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Upper Thames Missionary Church
Family Sunday 2021

Raising a Godly Family
1 Corinthians 12:12-13 &
1 Corinthians 4:14-16

1 Cor 12:12-13

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves[a] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

4:14-16

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

-Children are brought into the world through the choices of biological parents, but that does not automatically mean those children will experience the full and rich meaning God has for family.
-let's recognize the deep need we all have to go beyond the "biological" and into God's full-bodied intention for Spiritually vibrant families.

But only God can form a Spiritual family - and only Go can sustain it.

A Spiritual Family is not made by choice, but by mutual submission.

Made to be a Family:

We're all members of ONE body - sharing ONE Spirit

It's not about emphasising differences, its about working from our common ground.

-Your family is going to be composed of very different -

Personalities and abilities - Many Members

-a finger in an eye have nothing in common when you examine them there is no characteristics of them and no individual goals and purposes of them that are the same - except when you unify them in a body suddenly they become indispensable for each other.

so it is with us in the church.

in a family we will compose different ideas and personalities and abilities when we have our eyes fixed on Christ we begin to see how he unifies us not in spite of our differences but precisely because of some of these differences

-the key is always to be honoring Christ in those differences and not become self serving arrogant and prideful. that only damages you the other person and gives the body of Christ a poor reputation.

Histories (Jews or Greeks) - Some of these differences are rooted in our histories Paul goes on to specify Jews and Greeks -

there could not be a bigger difference in two groups of people at the time of Paul then between Jews and Greeks. Jews were extremely proud of their heritage as the people of God, the Greeks were extremely proud of their wisdom and political power, the Jews brought with them years of pent up frustration , and the Greeks brought with them worldly wisdom and refined culture.

the point here is that both what you've grown up with and what you've come through deeply shape you and shape the way that you see other people

in the same way Paul points out that our **situations in life** presently may also be very different. he talks about **slaves** and **free** people.

-the point here is that presently each one of us are also in situations that affect the way we see ourselves in the family of God and in our family units. Our present situations may push us to our families or away from our families .

-But again Paul is emphasizing what draws us together - our common baptism - no one enters the family of God except by being born again. and our common life in the spirit - he uses this wonderful phrase we all drink of one spirit - just like we need water itself we are completely dependent on the spirit of God to sustain us. if you remember from last week this is sounding an awful lot like acts 2:1-4.

Our unity as a spiritual family whether church or family unit is dependent on our submission to God, and our dependence on the spirit of Jesus in our journey.

So if you are going to take God at his word and submit to him in order to build up your family around you, then you're going to end up wondering what is this all for?

that second passage of scripture I read for us at the beginning is about a family on mission. 1 Cor 4:14-16

What does it mean to be a father or mother through the gospel?

-Being a father or mother is not about merely *telling* someone what the gospel is and what true theology is

- over and over again in Paul's letters if you haven't noticed I preach on this a lot too and highlight it - is the command to **imitate** him.

- to be a father or mother in the gospel means you are *living* that story and you are living the consequences of that story before somebody.

New Testament scholars and theologians have been puzzled by the lack of quotes of Jesus in Paul's letters - but the best answer to those questions lies in the fact that Paul was absolutely focused on **living** out the gospel.

- it would certainly seem that Paul talked about the gospel when he was with a church, and when Paul was away from a church and writing a letter like all of the letters we have from him he would instead encourage them to *imitate* him

-the gospel must transform us and transform the way we parent our children and to the people that God has placed in our life to watch over.

- our savior - is the son of God the Lord of all glory who emptied himself and became nothing for those whom he loved. that he was willing to be obedient to his heavenly father even to the point of dying on a cross, humiliated by worldly powers mocked and scorned by worldly authorities, and he accepted it all without vindictive and angry speech

- the prophet Isaiah spoke of him saying he was lead silently like a lamb to slaughter.

-the shape of the gospel is one of love and obedience and humility, because that gospel or good news is about Jesus the one who embodied love and obedience and humility.

Jesus listened in love

Jesus prioritized the vulnerable, the poor, the weak and children

Jesus had harsh words for people who tried to exalt themselves

Even to those closest to him (like Peter who abandoned and denied him and betrayed trust) - Jesus was incredibly and perfectly **forgiving**.

So we hear the challenge today: to raise a godly family we must be able to say to our children (biological, adopted, under our care):

"imitate me as I imitate Christ."