

Core Kingdom Value – Family

Luke 15:11-32, NIV.

Introduction

1. Over the past few weeks you have been challenged by God's instructions to His disciples concerning our **family** relationships.
2. **Today** we are going to look at **another dimension to family**, the kingdom of God, His church as a family.
3. A statement by Jesus about family that has always meant a lot to me.

Mark 10:29, 30, NIV. "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no-one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life."

4. We will begin with a **story**, a parable, as Jesus often did.

1. A Son Leaves a Family

1. Often called the parable of the prodigal but it is **really a story about his whole family**.
2. Do you know the story? Paraphrase
3. This is a story about the **kingdom of God**.

Who is the Father except God?

Who are the sons except the children of God in His kingdom?

3. We are a Kingdom Family

God is our Father – Consider just Matt 6 – the sermon on the mount.

Mt 6:1* "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your **Father** in heaven.

Mt 6:4* so that your giving may be in secret. Then your **Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mt 6:6* But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your **Father**, who is unseen. Then your **Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mt 6:8* Do not be like them, for your **Father** knows what you need before you ask him.

Mt 6:9* "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our **Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Mt 6:14* For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly **Father** will also forgive you.

Mt 6:15* But if you do not forgive men their sins, your **Father** will not forgive your sins.

Mt 6:18* so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your **Father**, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Mt 6:26* Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly **Father** feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Mt 6:32* For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly **Father** knows that you need them.

How does God become our Father?

1. By His creation of us – Every human being is a child of God in this sense.
2. By His recreation / adoption of us – As with the Prodigal.

*"13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons** of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **sonship**. And by him we cry, "Abba,*

Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are **God’s children.**”
Romans 8:13-16, NIV.

Disciples of Christ have become brothers and sisters to each other through this Father/Child relationship with God.

1. This is **very important to realize.** It changes the whole way you look at the kingdom of God.
2. We are **not siblings because** we went out and chose each other out of a “potential siblings” catalogue.
3. No each of one of us in different times, different circumstance but through the one Jesus were adopted into the family of God. We were **born again.**

*“3 In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is **born again.**” 4 “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is **born of water and the Spirit.**” John 3:3-5, NIV.*

3. Family Responsibilities

As you have seen, being in family involves a whole range of responsibilities and priveleges. I want today to focus on one dimension of our family relationship in the kingdom ie. our relationship as brothers and sisters to each other.

I loved being a kid. Every day was wonderful. Someone fed me, housed me, loved me, trained me, educated me, entertained me.

1. But when we grow up we realize that someone is not going to do that for us the rest of our lives. We now have family responsibilities.
2. It is the same in the kingdom family of God.

1. Truly love each other

“12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” John 15:12, NIV.

In this one section of scripture there is so much but let’s just focus on 2 things.

The Command – Love –

The How – Just like Jesus.

2. Care for and nurture each other

Galatians 6:1-10 “1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

- Someone in the family has a problem. What do you do? Gently help them.
- NOT ignore them, gossip about them, blast them or mock them.
- Why?

“2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”

- Because this is how Christ’s law is fulfilled. This is how you love your family.

*“3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 **for each one should carry his own load.** 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”*

- If you think you are above this, think again.

*“9 Let us not become **weary in doing good**, for at the proper time **we will reap a harvest** if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us **do good to all people**, especially to those who belong to the **family of believers.**” Galatians 6:1-10, NIV.*

- Family can wear you out and church family is like that :9
- God will take care of the checks and balances :9
- Do good for all, especially the family of God :10

3. Build Each Other Up

*“1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to **build him up.** 3 For **even Christ** did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”” Romans 15:1-3, NIV.*

*“11 Therefore **encourage** one another and **build each other up**, just as in fact you are doing.*

Here is how you encourage each other and build each other up.

12 Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15, NIV.

Conclusion

“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”” 2 Corinthians 6:18, NIV.