

You're Invited

Into the Family

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Week 1

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6

1. Is there a family picture in your past that you remember taking? What is something you could share about the people who were in that picture?

Every one of our lives are linked to a family, biologically. But in the Kingdom of God, our past, present, and future are not primarily connected biologically but spiritually.

Now, this doesn't take away any value of your biological or adopted family. But what we see in Scripture is that there is a bigger family tree that is captured in particular moments in time (like right now) is connected to eternity. That's why we should never feel alone. We should never feel isolated, on the outside, not included. It doesn't matter your past, your mistakes, your stumbles or the strikes against you, there is an invitation to a family.

This family has roots going all the way back to Abraham in the Old Testament, hitting the cross section of history in Jesus, and propels us all the way to Revelation 21 where in the new heaven and the new earth we are told that, *"God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."* **(Revelation 21:3, NIV)**

So, here's what we're going to unpack in this sermon series. There's a theological component for us to study and understand what Scripture teaches us about God's family. But then there's the practical application that says, You are invited. You are NOT an outsider. The Church is the dwelling place of God's Spirit that unites us all together where we have:

A place A people A purpose**2. When have you felt like an outsider where you were looking for connection?**

E91 is not about church programming, although programs like kids' ministry, student ministry, etc. can be helpful scaffolding to help us connect. E91 is not about worship attendance and budgets and buildings, although coming together and utilizing resources for Kingdom purposes can help us grow and serve. E91 is not about organizational and institutional structure, although structure can support the mission of Jesus.

E91 is about FAMILY who possess a PLACE, who are a PEOPLE, and who have a PURPOSE.

Let's trace our roots all the way back to the beginning. God gave Abraham a promise recorded in Gen. 12:1-3 that says, *"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* **(Genesis 12:1-3, ESV)**

Abram didn't have any children yet, but he had a history. His father was Terah. He had brothers—Nahor and Haran. He had a nephew, Lot. He had a wife, Sarai, who became Sarah. So, he had a family going back generations. That's the PAST. He had the PRESENT—Gen. 12:13—that's the snapshot, that's the picture. And he had a FUTURE—a promise given by God that he would become a father of a great nation, and through his offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed.

Now, fast forward about 250 years. God's promise has been fulfilled, at least in part, because now there is a nation. And in the early, formative years of this nation, we read this. In Exodus 19, God spoke through Moses to say to the people of Israel:

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." **(Exodus 19:5-6, NIV)**

Who are these people? They were REFUGEES who fled Egypt after being delivered from slavery. They were nomads in the desert of Sinai, encamped in the wilderness (Ex. 19:2). These former slaves are who God calls His treasured possession, kingdom of priests, and a holy nation!

Here is the theological: God invites the “un-avoidable” to have a place at His table, to be His people, and to have a purpose in His Kingdom.

And here's the practical: God's invitation extends to us as well. Not just to be invited to His table, but for us to offer the invitation to others. To see people the way God sees people. How does God see us? “Beloved, we are God's children now.” (1 John 3:2, ESV)

3. Isn't it interesting how we are so grateful God sees us a certain way—which is tied to grace, but we find it so difficult to see someone else that way? Is there someone you have a hard time seeing as God sees them?

When we give our lives to Jesus, when we accept Him as our Lord and Savior, turn away from our sin, we surrender ourselves to Him in baptism—celebrating that the old is gone and the new has come. And God calls us His children. He invites us into His family, even if we think we are “un-avoidable.”

When we accept God's invitation, we have a PLACE, we are a PEOPLE, and we have a PURPOSE.

Back to Exodus 19:

- We are God's treasured possession—we have a place at His table. ‘
- We are a holy nation—we are a PEOPLE.
- We are a kingdom of priests—we have a PURPOSE. What do priests do? They mediate between God and others. We are the ones who are on mission with Jesus to see others reconciled to God. We're a kingdom of priests.

We went forward about 250 years from Abraham to Moses. Now this nation promised to Abraham has become a reality. They are a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. But now let's fast forward even more, roughly another 1,500 years from Moses to Jesus. The promise given to Abraham was that God would make him a great nation. We see that in the time of Moses. But it was also that through Abraham— “And in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 22:18, ESV)

4. Who is the offspring? Read Galatians 3:16.

We're working our way through a timeline of this family that God invites us into. Abraham—Moses—fulfilled in Jesus—and now we have it all tied together with a nice bow on top in 1 Peter 2. Peter repeats part of what was written in Exodus 19:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." **(1 Peter 2:9-10, ESV)**

- We have a PLACE at the table—we are a chosen race. No one can deny us entrance because of the color of our skin or the balance in our bank account. We are chosen by God, invited to join Him.
- We are a people—we are a holy nation, a people for His own possession.
- We have a PURPOSE-- that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Takeaway: God invites the "un-avoidable" to have a place at His table, to be His people, and to have a purpose in His Kingdom. God's invitation extends to you and me as well.

5. If you believe this, what next step is God showing you to take?

Accept the invitation. You are invited into this family in this moment—the PRESENT.

This family has an incredible PAST going back thousands of years to Abraham, Moses, fulfilled in Jesus, and now to us, now, in this present moment.

And we have a FUTURE—that's not dependent on biology but the spiritual reality of God calling us out of darkness into His marvelous light.