

Intro.

- A. Have you ever considered how difficult it must have been to convey the idea of *the church* early in 1st C?
 - 1. Not many understood that Jesus was laying the foundation for the church (**Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11**).
 - 2. Just what was *the church* anyway. (Snap shots: *body, kgdm., bldg., family* (**Eph. 3:14-15**))
 - 3. H.S. used many diff. *pictures* of the church to help us understand the relationship between God & His people, & some of the responsibilities involved in that relationship!
- B. Of all the symbolism used in N. T. to describe the church, **the family** concept is most often used.
 - 1. Almighty Jehovah God = *Father*; Jesus the Christ = *the Son*.
 - 2. The church is described as the *bride of Christ*, **2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:9**
 - 3. Members = *children of God*, & we enter the family thru the *new birth* (**Jn. 3:3-5**), & as “*adopted*” *Children*, we can call God, *Father* (**Rom. 8:15**)
 - 4. Family members compose the *household of God*, (**1 Tim. 3:15**)
- C. There are some interesting lessons to be noted & applied in the lives of every Christian as we study re: God’s family, the church.
 - 1. Families share a common, yet unique name.
 - 2. They participate in each other’s joys & heartaches.
 - 3. They share in each other’s interest & goals, working together for the common good of the family.
 - 4. They spend time with each other now, & anticipate joyful reunions later on.
 - 5. They will also share an inheritance when death comes.

Discuss.

I. THE FAMILY NAME.

- A. One of the most obvious ways to distinguish your family f/ others = the family name.
 - 1. In **Eph. 3:14-15** we are reminded that our heavenly Father gives us our name.
 - a. **Isa. 56:5 & 62:2** – God said His children would be given a new name.
 - b. In **Ac. 11:26**, those who followed Christ were called *Christians*. (see also **Ac. 26:28; 1 Pt. 4:16**)
 - 2. We must live carefully so that God’s name is glorified, & not blasphemed, **Js. 2:7**
- B. Each of our actions should be *in the name of the Lord*. **Col. 3:17**
 - 1. The family name also speaks of authority. (*Ex. – open in the name of the law*)
 - 2. **Mt. 28:18** – Jesus had been authorized by heaven to give commands.
 - 3. He, in turn, said that the apostle’s words would be authoritative, **Mt. 16:19**
 - 4. That family name also obligates us to make sure our actions are complimentary of our Father’s will.
 - a. Prov. = inspired book of wise sayings from a father to his son. **Prov. 23:24**
 - b. The wise son listens to his father’s instructions, & obeys---whereby the father’s name = glorified.\
 - c. The spiritual application of this is seen in **Mt. 7:24-27**

II. THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE.

- A. In the family, the God-give responsibility of headship resides in the father.
 - 1. **1 Cor. 11:3** - *the head of the woman is the man*; **Eph. 5:23** – *the husband = the head of the wife...*
 - 2. If husband abdicates his position as head, that role being assumed by wife or children, home = weaknd.
 - 3. If -- wife usurps the position of her husband in the family, she weakens the foundation of the household
 - 4. If the children are disobedient to their father, we find a troubled house.
- B. The parallel is pretty obvious in the church, the family of God.
 - 1. Christ = the head of the church, **Eph. 5:23**
 - 2. We are to be subject to his will in our lives, (c. **Mt. 7:21**)
 - 3. There is not a single area of our life in which we should be at liberty to ignore His principles & precepts
- C. **The ideal--** each member of a family try to the best of their ability to make the family as strong as possible
 - 1. Our aim in - church is to be *good & faithful servants* (**Mt. 25:21f**), though never = perfect, **Rm.3:23**
 - 2. The church is strong when all members are sincerely *trying to do the best they possibly can*.
 - 3. You can anticipate the problems whenever 1 or more grow *selfish, demanding, self-centered, unfeeling, lazy, irresponsible or indifferent* to the welfare of the family unit, the church congregation.

III. WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD SHARE IN COMMON: (see **Tit. 1:1-4**)

- A. A common greeting: the *holy kiss* as *brethren*. (typical greeting of the land of Palestine)
 - 1. The typical greeting of God's family: *Grace & mercy & peace from God the Father...*
 - 2. This greeting is in Rom., Cor., Eph. Phil., Col. Thess., Phile. Tim., Tit., (Rev.)
 - a. Grace = that undeserved favor extended by a loving Father that is found in forgiveness & reconciliation among the children of God.
 - b. Mercy = when the Father does not give rebellious children what they deserve.
 - c. Peace = to the Jew was → security, safety & prosperity;
To Christians, peace = tranquil state of the soul which is assured of salva. in Christ.
- B. A common message, (proclaimed by God to be published thru out the world). **Vs 3** (c. **2 Tm. 2:2**)
- C. A common faith, **vs 4** (which lives w/ knowledge -- **Rom. 10:17 & Rom. 1:16-17**)
- D. A common Master **vs 1** (we listen to Him, & obey His words)
 - 1. He = worthy: *honest, eternal, interested & He has communicated to us.* **2 Pt. 2:16**
 - 2. Members of God's family = servants =>voluntarily (**Rom. 6:16**) owned by Him, body & soul,. \\
- E. A common goal = expectation (hope) of eternal life. **vs 2.** (**Col. 1:23, 27**; He = our hope, **1 Tm. 1:1**)

IV. HOW GOD'S FAMILY SHOULD BEHAVE ITSELF.

- A. We should love one another, **1 Jn. 4:20f**
 - 1. *not just in word or in tongue, but in deed & in truth,* **1 Jn. 3:18** helpless.
 - 2. *We ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,* **Rom.15:1** we should help folks when they are hurting & \\
 - 3. We work at helping each other overcome faults that we have fallen victim to, **Gal. 6:1-2**
- B. We will work cooperatively with each other, **1 Cor. 12:12-27**
 - 1. This cooperation & mutual support is not just when we gather in assembly, but always.
 - 2. There is a daily involvement in the lives of family members, **Ac. 2:44-46**
- C. We will certainly be forgiving of one another, **Col. 3:13**
 - 1. We cannot afford to involve ourselves in bickering, criticizing & back-biting, (**Gal. 5:15**)
 - 2. Togetherness with Christians has the opposite effect as assoc. w/ evil companions (c. **1 Cor. 15:33**)

Concl.

- A. God's family = that unit of all who...
 - 1. listen to the instruction of the heavenly Father, **Rom. 10:17**
 - 2. believe what God has said in the Bible, **Rom. 1:16**
 - 3. repented of their sins, **Ac. 26:19-20**
 - 4. confess their faith in Christ, **Rom. 10:9**
 - 5. who have been born again (**Jn. 3:5**), baptized for the remission of their sins, **Ac. 2:38**
 - 6. & continue faithfully serving God, **Mt. 5:16 & 1 Cor. 15:58**
- B. It is go to know that God wants to adopt you into His family.
 - 1. Any sacrifice you may have to make will certainly be worth it, **Phil. 3:8**
 - 2. Not only will you reap what you sow, but you will reap so much more, c. **Mt. 19:29**
 - 3. You've got so much to gain by becoming a part of the gtest. family you will ever know, will you come right now in obedience to the gospel of Christ.