

We Are Family
The Only Family that Lasts Forever!
Luke 8:4-21

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Feb. 26, 2017

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 the Bible you'll see a shift in emphasis from the biological family to the family of God as you move from the Old Testament and into the New.

II. Right Now this Forever Family of God is Made Up of Sinners Who are Already Called Saints But Their Sin Keeps Showing Up in Some Really Painful Ways

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

Until you're gripped by the fact the church is the only family that's going to last forever, you're going to struggle to understand the level of investment, commitment and emotion that God calls us to develop in our relationships with each other in the family of God.

III. What Does Being a Forever Family Look Like This Side of Heaven?

Read **Romans 12:9-16**.

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

Romans 12:9-10 "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."

In v. 9 we're told to love each other with agape love and that is the crowning word for love that is used to describe the way God loves us.

In v. 10 he presses us with two more Greek words for love: 'philstorge' which is love seen between parents and children, and 'philadelphia' which is a brotherly love or natural affection between siblings.

We're told to love this way because we're family right now and forever!

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

B. He Calls Us to Rejoice with Each Other and Sorrow with Each Other as If the Joys and Sorrows were Your Own

Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

When you're in the family of God your joys are multiplied, but so are your sorrows.

Colossians 3:12-14 “¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

C. You Forgive Each Other as If You've Been Forgiven All of Your Own Sins – Because You Have!

This is not optional, because if we don't practice what **Col. 3:12-14** says, then there won't be any love left. Forgiveness is what keeps love alive and allows it to thrive!

Since we are family, it feels awful to leave things awkward and broken in our relationships or to pretend nothing is wrong. God doesn't call us to pretend to love each other, but He calls us to humble ourselves and forgive each other so that we can go on truly loving each other intensely.

D. We Speak the Truth in Love to Each Other Because Our Own Spiritual Growth is Not the Only Growth We Care About

Ephesians 4:15 “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.”

Ephesians 4:25 “Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”

1. Real love moves you to speak directly to another believer instead of talking about them to others

I Peter 4:8 “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”

2. Real love puts a check in your spirit so that you assume the best about others and try to cover it with love before you ever say anything

We're to cover those hurtful moments with love! Yes, love calls us to go, but only when we see a pattern of sin.

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

These verses capture how you can keep on loving, risking, giving, rejoicing, weeping and forgiving as you interact with the family of God.

You have to be convinced that you are not just forgiven and tolerated by God, but you are dearly loved and cherished. That frees you up to risk loving others deeply, because you're no longer in doubt as to whether or not you yourself are loved.