take out of the Gentiles a people for his name sake. A people upon whom his name is called.”**

In the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, there is a scene where Walter has lost all the family’s savings, savings that were going to make his family’s dreams come true. Now the dream has dried up like “a raisin in the sun.” His sister, Beneathia, is so disgusted she says, “There ain’t nothin’ left to love.”

Mama puts her hands on her daughter’s shoulders, looks her directly in the eyes, and says, “Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done good and made things easy for somebody? Well, then, you ain’t through learning, ‘cause that ain’t the time at all. It’s when he’s at his lowest and can’t believe in hisself ‘cause the world done whipped him so.”

***That is family in action!***

Our heavenly Father loves us when we’re down. We were all spiritually bankrupt when he found us.

1. The woman caught in adultery. “Where are your accusers? Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.”
2. The Gentile woman at Jacob’s well. “Believe on me and I will give you living water.”

3. The rich young CEO. Jesus loved him and said, “give away all you have, follow me and you will have more, eternal life.”

*Jesus reaches* to those who are down and out. He considers them *family*. “While we were sinners, Christ died for us.”

## **2. Faith**

There is no greater force on earth than *faith*. Without faith it is impossible to please God. With God all things are possible.

- People with strong faith live happier, healthier, and longer than those without faith.

### ***Romans 12:3-5***

<sup>3</sup>For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. <sup>4</sup>For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- I am confident that all here today have faith. “God has given to each a measure of faith.”
- In this body of Christ, the church, the family, no one is to think of themselves greater than another because *faith is the great equalizer*. With faith all things are possible.
- Faith is not dependent upon other qualifications such as name, nationality, wealth, position, education, or past experiences. The Scripture says, “The poor are rich in faith.”

### **God has given all faith for what?**

- a. Faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. Faith to believe that all our sins and iniquities were laid on Him.

- c. That he died on the cross for our sins.
- d. Faith that we now are justified in God's sight by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- e. Faith that you to can be included in the Family of God.

**God, through His Word, has given us faith.**

- Our faith has made us one.
- Together we have experienced great and miraculous events. This feeds our faith.
- We invite all to share in our faith.

*Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, is here to invite you, inspire you, and include you in His family. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."*

**3. Friendship**

*Eph 3:19*

**<sup>19</sup>to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

- True fulfillment is found in right relationship with God and others.

Humans were created to have relationship, friendship, and fellowship with God. Only then can we be complete.

The church provides the structure and opportunity for both.

**"That you may be filled with all the fullness of God."**

*Jackie Robinson* came up through the ranks of the Negro Baseball Leagues. He became the first African-American to play major league baseball. It was tough for him. Fans threw insults and racial slurs at him in every game that first season. He wasn't sure he wanted to continue playing in the major league.

A turning point happened in a game in Cincinnati. The game was delayed and the crowd was vicious in their name-calling. Dodgers' famous short-stop, *PeeWee Reese*, walked over to

Robinson, put his arm around his shoulder, and just stood there for a moment for the world to see.

Although he spoke no audible words, the world heard the message clearly: “Jackie, you’re my teammate, part of the family, and my friend. You’re part of me.”

- **Jesus** didn’t say much while lifted high on the **cross** for the world to see. But His message was loud and clear. “Friend, you’re part of the family, I care for you. Come be part of Me.”

**J. R. Miller:** “Christ is building His kingdom with earth’s broken things. Heaven is filling with earth’s broken lives, and there is no bruised reed that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty.”

***1 John 1:7***

**<sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**Conclusion**

**Soldier Brad** was finally returning from his long and lonely service in Vietnam. When he got off the boat in San Francisco, he called his parents.

“Mom and Dad, I’ll soon be home, but I have a favor to ask. I have a friend I’d like to bring home with me.”

“Sure, son,” the father replied. “We’d love to meet him.”

“There is something you should know about my friend,” Brad continued. “He was hurt pretty bad in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and leg. He has no where else to go, and I want him to come and live with us.”

“I’m very sorry to hear that, Son. Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live.”

“No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us.”

“Son,” said the father, “you don’t know what you’re asking, Someone with such a handicap would need special care, and we

have our own lives to live. As you know, we live busy lives and caring for your friend would be a great burden. We think it best if you just come home and let your friend find someplace else to live.”

Brad said no more, just hung up the phone.

The family became worried when two days passed and Brad didn't return home. On the morning of the third day they received a call from the police. It looked as if their son had fallen from a building to his death. Most likely it was a suicide. The grief-stricken parents were taken to the San Francisco City morgue to identify the body.

Yes, the body was their son, but to their horror they also discovered that their son was missing an arm and a leg.

***Mark 2:17***

**<sup>17</sup>When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”**

**Jesus offers family, faith, and friendship through His church to each today.**