We Are Family
Luke 8:19-21
Pastor Brad Bigney

I. Your Church Family is the Only Family that's Going to Last Forever

Luke 8:21 "…My mother and brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

As you read all of your Bible, you'll see a shift in emphasis from the biological family to the family of God as you move from the Old Testament into the New Testament.

As wonderful as marriage is, it was always meant to depict something greater and better—the relationship of Jesus as our bridegroom and the family of God as His bride.

> "Marriage and family are temporary for this age; the church is forever. I am declaring the radical biblical truth that being in a human family is no sign of eternal blessing, but being in God's family means being eternally blessed. Relationships based on family are temporary. Relationships based on union with Christ are eternal. Marriage is a temporary institution, but what it stands for lasts forever."
>
> ~ John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*

II. Your Church Family is Filled with Sinners Who Still Sin in Surprising and Shocking Ways

We need to be prepared to run into sin right here in the family of God, and know how to respond when it happens.

We're sinners saved by grace who have been given a new identity in Christ—but on this side of heaven, our sin will show up in shocking and surprising ways to ourselves and to those around us, especially those closest to us.

III. Your Church Family is a Place to Experience Grace and Learn How to Love

A. God Calls Us to Be Channels of Grace and Love in Each Other's Lives

See 1 Peter 4:7-11

In verse 8, Peter uses the word "Agape" twice, then ramps it up by adding "earnestly" or "fervently" which is the Greek word "Ektiene." This means to stretch out or to strain, like a horse in full gallop.

In other words, my first thought should be to take my stallion of love, gallop across that hurtful moment and cover it with love! That's how he calls us to love each other!

B. God Calls Us to Love Each Other Deeply Even When You Don't Feel Like It

See Romans 12:9-18

Romans 12:9-10 "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil. Hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."

Three of the four words for "love" are packed into these two verses:

"Love" in verse 9 is the word "Agape" which is a non-sexual affection for the good of someone else—especially characterized by a willingness to give up your own rights or privileges.

The first "love" in verse 10 is the English translation for the Greek word "Philostorge" that referred to the family love between parents and children.

"With brotherly love" in verse 10 is our English translation for the Greek word "Philadelphia" that referred to natural affection you see between siblings in the same biological family.

Jesus said the greatest apologetic for the family of God that will get the world's attention is how we love each other.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

> "There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable...The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations [perturbed or agitated] is Hell." ~ C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

C. God Calls Us to Forgive Each Other Continually Because of How He's Forgiven Us

Colossians 3:12-14 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

When forgiveness becomes optional, relationships become fragile and disposable, because you can't keep love alive without forgiveness!

When you look at the cross, you see both love and forgiveness!

Luke 23:34 "…Father, forgive them…"

> "I am convinced that the most subtle temptation of our lives is not this or that obvious or gross thing but the desire to be normal. Jesus calls us to lives that are not normal. It is not the normal life of having rights, of doing what we want to do, of building up our own prosperity, or being the person we want to be…When we follow Christ's example, we don't get normal; we get Him…Every follower of Christ should have at least one situation in his or her life where he or she is ridiculously, absurdly, irrationally giving himself or herself away…don't be normal. Be a Christian." ~ Joseph Ryan, *That You May Believe (Studies in the Gospel of John)*