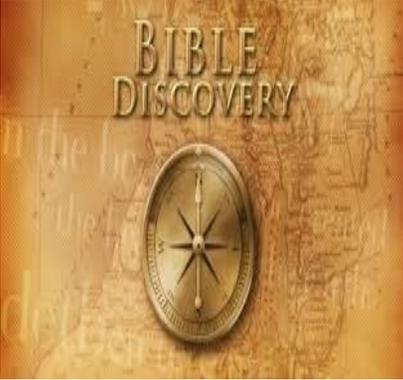


July 10, 2016

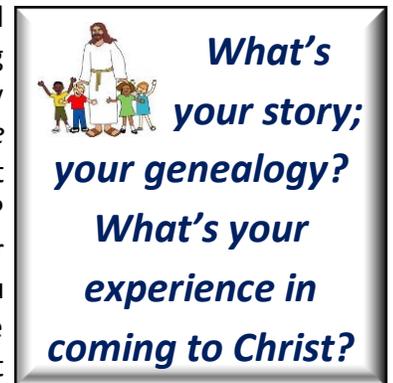
Matthew 12:46-50

## Genealogy as the Child of God

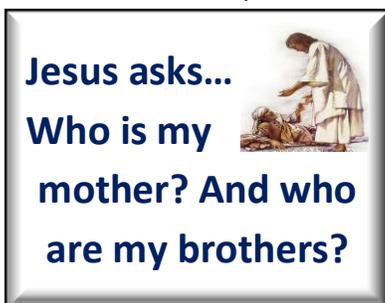


Your immediate family often holds the key to starting your family history. It used to be said, “Where there’s a will, there can be found a lawyer to contest it”. Today it’s more likely where there’s a will you’ll discover a genealogist! Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins are often what we consider if we dig into our genealogy. Of such research, Mark Twain reportedly quipped, “Get your facts first; then you can distort them as you please.” Starting with family history basics we’re expected to build knowledge of where we’ve come from – who we are by who we’re associated with through our blood-lines. Using records including birth certificates, records of marriage and death, even family letters, we establish dates and relationships down through the years to those who compose our family.

Yet as Christians there’s a different genealogy to our story. As a child of God we belong to God’s family. This hot potato for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church isn’t something we hear a lot of today. I think it’s because suggesting those who receive Christ’s sacrificial gift of salvation, becoming members of God’s family indicates it also excludes those who don’t. Our society’s more comfortable with everyone finding their own way to God; with a God who’s comfortable with us just as we are. Then what does God’s family genealogy look like? For me it was 1976 in Gagetown NB where I was attached to the 2 RCR and met Pastor Bill McLennan. He was a Chaplain attached to the unit and through ongoing conversations introduced me to Jesus on a personal level. I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and discovered what it was to be “born again” – to understand “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again” [John 3:4]. So you see, in that way, I’m really only 40 years old this year! What’s your story; your genealogy? What’s your experience in coming to Christ? Each one who claims Christ as their personal Saviour has the joy of a personal experience – a unique story. If you come from a Christian family and have seemingly always known Jesus, then quite possibly this seems like a strange question to ask. As for myself some of my earliest experiences were of trying to fit in with my biological family after receiving Christ. Ever try to evangelize in your own home? It doesn’t go over well.



If, like me, you’ve ever felt like your whole world was against you, you can at least empathize with some of the pain of Jesus’ calling: not only the religious leaders but his very own family doubted Him or at least misunderstood Him. Though both James and Jude, His half-brothers, came to faith after Jesus’ death and resurrection, leaving us the books of the Bible which bear their names, they never embraced Jesus’ mission while Jesus ministered on earth. Together with the remainder of Jesus’ immediate family they followed His wanderings and seemed perturbed by His attacks against the established order – particularly against the Pharisees. We can picture them outside, stomping their feet, waiting for Jesus to come out so they can calm Him



down. Jesus had said, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own house is a prophet without honour.” [Mark 6:4] Now family ties were paramount in His culture and being perceived as antifamily brought even more reproach than it does today. Jesus was isolated from family during His earthly ministry – or so it might seem depending on your definition of family. When told “His mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to Him Jesus asks, ‘Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?’”

In examining Jesus’ response, though I use “genealogy” of the child of God, in truth I’m better to suggest recognition of the covenant relationship God has established with humankind through His Son Jesus Christ. The Old Testament’s view of God’s covenant relationship was a *broken one*

because of our part in the equation. Yet God held firmly to His promise to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to David. The final covenant discussed in the Old Testament is the one that became our covenant. This covenant established in Christ is eternal – it cannot be broken. Though foreign to the mindset of westerners in society today, from the beginning it was God’s purpose to build a covenantal relationship through redemption in Jesus revealed first as early as Genesis 3. This covenant is the eternal agreement in which the Father appoints the Son, through the power of the Spirit, as Redeemer of His elect overcoming the evil one, overcoming the power of sin on our lives, overcoming the condemnation we so richly deserve.

It’s through this covenantal agreement, through the redemptive work of Christ, through the obedient practice of Jesus who placed the kingdom of God first just as He’s taught us to do -consistently following the Father’s will - that we discover who Jesus’ brother, sister or mother truly is. When we’ve acknowledged God as our Heavenly Father, His family becomes our family, and our allegiance to Him as Father comes before any earthly allegiances. Matthew Henry addresses this as he contends for our rightful response to the covenant gift of grace bestowed upon those who draw close to God in Christ, writing,

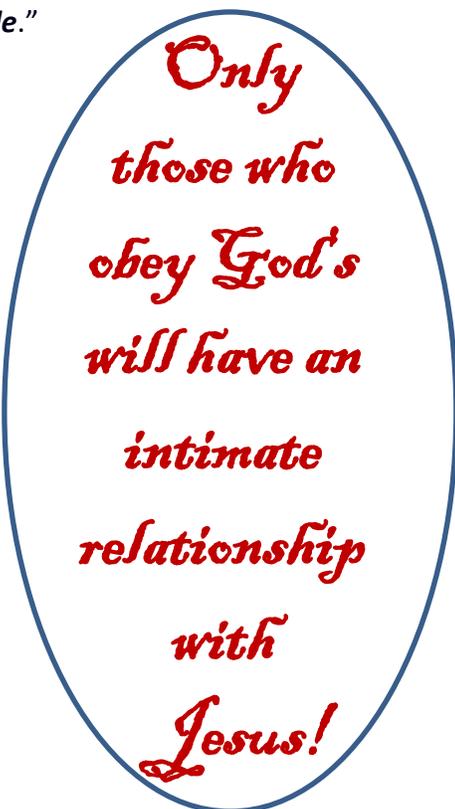
**“Let us cease from men, and cleave to Christ; let us look upon every Christian, in whatever condition of life, as the brother, sister, or mother of the Lord of glory; let us love, respect, and be kind to them, for His sake, and after His example.”**

From this we learn both the importance of obedience and the futility of depending on any other means of access to God save that of Jesus – our crucified, resurrected Saviour. Those who suppose they’ve some natural claim, some direct lineage, some birthright owing to parental faith, on the kingdom have no claim at all. Only those who obey God’s will have an intimate relationship with Jesus to depend on Him the way members of His family sought to do.

As Jesus stretches out His hand toward the disciples announcing, *“Here is my mother! Here are my brothers!”* He does so without seemingly relating anything elaborate; yet this short, impassioned speech in its great simplicity is perhaps one of the finest examples of divine sentiment laid out upon us as fallen humankind. What mercy! As Jesus pronounces, *“Anyone who does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother or sister or mother”*, it’s as if Jesus is saying, “I regard obedience to my Father – our God - so greatly above all others, that the relationship such devotion constitutes, the union it establishes, is a stronger tie than any crafted by the lineage of blood. In turn the love Jesus demonstrates with such tender and steady affection conscribes all who would cling to Him, and through Him draw to the Father for all eternity, so that we’re truly members of the family of God; brothers and sisters and mothers with Christ.

Such blessing’s never to be taken lightly. Such grace and mercy should lift our hearts and our faith to pursue goodness and love and joy and peace with God – and with one another. It’s a call by Jesus for nothing less than outright radical discipleship. Being elevated to family status over any ordinary rabbi-pupil, master-student relationship as a disciple demands total commitment in a most radical way. Such a call brings us into genealogy as a child of God not only giving family status but encompassing our whole life. Nothing’s more important to disciples of Jesus than Jesus Himself – not wife or husband, not children, not parents, not brothers & sisters. Our lives are to be prepared so that at the call of God we might leave all in our life, abandon such way of life as we’ve become accustomed to, and readily follow Christ!

The Apostle Paul says at Galatians 6:14 we’re *“to be crucified to the world and the world to (us)”*; we’re to lose our life for Christ’s sake. If we’re in the world, loving our life, going back to our old haunts, stirring up old embers, wallowing in our past, awakening old cravings, sights, smells, tastes, and sounds, we’ll not resist the tug of our emotions on our heart. Would we choose this life rather than being found in the genealogy of God as



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His beloved child? Pray it's not so! Only when we're able to see the glory all this gives to God, giving thanks to Him for willingly calling us from our wicked past into His holy family, providing means to be grafted into His eternal kingdom in Christ Jesus, and that through the cost of Calvary, our sins nailed to that cross, sacrificed together with Christ's broken body and shed blood, and raised to new life as God raised Jesus from the grave; only then can we understand the role it plays for His divine purposes and our salvation, and only then can we embrace all of it - thanking Him for welcoming us to His family and all in His wonderful, merciful grace. Only then will we ever

recognize our role in the genealogy of the child of God as a part of the family of God!

***If you have never enjoyed that intimate relationship*** to which I've been speaking today, don't wait any longer ~ not one of us any certainty to the opportunities before us to come into close ties with God. But the good news is that God is waiting for you to say yes to His great offer of forgiveness and accept His Son, Jesus the Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Go ahead and make today that day! Simply tell Him you agree with Him that you're a sinner – unable to save yourself and unworthy of His love but through His grace you accept His forgiveness. And give us a call our drop an email if you'd like to talk. We'll leave the light on for you.

*Blessings,  
Pastor Dave*

***Only when we're able to see the glory that all  
this gives to God... Can we understand the  
role it plays for His divine purposes and  
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