



Series:

WELCOME TO "CHURCH"

Title:

Family Matters (Part 6)

Preacher:

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Notes

Scriptures to reflect on:

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11-22)

Sermon review:

- Paul is writing to a mixed family and a dysfunctional family encouraging them to do more than "get along."
- Paul reminds them of their former identity:
 - dead, separated, alienated, strangers, without hope and without God.
- Paul spends the "But now..." in verse 13. The gospel isn't merely that God improved our circumstances. He changed our identity.
- We were outsiders. Now we're brought near. We were strangers. Now we have hope.
- Now we are Family!
 - ✓ We are a Mixed Family!
 - God doesn't make us family by making us alike.
 - God doesn't make us family by changing our identifiers but changing our identity! (Ephesians 2 is actually about the reconciliation of people who had some very real reasons to remain divided. Jew and Gentile don't become family because their differences disappear. They become family because Christ has broken down the wall between them.)
 - He makes us family through adoption. And in this adoption, we get a choice! We are saved by grace through faith so no one can boast. Instead, we brag on God.
 - ✓ We are a "dysfunctional family." We're a family full of sinners. The miracle isn't that the church is made up of people who never hurt one another, disappoint one another, misunderstand one another or get on one another's nerves.
- Our witness isn't that we are the family that has it all together. The world doesn't need another group of people pretending they don't have problems.
- Our witness is that we are the family that refuses to stop loving one another. The world needs to see what grace does to people who have problems. Because Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."



Reflection

Go back and read Ephesians chapter 2. (Go ahead and read the entire chapter.)

What are key words or phrases that stand out to you? Why do you think those words stand out?

1. Where in your life are you still living like an outsider when Jesus has already invited you home?

What would it look like this week to live from your identity as a beloved child of God rather than trying to earn your place?

2. Who is the person in God's family you find hardest to love?

What might it look like to take one small step toward that person—not because they deserve it, but because you have been loved that way by Christ?

3. If our church's witness to the world is supposed to be our love for one another, what does my life currently say about the family of God?

What is one thing I could do this week to make God's family look a little more like the family Jesus intends it to be?

4. Who do you have in the family of God that you feel safe to talk to about the hard things in life?

5. Would you consider yourself a safe person in the family for others to share their struggles? If not, why not? How can you grow?