



In Christ, I Am...Family!

Main Truth

Through Jesus Christ we are made members of God's own family.

Introduction

In August of 2006 my mother and I flew to the island nation of Haiti to bring home my two and three year old sons. Our flight represented the culmination of two years of paperwork, caseworkers, emails, and money, prayers, tears, translators and plane tickets. Two years prior when I held a then 14-month-old baby boy and knew in my heart that he was my son, I never would have imagined the stress, strain and sacrifice necessary to bring he and his brother home.

It was a Friday afternoon as mom and I walked up the C concourse carrying my boys at Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix, Arizona. After a week of sleepless nights, hurricanes and roving voodoo bands—we were home. For the first time in two years my family would be whole.

Waiting at the gate was my wife, my dad, and more than 20 of the extended members of our church family. A family made of many different people, from different backgrounds and unique journeys of faith. They were there to celebrate the homecoming of these two precious boys. Boys who previously had no family, no community, no story of their own. There were balloons, banners, streamers, and cameras everywhere. For the next ten minutes, that gate turned into our sanctuary as we praised God for His amazing faithfulness. My mom began singing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the rest of us joined in.

In that moment we were a holy image of God's family. A family drawn from different journeys and histories, but with a common unifying future.

Reflect

- What are the words/images that come to mind when you think of family?
- How has your definition of family been molded and shaped by your experiences?
- What role does family play in your life?

Scripture

Ephesians 2:19–22 (New Living Translation)

¹⁹So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰We are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. ²¹We who believe are carefully joined together, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. ²²Through him you Gentiles are also joined together as part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Exercise

Give everyone a plain white sheet of paper and a handful of crayons. Without using words, depict the Ephesians passage with images. Share your creations with the group.

For Discussion

What leaps out to me as I read this passage is that over and over again Paul uses the present tense. It is not about what we will become “someday”, or who we might be “in the future.” He says over and over again that we “ARE.”

You are – no longer a stranger

You are – a citizen of God's Kingdom

You are – a holy person

You are – a member of God's family

You are – His house

You are – being carefully joined together

You are – becoming a holy temple

You are – joined together by His Spirit

We do not need to wait for any of this. We do not need to strive for any of this. All of it IS NOW.

- How does this realization affect your connection to God?
- What gets in your way of realizing these truths?
- How can we help each other live in the “now” of what Jesus has done for us?

Going Deeper

Write the eight “You are” statements on separate index cards. For the next eight days put a new card each day somewhere visible that will remind you to ask God to make this truth a reality in your life. After the eight days, share your experience with the group.