

# Part of God's Family

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Date: 01 September 2024

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     What a great song. If you have a Bible with you, we're going to be looking at John's Gospel, first chapter. If you don't, there's Bibles in the pews, and I'm going to read out just from verse 9 to verse 13.

Last week we finished a summer series on the attributes of God, and we were going to maybe start back in Exodus this morning, but I decided it would maybe be good to have just a week to breathe, and so this is the week to breathe.

Next week, what you could have had, here's the prize you could have had. Next week we're going to be covering about three chapters of Exodus, and it's all law, but it's wonderful. It's fantastic. But this morning we're just going to be looking at John's prologue, and we're going to be thinking about what it is to be part of the family of God.

How does that happen? Who can be part of the body, the family, and how does that happen? And so let me read from John 1, verse 9 to 13.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

[ 1 : 4 2 ]     He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Amen. This is God's Word, we pray He blesses it. Well, this past week, earlier on in the week, me and Jen stood outside the school gates.

Ezra, our youngest, just started primary one the other week. And we stood outside the school gates, and we were watching them going in and reflecting on how Levi was when he first went to primary school, and the nerves of that, he was the first one to go.

And we were just watching Ezra, and we looked, and I think, Jen, you turned and said something like, He's getting on so great, isn't he? Look how great he's got on with starting primary one.

And there was a wee thought that I had to myself. It's something that every parent that's gone ahead of you says this, every grandparent or every other person says, No two are the same.

[ 3 : 0 7 ]     Is that not true? And I, you know, proudly looked on and thought, That's amazing. No two are the same. And one of the difficult things with this basic truth is that it becomes very easy to compare.

You ever compare yourself with others? You ever compare someone else with someone else? No two are the same. It becomes very easy to compare. Why can't you do that?

Why can't you be more like your brother, or this or that? And so, I thought about this scenario, right, where you're perhaps saying to your children, You know, come on, you should know this by now, or this or that.

Are you giving them into trouble for something? Are you trying to teach them something? Are you getting frustrated that they have not yet learned to do this thing? But this younger one seems to have got it fine.

Or whatever the scenario is. And I imagine that you were in that situation, And your child, Their response to this frustration that you have, Their response was, Well, I mustn't be part of the family.

[ 4 : 25 ] If I can't do this or I don't do that, Then I don't feel like I'm part of the family. How heartbroken would you be if that's how they felt? And I thought about this.

And I thought to myself, These things are not what makes you part of the family. You know, when you learn how to do this, Or how you get on with this, Or how your behavior is here and there.

These things are not what makes you a part of the family. You're a part of the family because you have been born into this family. Simple as that. Nothing that you do is going to make you not a part of this family.

And I thought about this with my boys. How heartbreaking it would be if that's how they felt. And just thinking, No, no, no, no. You are part of this family.

Regardless of what you do or don't do. Full stop. And if you belong to this family, Then you're never going to be able to misbehave your way out of this family.

[ 5 : 27 ] And another child, As good as they might be, Another child from another family Is never going to behave their self into this family.

Because they're not born in it. They might be better than you. They might behave better than you at some point in time. But that doesn't make them part of the family. And you not a part of the family.

Does that make sense? You see, Our children are part of the family Because they were born into the family. Nothing's going to change that. And any children outside who might be good Doesn't make them part of the family.

No matter how good they are, Doesn't make them part of the family. You're either born into the family Or you're not born into the family. Now, we will talk about adoption later. But it's simply to say That the way into the family Is to be born into the family.

And this is how it is with the church family. You see the family of Jesus. Because our behaviors and our actions, Yeah, they should reflect. They should reflect the family values.

[ 6 : 33 ] They should reflect who we are And the family that we belong to. But our mistakes that we make And the timescale that it takes for us to mature Does not determine whether we are part of the family or not.

Like earthly families, People are born into the family of God. And this is what John is saying in the prologue. The difference is, With the family of God, You are born through faith.

Not in the same way humans are. Not by the will of flesh. Not by the will of man. But of God. And so John says, The true light which gives light to everyone Was coming into the world.

He was in the world. And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. And he came to his own, But his own people didn't receive him.

But, To all who did receive him. What does it mean to receive him? To believe in his name. He gave the right For them to become Children of God.

[ 7 : 40 ] Not born by the Blood or will of flesh Or the will of man. But of God. Those who received him, Who believed in his name, Were born of God through faith.

And firstly, That little section, Firstly, It talks about Who Jesus is. Jesus is the true light, Which gives light to everyone. He is the one Who the world was made through.

He came into the world. He became flesh. And then secondly, It talks about The people who received him. People who believe in his name.

They become Children of God. He became flesh So that we could become Children of God. Not born the way humans are, But born of God through faith.

Now John started His gospel by telling us Of the one who was in the beginning. Who was with God And who was God. All things were made through him.

[ 8 : 40 ] In him, Verse 4, Was life. And that life was the light of men. He's the life and light of mankind.

And then John tells us That this person Who was in the beginning, Who was with God And who was God And who all things were created through, This person was coming into the world. Later, He describes What he saw Because John was there.

He witnessed this person Coming into the world. And he says it this way. He says, The word became flesh And dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory.

Glory as of the only Son From the Father. He was full Of grace And truth. That's what he saw When he saw Jesus, This person Who came into the world.

John was there. He witnessed the true light Coming into the world. And he dwelt with him. He knew the true light By the name of Jesus. And he spent three years Dwelling with him. And when he spent time With Jesus personally, And when he witnessed How Jesus was With other people, The things that he said and did, John said, It was like seeing God in person.

[ 9 : 51 ] It was like seeing glory As of the only Son From the Father. It's like seeing a person Who is full to the brim Of grace and truth. As John puts these things Down in paper, He wants people to know That Jesus Is both the long-awaited Messiah And nothing less Than the Son of God.

And he got this amazing privilege. Can you imagine Of being there And witnessing This coming into the world? He saw How Jesus Was the true light Who came into the world.

He saw How Jesus was the creator By the things that he did. He saw That he was The eternal Son of God. Yet he also saw How Jesus As the true light Was not received.

He saw His own kinsmen Reject him. He saw In John chapter 3 Describes it By saying that people Loved the darkness Instead of light.

But some did receive Jesus. They believed in his name. They believed in who he was. And at the end of John's book He says the purpose That he's writing all of this Is so that you might believe In who Jesus is.

[ 10 : 58 ] And in him Have life In his name. That he is the Messiah The Christ The Son of God. And that by believing in him You might have life In his name.

To receive Jesus To believe in his name. And so this is how a person Is born into the family of God. You never ever Behave your way Into the family of God.

You see Believing in the true light Who came into the world. Believing in the one Who all things were made through. Believing in the one Who is the source of all life. Believing in the one Who John describes as The Lamb of God Who takes away The sin of the world.

Believing that Jesus Is the Son of God Who came into the world To make the unseen God known. You see one funny word That Ezra uses just now.

Kids latch onto words And they use them in funny ways. And a word that Ezra is using I don't know where he heard it. It's not a complicated word. But he's just He's using it all the time.

[ 12 : 02 ] And it's a word Somehow. He'll just put it in front of He'll just be telling us something And he'll say Somehow. That's not Somehow. In verse 18 Look at this No one Has ever seen God.

No one. The only God Who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. John says that Somehow Somehow God Is revealed as both Father and Son.

That while no one Could ever see God Or comprehend Him Because the Son Has always been with the Father He knows and sees His Father He could come into the world And reveal Him to us That we might know The unseen God.

We will only know The unseen God If we receive the Son Who came into the world To make Him known. I like that little word Somehow.

You see with God There is always a somehow. There's a song Probably won't know it That uses that word In a wonderful way And it has a wee line That says this I know I don't deserve This kind of love Somehow This kind of love Is who you are.

[ 13 : 23 ] It's not just what He has It's who He is. And so we've just spent A summer Learning about who God is And one of the things That's always important To remember Is that God is All that He has.

He's not made up of parts It's not like God has love And God has mercy. God is love. And I like this Little chorus That says This kind of love I know I don't deserve it But somehow This kind of love Is who you are.

What kind of love is that? Well it's the kind of love That leaves the Father's side To come into a broken world. It's the kind of love That would go to a cruel cross For you and me.

It's the kind of love That would allow itself To be broken So that we could be restored. It's the kind of love That compels the Son of God In all His glory To become flesh So that we can become Part of His family.

Somehow. Isn't that amazing? You see if you are someone Who has received Jesus And believed in His name Is this not exciting?

[ 14 : 37 ] Somehow Somehow You have become Part of the family of God You have been born Into the family of God Through faith Somehow And so there's these four Wonderful pictures I wonder Stephen If you could pop this up There's these four Wonderful pictures That the New Testament Gives To show us What that is like Okay And you'll see I've made a wee window And there's four panes And it can be A little bit blurry But that's what you see Through glass The first picture Is of a kingdom The second of a flock The third of a family And the fourth of a body And so this is to show us Who Jesus is Jesus is a king He's a good shepherd He's a true son Of God And he is the head Of a body That was broken for us And in a kingdom

We are his citizens If we are part of his family In a flock We are his sheep And he is our good shepherd In his family We have this amazing privilege Of being adopted Into the family of God Because of the true son And in his body He is the head And we are The parts that make up the body And this is trying These pictures From the New Testament Are trying to show us How the followers of Jesus Belong and live And grow together So if you belong to Jesus Then you belong In these four ways You are part of the family You are not part of the family Because you're a good person You are part of the family Because you received Jesus And he gave you the right To become children of God Born through faith Now you might be a very good person

But that doesn't make you part of the family We could never be good enough To be part of the family That's not how one It's like other children In a natural family They're never ever going to be good enough To be part of the family And if anyone ever Has adopted a person Have they adopted them Because they've been good enough?

No It's not about being good enough Now if you're part of the family Then you're a citizen Of his kingdom You're a sheep in his flock You're a son or daughter And you're a part of his body Now Here is the truth You might be a very good And upstanding citizen You might also be A struggling citizen You might be a very docile sheep You might also be A sheep that is always kicking And getting stuck in ditches You might be a very obedient son Or daughter You might be disobedient And rebellious You might be a very healthy And active part of the body Building up the body You might also be like An inflamed organ Or a broken limb Causing pain to the body But the point is If you are in You're in Simple as that Remember it's like children

Something they do well Sometimes they do well Other times they struggle But that's not what makes them Part of the family As Christians Sometimes we do well Sometimes we don't That doesn't make us Not a part of the family Just like our children Are not Not a part of the family Because of how they behave Now John wrote That to be part of the family Is not because of your performance Or your behavior And he knew that Because he was one of Jesus' closest disciples And Jesus gave him a nickname Does anyone remember What that nickname is?

[ 18 : 33 ] Him and his brother Boanerges Sons of Thunder And he gave them the nickname Because of something him And his brother did That wasn't very good He wanted to call down Fire from heaven To destroy a people But sometimes that can be used For good That passion And so he knew What it was like It wasn't about his performance His performance Never brought acceptance If you have a child Does their performance Is their performance The thing that brings them acceptance?

No So he knows this He knows that Jesus doesn't just want John's behavior He wants his heart Jesus doesn't want Our performance He wants our trust And by trusting in Jesus By believing in him And by loving him As our king And our shepherd And our savior Trusting him to forgive us And save us And give us life That is what makes A person part of the family That's how a person Is born into it By believing In who he is Not the way humans are born But born by faith In Jesus By believing in his name And when we are part of the family We will be transformed Our hearts will turn toward God Rather than when it was away from God We will want to live like Jesus Even if we don't always get it right Like that guy on the horse And he gets flung off And he says Well I need to try again We strive together

To be the citizens That we should be Loving our king And living out the values Of this kingdom We strive together To be the sheep That we should be Listening to the voice Of our shepherd And not the voices Of others Who will lead us astray Not running into ditches We strive together To be obedient children Being humble and kind Watching Jesus The true son To learn how to be True children of God And we strive together To be a healthy part of the body So that we can build One another up And not tear One another down You see Through Jesus God is trying to show the world Who he is And also Who we are made to be And one of the reasons I think that Jesus Was the most influential The most gracious And loving human The most impactful human That has ever lived Is because he was actually The most human human Who has ever lived

You see Sin makes us subhuman Less than what we are made to be We have all been there There may be guilty pleasures But the pleasures are fleeting And the price is costly The damage is devastating Sin dehumanizes us And you just need to look At the world to see that It destroys us You just need to look At a newspaper to see that We are made to be with God And without sin And yet we have become With sin And without God That's what happened to humanity And it's never going to end well Because God is the source Of life and light The creator of the whole universe The father of every good gift And the one in whom We live and move and exist God is our maker And his love And goodness is infinite Sin, on the other hand Has no care for us

And will gladly destroy us Romans 6 says The wages of sin is death For the free gift of God Is eternal life In Christ Jesus Our Lord Yet another reason That Jesus was the most impactful Influential human in history Is because he's not just a man He is the Son of God Divine Fully God Fully man His life was like no other On the face of the earth The true light came into the world And his death Is the only thing That has turned the tide Of darkness and death In human history Jesus wasn't just a good person Or a moral teacher Remember in his book John says that Jesus Is the one who all things Were made through And just as creation Came through the Son of God Came through the Word In the beginning The truth about Jesus

[ 23 : 08 ] Is that he came into the world To live and die And rise and ascend So that through him Creation would be renewed The new creation Is coming through him He's bringing about A new creation And that is why It is only through him That we will ever become What we are made to be Sounds exclusive Until you realize That Jesus Is God Until you realize That he is the word That created all things Until you realize That new creation Is only coming through Jesus To receive Jesus Is to receive Light And life And to receive truth To receive grace To receive love To receive everything That is true And good and pure To receive Jesus Is to be created In him As a new creation And to know him Is to know God And to belong to him Is to belong To the family of God He's renewing his people

On the inside And will take These dying bodies And transform them From mortality Into immortality What an amazing Hopeful thing it is To be part of the family Of Jesus Now I know Largely I'm preaching To the choir But what I want To remind us of Is that if you're Part of the family You're in You're part of the family And the only way That you become Part of the family Is by being born Through faith And so church These four pictures Church is supposed To be this way For his family To belong And live And grow together Into the people That he has made Us to be It's not going to Look perfect It's not going to doesn't It's not yet complete And it's not a clear Picture Of all that we Will be together But it should be A picture of the Family of Jesus Belonging and living And growing together

Now the word church Why do we come to church? The word church Is simply a collective Noun For the people of God It's like saying A pride of lions Or a pod of Dolphins Or a school of Fish Or And a flock of sheep Or seagulls Or whatever Church simply means Assembly In the Greek Ekklesia The called out ones In ancient Greek It was a term used For a civil town meeting That people were called Out of their homes To a public meeting But Jesus gives it A deeper meaning The ones Who have been called Out of darkness Into his marvelous light The ones who have been Called out of the Kingdom of darkness Into the kingdom of God The ones who have Called out of the Orphanage And slavery of sin And rescued by Jesus And adopted into His father's house And it's like the saying No two are the same In church No two are the same

In a church family It's a good thing To remember That no two are the same Because we can be Tempted to compare And I would Not be right To expect Every Christian To look the same Or respond the same Or act the same way Or handle things The same way No doubt There are standards We share the same DNA We should reflect The values of the family But how we love One another And so on Will look different We are not clones Or robots Although every sheep Has sheepish characteristics A shepherd will tell you That they're all different Although the citizens Of a country Will tend to speak A common language Share the country's values And carry the same passport No two citizens Are the same Interestingly Interestingly in the Bible One of the strongest Pictures Of differences Is also one of the Strongest pictures Of unity

And that is a picture Of the body It's the most frequent Used picture Of the church That we are Incredibly diverse But undeniably united One of the reasons Paul describes The church As a united body Made up of diverse Parts Is because some people Were treating other people Like they were not Part of the family Because they weren't Like them They'd forgotten The basic truth That no two are the same Now last week We were speaking About the presence Of God The omnipresence That God is everywhere Always All the time And I left a question Hanging Can any of you Remember the question If God is present Everywhere Always Then what on earth Is church for Well I want to answer that A little bit just now Church It is not really

[ 28 : 13 ] To give us a time And a place To worship It's not what church Is for Church isn't about that Ironically When we make it Only Only about that Only about the vertical We forget About the horizontal Which is the very thing That God wants Jesus said What was the command That he left with us Love One another As I have loved you By this Will the whole world Know that you're my disciples And so God Doesn't need anything From us It's not to say We shouldn't worship him We're made To worship him But he doesn't need anything And so Don't bring An offering to God When you Are angry With your brother The Bible says that Don't Don't do that You see It doesn't reflect God's character If we're fighting Each other And worshipping God At the same time And so What is church What's it for

Well Amos knew this The prophet Amos When the people Of Israel Stopped Caring about The horizontal And still They were going With their sacrifices And offerings To God And Amos said This is what God says Listen Put your songs away I hate them I hate your songs And offerings Put them away I want to see mercy And justice Yeah the people When the people Stop being merciful God doesn't want To hear our songs Because when the people Are being merciful We are reflecting Our father Who is Merciful And so What is church for Well the other night I was driving home From somewhere And I drove past A pub A bar And I saw people Going to the place Where Their people belong That's not to say I mean if you go To a pub That's fine Nothing wrong

With that Okay Be careful But know Where your people are And so church If you love Jesus This is where Your people are They're not out there They're not in a pub I mean you might Find them out there Even there But this is where Your people are If you love Jesus This is where Your people are This is your family If you want to Follow Jesus These are the people Who are going to Help you Now yeah We might hinder you At times But that's the Mistakes that we make But God's will For your life If you want to Follow Jesus If you want to Know what God's Will for your life Is God's will for your Life is to Become like Jesus And one of the Crazy things That God does Is he uses This To do that His will For us Is to become Like his True son And this Church Is how he Has chosen For us

To grow Into that For us To belong And live And grow Together One with Another How do we Practice Learning to Become like Jesus Well we Practice it With each Other To forgive One another To love One another Now when we Make mistakes And we're Messy Don't worry About it It's an Opportunity To be like Jesus It's an Opportunity To have Grace When you Should get Angry It's an Opportunity To have Patience When you Should fly Off the Handle It's an Opportunity To love When they Don't deserve It This is what God is making Us into It's this Thing You know Church is not Supposed to be Some short Short gathering For an hour Just to sing Songs to God And feel Better about Ourselves This is our Family These are the People that God has given Us to make Us like Jesus Getting together With our Family to Love each Other and Serve each Other and

Help one Another to Look like Jesus to Remember how Amazing Jesus Is to Remind one Another his Great promises For us Where else are You going to Get reminders of Truth and Grace and Life If you're in The family Then be a Part of the Family Love them Serve them Be with Them This is how The followers Of Jesus Belong and Live and Grow together If you want To become The person That you Have been Made to Be Then be With the Family Serve and Love the Family Be with Them Learn from Them Role With Them Be Patient With Them It's an Amazing Thing and If you are Not part of The family Don't ever Make the Mistake of Thinking that You could Behave your Way into It You're going To kill Yourself Trying to Do that And you're Always To fail None of

[ 33 : 18 ] Us Who are In the Family Are ever Good enough To be Part of It Anyway The only Way you're Part of The family Is by Being born Into the Family Through Faith In Jesus And he Will give You the Right to Become Children Of God And so I know I'm Preaching To the Choir But Just a Reminder Of what it Means to be Part of the Family A reminder Of how We get Part of The Family A reminder When our Behaviors Are up And down What it Means to be Part of The family And when We get Focused on Behaviors And comparisons How we Treat one Another in The family And how we Treat people Who are not Part of The family And the Picture that We show People of How to Become part Of the Family It's all Through Grace It's all Through Amazing Grace That comes From Jesus And we're Going to Sing an Old Favorite Here Probably Everyone's Familiar Shine Jesus Shine Yeah

Like when We struggle To shine Let us Just turn To Jesus And just Let him Shine And so Let me Pray and We're Going to Sing that Together Yeah Lord we Thank you So much For your Grace None of Us are Here Because we Deserve To be Here None of Us Are here Because we Behave Good Enough To be Here We are Here Because of Your Amazing Grace And we Thank you That your Life and Your death And your Resurrection Your Ascension Your Grace And your Love Has made It possible Somehow For us To be Part of The Family Lord Let us Give Thanks And loud Voices For that One Fact We Thank you Jesus Amen You You

You