

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expositional Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

144- Properly Discerning the Family

Church October 26, 2025

Matthew 12:46-50

46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

47 Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

48 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!

50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Back in 1140 AD, probably in Lyon, France, a little baby boy was born. And his Parents named him, "*Pierre Vaudet*". Not much is known about his early Life, but sometime around 1170-1177- at around 30 years of Age- this man, who was then known as "*Peter Waldo*" and had become very Wealthy- *renounced* all his earthly Possessions; *committed* himself to a Life of *voluntary* Poverty and Preaching; and *founded* a religious Group. This Group was *initially* known as, the "*Poor Men of Lyon*"- and later came to be known as the "*Waldensians*" or the "*Waldenses*".

And some 340 years BEFORE Martin Luther nailed his "*95 Thesis*" on the front Door of the Church at Whittenberg, Germany, the Waldenses became one of the early, "*Proto- Protestant*" Groups- who cried out against the *unbiblical* and even *sinful* Teachings and Practices of the "visible Church" at that time and energetically *promoted* Beliefs such as:

- Promoted the Holy Bible as their "sole Authority" (rejecting the Authority of the Pope)

- Promoted “apostolic Poverty”
- Engaged in “expositional Preaching”
- Rejected Purgatory; Indulgences; and Prayers for the Dead
- Baptized ONLY Believers by full Immersion
- Rejected “Transubstantiation” at Communion

In 1184, Pope Lucius III *officially and formally*¹ declared the Waldenses to be “*Heretics*”; and that Proclamation was *emphasized* by Pope Innocent III 34 years later in 1215. Then in 1487, Pope Innocent VIII issued a “*Bull of Extermination*” against the Waldenses- which led to numerous Crusades and bloody Massacres against the Group.

It was during that Time when a large Group of the Pope’s Army came to a small Village in France to confront the local Pastor. The Captain of the Army commanded the Pastor to formally and publicly repent for the “many Heresies” both he and the Waldenses had taught and deceived the people with.

When the Pastor *refused* to repent- the Captain ordered, that by the next Day- the Pastor would bring to the Captain- all the gold that the Waldenses had or face total Annihilation. The next Day- the Army met the Pastor in the Road by the Church- who had come with the Members of the Congregation of his small Church.

The Captain then ordered the Pastor to give him all the gold. And the Pastor replied, “*These precious Souls ARE the gold of my Church!*” And upon hearing that Statement- the Captain ordered his Soldiers to slaughter every Man, Woman, and Child!

That gruesome and bloody Slaughter was memorialized in a Painting that, for many Centuries, hung in the Vatican in Rome, with this Inscription at the Bottom, in Latin,

“*Papa Valdenses Odit!*”

... which in English reads,

“*The Pope Hates the Waldenses!*”

Now to his Credit, in June of 2015, Jorge Mario Bergoglio (*Pope Francis*) actually went to a Waldensian Church in France and publicly begged for Forgiveness on behalf of the Roman religious System for its “*un-Christian and even inhumane Positions and Actions taken against you historically!*”

¹ It is unknown if this “*official and formal Declaration*” against the Waldenses was considered to be “*Infallible*”. If it was- then Pope Francis was actually sinning (according to Rome) by asking for Forgiveness on behalf of the Roman religious System “*for its un-Christian and even inhumane Positions and Actions*” taken against the Waldenses in June 2015.

The Point I am making by brining this up- is because over 500 years ago- born again; Blood-bought; Sin hating; Jesus loving; Heaven- bound; Bible-believing Christians were violently *murdered* by people, who were, *supposedly* representing the visible, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church that Jesus is building; and over which- Jesus alone is Head! So, Believers murdered Believers- in the Name of the Lord, Who *supposedly* saved both of them! So, how does that happen? What has to happen in the Heart and Mind of people, who claim to be saved- for them to come to the Conclusion that it is God's Will to *violently* slaughter Men, Women, and Children- who, according to the Bible, have every Indication of being saved?

Now look, the History of Christianity is *filled* with the Blood of the Martyrs! And genuine Believers have been persecuted; beaten; imprisoned; tortured; ostracized; condemned; and murdered- since immediately after the very first Prayer meeting in the Upper Room. But the overwhelming Majority of that Violence against the Christian Church- has been conducted by either unsaved Jews; or the lost Pagans of this World; or both. And Jesus Himself promised that would happen:

Matthew 10:17-23

17 But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues;

18 and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

19 But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

20 For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

21 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

22 You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

23 "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

John 15:20&21

20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

... so unfair; illegal; violent; ungodly; and evil Acts against true Believers are actually the NORM! It should be EXPECTED! Because those terrible Acts have happened- in one form or another- to ALL, who will live godly in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:12

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

... in fact, we are to be concerned if we are NOT being persecuted by those who are Lost.

Luke 6:26

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

... but, again, ALL of those Examples have to do with unsaved and lost people. And look how Jesus described them...

... all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

... so, it is Common and Normal for genuine Believers to be persecuted in one Way or another by those who are NOT Believers. And during the 2,000+- year History of the “*Church Age*”²- there are just a few Exceptions to that. The wonderful 250 year “*Reprieve*” which God has blessed the American Church with- being the most notable³.

The Bible teaches that God sovereignly *allows* Persecution because Hostility against Believers by Unbelievers actually *purifies and strengthens* the Believers. So, those who have genuinely experienced the Miracle of the New Birth do NOT *fear* Persecution. Now we don’t necessarily *enjoy* being persecuted- but we are told to actually *rejoice* when it comes to us. In **Matthew 5:11&12**, our Lord said,

² With the Life; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus; along with the Rejection of the Jesus by the Jews- the “*Church Age*” has replaced the “*Jewish Age*” in the “*Story of Redemption*”. It is also thought by many godly Scholars that the “*1,000-year Millennial Reign of Jesus*” found in **The Revelation 20** is *symbolic* of the “long period of Time” in between the 1st and 2nd Advent of Jesus, called the “*Church Age*”.

³ It is my Opinion that the Safety and Respect that the Christian Church has enjoyed in the United States for almost 250 years has, however, brought about other serious Problems. And among them is the Concept that American Believers tend to think that this Respect is normal, when it isn’t. And the Comfort and Prosperity that the Church enjoys in the United States also tends to lull people into Laziness and a lack of Urgency.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

... and the Example of the Apostles concerning Persecution is found in **The Acts 5:41**:

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Now the "Persecution" exists because there is great "Hostility" between two Groups- the "Saved" and the "Lost". And the "Hostility" exists because there is a great "Division"; a "Separation"- between those two Groups. And the "Division" exists because the "Saved" belong to a *particular* "Kingdom" while the "Lost" belong to *another* "Kingdom". And those two Kingdoms are:

1. The Kingdom of God (Heaven)
2. The Kingdom of Satan (Man)

... or as Augustine put it, 1700 years ago- there are two different "Cities":

1. The City of God
2. The City of Man

... and BOTH "Cities" or "Kingdoms" *require* "Citizenship".

But ALL of Humanity are *automatically* "Citizens" of the "Kingdom of Satan" (City of Man) by default. In other words, we belong to the Kingdom of Satan- by Birth! And that is caused by the Reality of "*Original Sin*". The Bible teaches that, because ALL of Humanity was in the Loins of Adam- when he sinned- we sinned. And when he fell- we fell. And so, everyone after Adam was conceived with the same rebellious "*Sin- Nature*" that Adam had AFTER he fell. But because Adam was our *first* "Father"- we are also *personally* Guilty of the Sin that Adam committed!

And so, we are Sinners- by Nature! And that is why we all die! And so, in **1Corinthians 15:22a**, the Apostle Paul infallibly wrote:

For as in Adam all die ...

... and in **Romans 5:12**- he wrote,

Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

... so, contrary to the Darwinian Evolutionists- there was NO Death at all- until Adam sinned. So, until Adam fell- Death did NOT exist. And that Fact *totally* defeats the Evolutionists! But once Adam fell- now EVERYTHING dies!

But there are two things to keep in mind about this:

1. BOTH Adam and Eve sinned. In fact, Eve sinned FIRST! Yet Paul said, “**as in Adam all die**”! And then in **1 Timothy 2:14**, the Bible says, “**And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.**” Yet Eve’s Sin is NOT accounted as the Cause of Death. ONLY Adam’s Sin! This shows the Distinction between Eve’s Sin (caused by being Deceived); and Adam’s Sin (caused by “free-will Volition”).
2. In **Romans 5:12**- Paul said, “**death through sin**”. So, Death came about because of Sin. But then he said, “**ALL sinned**”. So, how do babies sin? How do *unborn* babies sin? And how do mentally retarded people sin? Yet, they all die!

... so, HOW do ALL human beings sin? Three Ways:

1. ALL humans are “*Sinners*”- because we are *conceived* with the *same* rebellious “*Sin-Nature*” that Adam had AFTER he sinned
2. ALL humans are “*Sinners*”- because God has sovereignly “imputed” the Guilt of Adam’s Sin onto us.
3. ALL humans are “*Sinners*”- because we *personally* commit Sins

... and the *first* two Reasons are *why* babies- both born and unborn; as well as mentally weak people- die! They are also “*Sinners*”.

But if babies and mentally weak people are all “*Sinners*”- do they all go to Hell when they die? NO! They go to Heaven- because God issues them His Grace- because they CAN’T repent and believe!

So, by Default- EVERYONE is a “Citizen” of the “Kingdom of Satan (Man)” at the very Moment of Conception! But in order to be a “Citizen” of the “Kingdom of God” (Heaven)- you MUST be “born-again”!

Ephesians 2:13-22

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups [saved Jews and Gentiles] into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,
15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,
16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.
17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;
18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.
19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,
21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,
22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.**

We are all *naturally born* into the “Kingdom of Satan” in, by, and through our *natural* Parents. But the ONLY Way to belong to the other Kingdom- the Kingdom of Heaven (God)- is to experience a “Re-Birth”! So, the ONLY Way a Citizen of the Kingdom of Satan can “migrate” into the Kingdom of Heaven- is to experience the Miracle of the New Birth!

So, this is NOT about Real-Estate. Being part of the “Kingdom of God” is NOT about living in Israel. This is about a supernatural, miraculous, and sovereign, “spiritual Transformation” of the human Nature- through Faith in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus!

So, all we have to do- to *remain* a Citizen of the Kingdom of Satan- is to do NOTHING! Why? Because we are ALREADY Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan- and we don’t need to do anything to *remain* there! But we DO have to be born again- to become a Citizen of the Kingdom of God!

Now both of those Kingdoms have a Language; a Philosophy; and a Logic- that *dominates* and *governs* its Citizens. The one Kingdom has Laws enacted by Man. The other one has both the Spirit and the Word of God! And the Citizens of both Kingdoms have Loves; Desires; and Wants. The Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan are cruelly “driven” by their own Lusts and are “Slaves of Sin”; while the Citizens of the Kingdom of God are “led” by the Spirit of God and are “bond-slaves of the Lord Christ”! And so, the normal, every-day Behavior of the Citizens of both Kingdoms- reflect which Kingdom they belong.

You see, human Behavior is based on what we believe. People do what they believe will help them be happy and fulfill their Goals. And the *universal* Truth with ALL people- is they want to be Happy. And EVERYTHING we do- is based on the Belief that by doing *this*- it will make us Happy.

Even when we sin. We sin- because, at that Moment- we perceive that by committing that Sin- we will be Happy and better off. And that is what “Deception” is. And that is true with things as small as being Lazy and as large as robbing a Bank or even Murder. We choose and we do- what we perceive at that Moment- will makes us Happy and help us fulfill our Goals.

And from that Truth- we can know that all of our Choices and Decisions are based on what we love. And we CANNOT choose *contrary* to what we love. And so, ALL the Choices of ALL the Citizens of BOTH Kingdoms- is based on what those Citizens love! And those, who are Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan love three things:

1. Sin
2. Self
3. Darkness

... but they do NOT love God. And they DO NOT love God- because they CANNOT love God. And they CANNOT love God- because they DON’T WANT to!

And so, the lost and unsaved Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan are NOT Victims. They are Perpetrators- doing what they *choose*- because that’s what they *love*; and that’s what they perceive will make them Happy!

Now the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven love at least five things:

1. God
2. The things of the Spirit of God (the Bible; Church; Prayer; etc.)
3. Sin
4. Self
5. Darkness

Their redeemed Soul loves God and the “**Things of the Spirit of God**” (**1Corinthians 2:14**). But their unredeemed Flesh still loves Sin; Self; and Darkness! And so, the Citizen of the Kingdom of God is in a *relentless* Struggle between their Soul- loving God and the “Things of the Spirit of God”; and making the Decisions that flow out from those Loves; and their Flesh- loving Sin, Self, and Darkness; and making Decisions that flow out from those Loves.

And whichever one is the Stronger- will *dominate* the other. So, the MORE they “Feed” their Soul- the STRONGER their Soul will be and the WEAKER their Flesh will be. And the MORE they “Feed” their Flesh- the STRONGER their Flesh will be and the WEAKER their Soul will be.

So, the Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven- is very busy! He is engaged in those “*spiritual Disciplines*” or those “*Means of Grace*”⁴- that will “feed” his Soul and cause his Soul to *dominate* over his Flesh. But the Citizen of the Kingdom of Satan- is very busy, too. And he is engaged in the “Works of the Flesh”- that will ‘feed’ his Flesh and cause his Flesh to *dominate* over his Soul.

And when the Soul of the Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is Strong and dominating over his Flesh- he has but ONE SINGLE GOAL: That in ALL that he says and does and thinks- God ALONE is glorified! But when the Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven has neglected to avail himself of those “spiritual Disciplines”- the Goal of God ALONE being glorified is *minimized; diminished; and frustrated!*

But the Citizen of the Kingdom of Satan never had any Intention of living his Life to God’s Glory. He seeks to *rob* God of His Glory and to keep that Glory for himself; and to “*do whatever is Right in his own eyes*”!

What I’m trying to illustrate this morning is how DIFFERENT the Citizens of those two Kingdoms are. And those Differences go way beyond the Reality that we “go to Church” and they don’t. We are of two completely DIFFERENT Kingdoms that have completely DIFFERENT Goals; and are empowered by two DIFFERENT Sources. We eat DIFFERENT Foods and speak DIFFERENT Languages. We love Different things; we seek for Different Results; and we don’t even walk the same!

By God’s Grace and to God’s Glory- we have been sovereignly brought into a “*Union*” with Jesus Christ! We have become a Part of Almighty God’s Household through the sovereign Miracle of Adoption! We are NO LONGER “Strangers or Aliens” to God or to His Will! We have been Redeemed! And ALL of our Sins- Past, Present, and Future have been forgiven! And God the Father has taken the spotless Righteousness of God the Son (that He earned by living a sinless Life) and He has “imputed” that Righteousness to us (by Faith alone)- which has made us “fit for Heaven”!

So, other than a few areas attached to Family; Friends; Work or some other temporary Quality of our earthly “Humanity”- we have NOTHING in common with the Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan! We are as Different as Day is from Night! And that is why the Apostle Paul was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write this from **2Corinthians 6:14-18:**

⁴ The “*Means of Grace*” include things like Bible Study; Prayer; Fellowship; Fasting; Giving; and Serving that ALL genuinely born again Believers are to “avail themselves” of- on a consistent Basis.

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you.

18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Now this is the almost forgotten Truth about "*Christian Separation*"- that has fallen on "hard-times" with people in the modern Church. In our Day- you can faithfully attend Church for many years- and NEVER hear it taught or see it practiced. And even among those who say they believe in it- there is little to no "Accountability" about this Subject any more. And the Result of this glaring Lack- is that those- who are *supposedly* Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven- date and then marry Citizens of the Kingdom of Satan- all the Time! Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven also enter into business Partnerships with people who do NOT love God; and who do NOT desire to operate their Business according biblical Principles! And the longer this Truth about "Christian Separation" is neglected- the MORE the supposed Citizens of the Kingdom of God- will be "**bound together with unbelievers**"- in direct Disobedience to the Word of God!

Christian Separation is about the Self-evident Division between the Saved and the Lost. Between those who love and strive to obey Jesus and those who don't. Between the Sheep and the Goats; and between the Holy and the Profane. And this is *why* God the Holy Spirit "moved" on the Old Testament Prophet to say this to the spiritual Leaders in **Ezekiel 22:26**

Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

... because God has called ALL of the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven to walk on the "High Way" of Holiness!

Isaiah 35:8&9

8 A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it.

9 No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there,

So, now look again at what the Apostle wrote in **Matthew 12:46&47**

46 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

47 Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

Now the Culture of 1st Century Israel was such that any Jew worth his salt- would ALWAYS defer to his Family- but *especially* his Mother! And so, as Jesus was teaching the people the Issues recorded for us in Chapter 12- *somebody* came up to Him and informed Him,

... "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

Now the Fact that Jesus' Mother and natural Brothers were "outside" shows us that at some Point in Chapter 12- Jesus moved *inside* a particular Dwelling or Building of some kind. But we don't know WHY they were "outside". Were there so many people listening to Jesus that there was no Room? Or were Jesus' Family simply standing beyond the large Crowd and couldn't get close enough? Maybe- but we simply don't know.

Now, normally, when someone was teaching- and there arose a Situation that needed to be handled- somebody would walk up quietly and whisper in the ear of the one who was teaching. And I assume that is what happened here.

And, normally, upon hearing that His Mother and Brothers were standing "outside" and were wanting to speak to Him- Jesus would have, gotten up; told the Crowd He would be back; and then would go out to greet His natural Family. But this Time, He didn't. And instead of stopping His Teaching, look what happened,

Matthew 12:48

But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

Now it is possible that what Jesus said here was designed for ONLY the person who came up to Jesus and told Him that His Family wanted Him. That's possible. And God would have NO Problem with stopping EVERYTHING and dealing with just one single Soul! God is Merciful and He did that all the Time! But I don't think that's what happened here- because of what Matthew wrote in the next verse-

Matthew 12:49

And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"

Now the word, “**said**” as used in this verse- comes from a Greek word that has to do with normal Conversation. So, Jesus did NOT speak, “*under His breath*” to ONLY the man, who came up and told the Lord that His Family wanted Him. He spoke in a normal Voice. But Matthew told us that Jesus also gestured toward the Crowd that was before Him as well. And that also gives us Indication that He spoke in a normal Voice and NOT a Whisper. And that means that what He said here as well as what He said in the next verse- He meant for *everybody* to hear! And God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Matthew to write this down- so we would understand it as well. So, please look at the next verse:

Matthew 12:50

For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

... and this is where the “Rubber meets the Road”!

This tells us that our Brothers and Sisters in Christ; the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; the Members of the Church of Jesus- those are the people who make up our *true* Family! So, it is the “Saved” and NOT our own blood-Relations (who are NOT saved)- who are our *real* Family!

Now why is that? We are *closer* to our Brothers and Sister in Christ- precisely because we are all Citizens of the SAME Kingdom! And we speak the SAME Language- spoken from Lips that have been made “Pure” by the “*Fire of God's Zeal*”. Look what the Prophet *infallibly* said about this from **Zephaniah 3:8-11**:

8 “Therefore wait for Me,” declares the Lord, “For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To

pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal.

9 “For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

10 “From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings.

11 “In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me; For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain.

We are *closer* to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ- because we have been spiritually *adopted* into the SAME Family; and *birthed* into the SAME Church; and have been brought into “Union” with the SAME Lord! And even though our natural Families are very Important and many of us are very *close* to our natural Families- our *spiritual* Family will be for all Eternity!

For Example, I have MORE in Common with a black African Man, who is truly saved- than I do with my own natural Brother, who is NOT saved! I love my natural Brother. And I am actually closer to him now that our Parents are both Dead than I ever was while we were growing up. But my natural Brother is NOT saved. And so, he dwells in a different Kingdom. And so, his Logic; Language; and Actions all derive from the Kingdom of which he is a Citizen! And the Result is- my Relationship with him is NOT as close; and NOT as rewarding; and NOT as wonderful as what I have with every single one of you!

You and I share a Relationship with THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT TREASURE IN THE UNIVERSE- Jesus Christ! And we grow in that Relationship together. And we WILL share that Relationship throughout the eons of Eternity! My Relationship with my natural Family- who is NOT saved- is ONLY Viable for this Life!

The Bible teaches that the Blood of Jesus draws *unlike* people together and, combined with God the Holy Spirit- places us together in the Family of God- FOREVER! So, the Reality is that our natural Families are a Type; a temporary Symbol; or a Parable of the *eternal* Relationship found in the Church- the Family of God!

So, the *visible, earthly, and temporary* Relationship we have in our *natural* Families- through the “*common* Union” of our *natural* Parents- is a Sign; or a Symbol of the *invisible, heavenly, and eternal* Relationship we have in the Church- through the sacred Mystery of the Union of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit!

So, *natural* Families exist to represent something else that is infinitely *better* than our *natural* Families! So, our natural Families illustrate to us the infinitely *greater spiritual* Family- the Church! And the Love and Kindness and Beauty that is displayed in our *natural* Families are magnified *ten-fold* in our *spiritual* Family!

Now that does NOT mean that we are to *neglect* our natural Families. We aren't. We are to *love* and *cherish* our natural Families. Because we have to realize that MOST Divisions within natural Families- are caused by Sin- *except* when that Division is caused by Salvation! Look what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:34-39**:

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;

36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Some of the *hardest* Turmoil that exists on this earth is found in Families where one Member has been saved- while the others are not. And even though the saved Member will grieve and pray and will work tirelessly to win the other Family Members to Jesus- until that happens- there is GREAT Division!

And while that Division exists- the one Place that offers Peace; Hope; Comfort; Love; Encouragement; and Instruction to the saved, *grieving* Soul- is through the Church- his *spiritual* Family!

I was born again; justified; and adopted at 16 years of age- in just a few milli-seconds on June 25, 1971. And that very Night- the Division and Turmoil in my natural Family began. As soon as I explained to my Parents that I had been washed in the Blood of the Lamb- I was ridiculed; condemned; and persecuted by my natural Family. And that Division grew to such an extent- that I had to move out and live with rats.

I grieved and prayed and cried a River of tears for my lost Family for many years- as it seemed that, every time I would even mentioned Jesus- things got worse. And look, I made some terrible mistakes along the Way.

But God was faithful. And one Night in Prayer Meeting- God dealt with my heart and I knew that the Division with my Father was sinful. I knew I NEEDED my Father! Now I knew that *part* of the Division was that I had been saved. But another part of the Division was the “*Curse of Fatherlessness*” that had come to me (**Malachi 4:5&6**). And so, I humbled myself; went to my Father’s house; repented for my Mistakes; and asked him to pray for me.

That began to break down the Division. Another thing God did to help break down the Division that my Salvation had caused was God allowed my Wife and I to taste of horrific Suffering. And so, we entered into a “Season” of great Hardship; Disease; Accidents; and even the Death of our Children.

So, one Day, my Father came to my Office and walked right into my Room; closed the Door; pulled up a chair next to my desk; and said, “*I’ve watched you under every Station of Life- your Children getting sick and dying and the Suffering you and Rhonda have gone through. And yet, you never turned to alcohol or drugs or Adultery- you always stay the same! And your Faith in God is amazing! You have something I don’t have- but I want it!*”

I actually as so stunned, I didn’t know what to say. But God was working. And soon, my Father got sick- and I was able to go to his Home and bathe him; and feed him; and dress him; and sing to him; and pray with him! And it wasn’t long until my Father was saved! And before he died- my Father, who at one time told me that there wasn’t anything to the Bible- was attending Prayer Breakfasts with me! And I was blessed to preach his Funeral!

And when my Mother got old and weak- I was able to serve her; and built her a home on my Property; and cared for her; and prayed with her- until she was saved! I was separated from my natural Parents for over 29 years because of Salvation! But, thanks be to God- my Parents entered into Eternity- covered in the Blood of Jesus! And so, my *natural* Parents joined in with my *spiritual* Family! And now I am praying for my natural Brother!

Friends, we all have natural Families. But thanks be to God that we also have a spiritual Family as well- the Church of Jesus! And while our *natural* Families are *temporary*- our *spiritual* Family is Eternal! Jesus said that His “Brothers” and “Sisters” and “Mother” are those who do the Will of His Father! And that means me and you- the saved! We are the Brothers; and the Sisters; and the Mothers of Jesus! And *that* Family- the Church that Jesus is building; and over which He alone is Head- will last FOREVER!

Amen! Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace! *Soli Deo Gloria*. For the Glory of God ALONE!