

Sermon- Being Church: Being the Household of God

Scripture:

Sunday, July 5, 2020

[Ephesians 2:19-22](#) ESV / 173 helpful votes

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the [foundation](#) of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

[Galatians 6:10](#) ESV / 136 helpful votes

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

To recap we are in a sermon series I started couple Sundays ago titled “Being Church” in which we are going to look at 5 metaphors describing church in the New Testament. We started with ... and last Sunday we looked at ... This Sunday we are looking at the church described in the book of Ephesians as the “household of God”. Eph 2:19 and 20 states, ***“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the [foundation](#) of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together”***. John 1:12-13 elaborates on this idea of household of God like this, ***“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”***.

In other words, just as you are physically born into the household of your earthly parents, you are born-again into God's household.

Eph 3:14-15 says, ***"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named"***. And in Romans 8:29 Paul says, ***"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."***

Now I listed these four verses because together they develop this idea of the relationships within the household of God. Let's take a deeper dive. The first thing I want you to see is that the head of the household of God is God the Father. Paul in Eph 3:14 and 15 talks about bowing his knees before God the Father. The next person in the house of God is God's son. Our Rom 8:29 passage talks about the Son of God, who is the first born of God. He is talking here about Jesus Christ. Then our Eph 2 passage builds this relationships out further when it says, ***"but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together"***. This passage talks about the first earthly people who were given the privilege of joining the household of God. Finally, our John 1 passage talks about you and me when it says, ***But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*** So you have this picture being painted of the household of God that starts with our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father has a Son Jesus Christ who is His spiritual first born not because Jesus starts existing when he was physically born. No because Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead to a new kind of existence that gives us a glimpse of the new world to come. Jesus Christ then gave the right for those who believed in Him to enter into God's household not as servants or slaves but as his spiritual brothers and sisters. The first people to experience this amazing privilege were the Apostles and prophets. And from that time on, generations

upon generations who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the **only way to salvation** have experienced what it means to be born a second time which comes along with both the right and honor of becoming part of the “household of God”.

This metaphor of the “household of God” is also more than just a metaphor. Because it is not that we are “like the children of God”. We **are the spiritual children on God**. And this works both at the universal church level and local church level. At the universal church level, we have God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son and everyone starting with the Apostles on down as part of God’s household. At the local level, we have God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son who is head of the church and our spiritual ancestors, the people who have lead us to Him spiritually. And we have our spiritual brothers and sisters who support us in our spiritual family in all kinds of ways.

In the early church, in the book of Acts chapter 2, this is what it looked like for the church to be a spiritual family. ***“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”***

This is a very rich passage and much more than we can digest today. The Acts 2 church also sets an extremely high bar that churches everywhere will fall short of. But let me share my own experience of church when I first came to the US, 20 years ago. You see at that time I was working for my company back in India and used to spend half my time in India while my wife and 19 month old daughter were in the US by themselves. In those days we did not have a car and had never experienced an American winter before. Our

only reference of winter in Mumbai, where we grew up, was temperatures dropping on an occasional night to 64F. But when we came to American we realized that the temperature used to fall like the mercury at the end was not in a bulb but a bottomless pit. Even so more than the cold of the Pittsburgh winter what I remember is the warmth of the church we had connected to. This was a church with mostly people from the Indian subcontinent and they accepted us, loved on us and did things for us that I would never expect from someone outside of family. For example when we experienced a health crisis and I was back in India, a retired nurse spend nights at home, taking care of everyone at home. When Sufi had emergency surgery, they kept our refrigerator stocked for a month. When Ahia needed to be looked after, they took her home and watched her for 3 nights in a row. When we needed rides they drove us everywhere we needed to go. That was when I understood for the first time the meaning of spiritual family. Spiritual family is family who will be there for you, love you unconditionally and go the extra mile, just you have a common spiritual Father and for no other reason. I had never experienced anything like that before and I was blown away. In fact so blown away that it became the primary reason why I was able to hear God's call to blow away my career in computers to be in full time ministry. That church may not have been an Acts 2 church but in my book it was pretty close. That is when I realized that spiritual family is family you can depend on. Spiritual family is where Christ's love overflows and where Christ's love overflows, that is the grandest home you can ever like in. So when you are inviting someone to church, you are inviting them to become part of the best kind of home anyone can have. This is being the "household of God" at the local level.

But it gets even better. Remember I said that the church is part of God's household at the universal level as well? Remember in 1 Cor 12:26 referring to the church as the body of Christ, it says, "***If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together***". This is true not just for your body parts but for your family as well right? If one person in your family suffers, everyone suffers as well. You

see this in the universal church. When you look at the global church, you see that many parts of the global church are experiencing persecution. The top 5 countries where it is most difficult to practice your faith are North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Pakistan. In fact according to Open Doors, the Ministry that tracks persecution, 215 million Christians or 1 out of every 12 Christians lives in a country that has high, very high or extreme levels of persecution. In India in the year 2014 was ranked 31 on the persecution index. When the present government took over India jumped from 31 to 15. Today, she sits at the 10th place. That is the biggest jump in persecution of any country on the list. When you know that your brothers and sisters around the world are suffering for their faith, how can you rest easy? You cannot but that is the pain of being connected in God's household. But God's people are not just suffering because of persecution right? People are suffering because of wars and famine as well. People are suffering because of gender discrimination, color of the skin, disease taboos and the list goes on. How can we rest easy when our brothers and sisters are suffering? When you are spiritually connected to the global household of God, then when one member suffers, be it persecution, discrimination or starvation, or anything else, then the whole household suffers right?

On the other hand, just this week I was reminded of an upside to being part of the global household of God as well. You see at our ISI national conference that was held this past week, one of our plenary speakers was an incredible Iranian church leader by the name of Sasan Tavassoli. He became a Christ follower at the young age of 16 from a Muslim family in circumstances that God engineered. He was taken out of Iran and sent to a Christian school in Portugal by his dad so that he would not have to be enlisted to join the army and fight the Iran-Iraq war. But the school in Portugal was run by an ISI couple. He was invited to their home and even lived with them for 8 months when this couple were at the time newly weds. This boy came to Christ at the time and went on to become an amazing Church leader, leading Iranians to Christ through radio and Satellite

broadcasts into Iran that has resulted in many many Iranians coming to Christ. But one of the things Sasan Tavassoli shared was that you Americans are now struggling with online church because of Covid and not very comfortable with it and don't really know what to make of online church. But he said that "online church" is the only kind of church that many in his world who live in persecution have ever known. And they are doing very well with it. They are growing in their faith and in numbers even. Thing about this. You may not have seen this on any headline but the Iranian church is the fastest growing community of Christ followers in the world today! So don't worry he told us. If we are in a new territory with online church, it is not new for the persecuted church and they could help us figure out how to adapt and thrive in this new medium.

Suddenly, it feels good to have a brother in Christ from a different part of the world to show us the way, isn't it? Suddenly it feels good to be a part of God's global household.

So remember, we are not such a social gathering but the household of God in our local community and across the entire globe. We are nothing less than brothers and sisters to each other. We have one heavenly Father and earthly spiritual parents. That means our church is a home overflowing with Christ's love. Church is the best kind of home there is. So let us enjoy the endless delights of our spiritual home and constantly invite others to experience it with us. Let us pray.