

Weekly Correspondence

From Pastor Emmanuel & Your Church Family

We Are God's Big Family

This article is the first in the series as we use Lent to reflect on who we are as a Church. The series, as we go through Lent, reminds us of the work of God through Jesus Christ.

The significance of Lent, therefore, resides in what God has already done through Christ.

A major piece of what Jesus came to do, as part of God's work, is to show us the Way to the Father (John 14:6). Through Him, God has revealed Himself to us while giving us access to Himself through Christ.

God reaching out to humankind was for the intention of bringing us all back to Him. God wants us back into God's family.

Read Mark 3:31-35,

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Before reflecting on the above scripture to discover what Jesus says about God's family, let us first understand the make-up of a human family.

The Understanding of Family

When we think of what family means, what comes to mind are parents, or guardians, and children.

In other words, for one to belong to a physical family, they need to be born, adopted, or fostered into that family.

To every family, therefore, there is a beginning, and there will be an end. Birth, adoption, and fostering are our beginning as members of a given family.

Families, as we know of them, and because they have a beginning and an end, are prone to breaking or failing.

Anything can break or alter human families.

God's family

God's family is the kind of family that transcends everything about our human families. While anything can break or alter people's families, God's family is always unbreakable.

What makes God's family unbreakable is the fact it starts with God through Christ.

Let's now see how one can become a member of God's family. We will use Mark 3:31-35 as our foundation. Here is how it reads:

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

If you read the above scripture without taking into consideration the mission Jesus had to accomplish when He was here on earth (John 6:38), you may think He was rude to his mother and siblings.

Also, let me point out that this story is also in Matthew 12:50 and Luke 8:21.

Doing God's will makes us members of God's family

Yes, Jesus is clear in His response to his human family saying: "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

There are three truths that come out of that.

First, choosing to receive Jesus and believe in Him makes us children of God (see John 1:12).

You become a child of God once you invite Jesus into your life as your personal Lord and Savior.

That's exactly how we are born into God's family. We show to the world that we are members of God's family through our baptism (born of water and Spirit; see John 3:5).

That's the beginning of our journey with Christ, but not the beginning of God's family, which is as timeless as God is.

Second, anyone can become a member of God's family.

There is a scripture I love, which, to my belief, says it all:

I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. Acts 10:34-35.

Yes, anyone, and from anywhere, can join God's family. If they choose to believe and live in the fear of God, God welcomes them into His family.

You may not belong to any local Church, and still are a member of God's big family. Don't get me wrong here. What matters the most is if you have already been born into God's family.

Third, God unites all members of the family through Jesus Christ.

Here's a prayer Jesus said just a few days before his death and crucifixion,

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:21-22.

Notice two things. Jesus isn't only praying for the ones that have followed Him during the three years of His public ministry.

He is praying for those who will join this family later. And how?

Because they will have heard the message members of God's family will share with them. That points out some expectation that comes with being a member of God's family: "we all have to share the story."

As a member of God's family, God expects you to talk about your family and share the story that has changed your life as well as has allowed you to claim God as your Father.

Bringing it together

You and I have a place in God's family. Actually, every human being does. Technically, through baptism by water and the Spirit, we are born into this family. Our baptism is how we show we have chosen to believe in Jesus and receive Him as our personal Lord and Savior. Once members of God's family, we live out and share the story that has made us children and members of God's big family.

About

You are receiving a written reflection from Pastor Emmanuel, based on his message from Sunday worship. This correspondence contains Pastor's reflection from his blog: *We Are God's Big Family*. Pastor also publishes his messages as reflections on his blog, www.emmanuelnaweji.com. The other document included in this envelop is the Sunday bulletin. While we do not print bulletins for worship, we would like you to have a printed so that you know what is happening in the life of our Church.