

SERMON SERIES: *Starting Point*

SERMON TITLE: New Family

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:1-16

DATE: 10.24.21

BIG IDEA:

Only through the Gospel do we receive a new family.

1. We all need a family or a tribe to belong to.

- We have been made to need human community and can only thrive when we are a part of it.

2. The family God creates through the Gospel is uniquely designed to fuel your growth in godliness.

- Without the help of God's family, you will remain underdeveloped, not reach your full potential, and your immaturity will cause damage to your relationships.
- **Through the Gospel, God creates a family of radical:**
 - **Inclusivity (Colossians 3:11)**
 - Because God's family is radically inclusive, you can be let into the family that will fuel your growth in godliness.
 - **Equality**
 - The Gospel is the Good News that Jesus Christ has done everything necessary to merit our adoption into God's family.
 - No one in God's family can point to any work of their own as the reason for their adoption. ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#))
 - As a member of equal value to the other members of God's family, you should be able to find equal opportunity for growth in God's family.
 - The way you entered God's family should produce a humility in you that truly allows you to learn from everyone in God's family.

- **Diversity**

- The differences in God's family can sometimes rub us the wrong way, but if handled in a loving, gentle way, they can fuel our growth in Christ because we have so much to learn from our differences.

- **Support and Challenge**

- In God's family, you will find **support** ([1 Corinthians 12:26](#)). Family members will:
 - Weep, mourn, and grieve with you
 - Celebrate with you
 - Pray for you
 - Work for you
 - Cook and deliver meals to you
 - Give money to you.
 - Encourage you
- In God's family you will find **challenge**.
 - Family members will speak the truth to you in love ([Ephesians 4:15](#))
 - Restore you if you are in the wrong ([Galatians 6:1](#))
 - Keep you accountable for making the changes you have discerned God wants you to make

- **Power**

- God is uniquely present in power amongst his family. ([2 Corinthians 6:16](#), [Ephesians 2:20-22](#))
- God's family, the church, is the focal point of everything that God is doing in the world.
- Each person in God's family is given a spiritual gift so that we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. ([Ephesians 4:13](#))
- As we exercise our spiritual gifts and are ministered to by the gifts of others, our growth is fueled.

- **Influence**
 - The gathered family of God scatters into schools and places of work. And it is there, with the Holy Spirit filling them and Christ's character more and more formed in them from their participation in God's family, that they exert great influence in the world.
- **Unity and Forgiveness**
 - Because members of God's family share the same Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, and Father, they are unified on the essentials of life. This unity enables them to be kind and tolerant with one another on issues of secondary importance. Or to use Paul's exact words, they are able to with all "lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bear with one another in love." ([Ephesians 4:2](#))
 - When a person in God's family is sinned against, forgiveness flows. They know the reason that they are even in God's family to begin with is a result of God's great forgiveness towards them and so how can they not forgive their fellow brother or sister in Christ for a much smaller sin?

3. Life is hard. Don't do it without God's family.

- *A number of large, well-designed research studies have found that religious service attendance is associated with greater longevity, less depression, less suicide, less smoking, less substance abuse, better cancer and cardiovascular-disease survival, less divorce, greater social support, greater meaning in life, greater life satisfaction, more volunteering, and greater civic engagement.*¹

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes our desire to belong so strong?
2. Do you fear rejection? If so, by whom?
3. Why is membership in God's family so critical if we are going to grow in godliness?
4. Our culture values inclusivity. How can the inclusivity of God's family be good news to Americans?

¹https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/november/church-empty-pews-are-american-public-health-crisis.html?utm_source=CT+Weekly+Newsletter&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=12587&utm_content=7347&utm_campaign=email&vgo_ee=6YBk4kAXYhIwo3qRt0wYhzpxdzkQNI9LgdxZ9pnzLRY%3D

5. How does the Gospel create equality in God's family?
6. Our culture values equality. How can the equality that exists in God's family be good news to Americans?
7. Why should the Gospel create a deep humility in you that allows you to learn from other members of God's family?
8. How can the differences that exist in God's family fuel our growth in Godliness? Have you ever experienced this?
9. How in God's family have you received support? How about challenge? Which is easier for you to give to a brother or sister in Christ? Which is easier for you to receive?
10. How is God uniquely present in power in his family?
11. Do you know your spiritual gifts? If so, what are they and how are you exercising them for the edification of God's family?
12. How are you influencing people outside of God's family for good?
13. What binds members of God's family together?
14. Are you a source of unity or division in God's family?
15. Who do you need to forgive in God's family? Who do you need to seek forgiveness from?