



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Church: Church as Family

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Ephesians 2:18-20

For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also **members of his household**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Ephesians 2:18-20 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

In this part of scripture, Paul is highlighting that in the grand scheme of things God wants to join the Jews and Gentiles together. There were many layers of deep tensions between these people, along lines of ethnicity, religion and economics. Paul is reminding them that it was Jesus Christ who joined them together where they previously didn't know each other. They were no longer foreigners or strangers to God, or to each other, but were to be brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Biblical times when people were introduced, they were introduced with their family. The Bible is fundamentally family oriented, showing us that we belong to one another. It is more communal oriented than it is individually oriented. You will never see the words "Jesus is my personal savior" in the Bible, instead He teaches us to pray "Our Father in Heaven." Paul's letters say "our Lord" 53 times and "my Lord" only 1 time. The world came into existence through the love of the family – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *The Gospel is a sledgehammer that tears down walls that separate us.*

The church is not an event, a location, a product or an experience. The church is the family of God.

As often is the case within the church, we can live as foreigners and strangers towards one another. Although we live in close proximity to one another, we still see others as strangers or foreigners. For some of us this can take place within our own homes, under the same roof with our families, treating each other as foreigners and strangers. The irony and challenge during this pandemic is understanding that proximity doesn't mean intimacy.

The world needs us to be more than foreigners and strangers - it is longing for human connection. We need to be the family of God because of what Christ has done. This is good news for a world caught up in loneliness, divided by political hostility and racial injustice. It is possible for you to find this connection in the family of Christ.

Jesus gathered disciples who on social, political and economic levels had nothing in common. Matthew was a tax collector and Simon was a tax protester. Matthew collected revenue for the Romans, Simon was rebel against the Romans. By joining others together like Matthew and Simon, Jesus showed us what was possible with God.

God's family is open to everyone. God accepts you with all your sins, additions and problems. Neither your past nor present keeps you from being welcomed into the family of God. There is spaciousness in the family of God, and there is always love for the broken. The world needs the church to be the best demonstration of God.

How are we to live out this reality?

- Life is shared. We share our hopes and hurts and care for one another. It is so easy for people to get lost, preferring to be anonymous. To be in the family of Jesus means that you are moving along a spectrum where you are known by others and you come to know others.
- Conflict is not the last word. To be in the family of Jesus means it is normal to not agree on everything and have conflict from time to time, but conflict doesn't have to have the last word.
- Carry each other to God. To be in the family of Jesus means that our lives are to be marked by mercy, grace, forgiveness and intercession for one another.

The world needs the church to show what it looks like to be in the family of God.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas begins a new summer sermon series Church: Being a Community of Jesus Followers. Today Pastor Rich's sermon focuses on the church as a family, talking about what it means that the church is a family and how we are to live out this reality in our lives.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, what type of community did you experience? Did you feel as though you were part of the family or did you feel more like a foreigner or stranger? How did this shape and form who you are today and how you feel being part of a family?
3. To be in the family of Jesus means that life is to be shared, conflict does not have the last word and we are to carry each other. Are you known and do you know others? Are you able to disagree and not have that be the last word? Are you able to offer those around you grace and forgiveness?
4. Not everyone has the same relationship with their family. Some of us are estranged from our family because it was a source of irritation, constant conflict or abuse. If this was your experience, what feelings come up for you when you hear the word "family?" Can you find time this week to be with God and process those feelings?
5. How does it feel to know that God loves and accepts you into His family no matter your sins, addictions, past or present?