

**ST PAUL'S CHURCH (RONDEBOSCH)
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SERMON (YEAR B)
6 JUNE 2021**

**READINGS: 1 SAMUEL 8:4-11 & 16-20// PSALM 138//2 CORINTHIANS
4:13- 5:1// MARK 3:20-35**

.....
Lord Jesus you spoke to people in parables and so many looked but did not see, listened but did not hear Open our eyes that we may see, open our ears that we may hear and open our hearts that we may respond to your Word in Jesus name AMEN

A preacher said to a farmer, "Do you belong to the Christian family?" "No." said he, "they live two farms down."

"No, I mean are you lost?" "No, I've been here thirty years."

"I mean are you ready for Judgment Day?"

"When is it?" "It could be today or tomorrow."

"Well, when you find out for sure when it is, you let me know. My wife and children will probably want to go both days!"

In Mark 3 v 33 Jesus asked who are my mother and brothers. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother?

You will agree with me Family life in the world, in our country, in our communities and even are own families are under tremendous pressure. Some of the challenges that families are experiencing are:

- Different personalities clashing and disagreements over ways of doing things
- Jealousy or fighting between brothers and sisters
- Parents arguing
- Divorce or separation (According to the statistics in SA: 4 out of every 10 marriages end in divorce. 2, 8 million children are living with one or without both parents.
- New step-parents or step-brothers and sisters
- A parent or relative having mental health problems, disabilities or illness
- A parent or relative having alcohol or drug problems
- Stresses due to unemployment, money or housing problems.

- Domestic violence
- Cultural or generational differences
- The effects of bereavement
- Abuse or neglect
- The elderly parent experience loneliness because their children don't visit

This morning I would like us to reflect on **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Throughout history family has played a major role in everyone's life. From the very beginning the concept of family has always existed. When God created the world, he looked around and saw that everything was good, except for one thing, Adam was alone. And so, God created Eve right out of Adam's own body, and thus the first family was born. They were to be one flesh, a family unit, to work together serving and loving God and loving one another. Families are essential for they are the building blocks of communities, and communities are the building blocks of nations. But in Genesis we read how Satan created doubt, caused division and mistrust, and even murder in families and just as quick as the family was created, it has been under attack ever since.

Even though we all have different histories: cultural, economic, religious and social backgrounds, families are still a big deal. As many of us have experienced, family relationships, loyalty and honour have a huge influence on our lives.

When we establish our own families we draw from the values and the standards and we tend to build our own family and make it like the family in which we grew up..

If you grew up in a Christian home where your parents loved the Word of God and taught you the Bible and Bible morality and to love Jesus and love one another, then you have a good family heritage that would be a good foundation on which to build your family.

Back in the time of Jesus, the Jewish family had this extra added spiritual significance. Jewish family was the local expression of the wider Jewish family of God. You were who you were in God's kingdom BECAUSE of your family.

Let's turn to our Gospel text of this morning

From the Gospel text we see two dynamics to our family relationships, one is our physical family and the other is our family as church.

So let's reflect on the physical Family relationships

In v 21 we read ***“When his family heard about this they went to take charge of him, for they said “he is out of his mind”***

And in v 31-32 we read ***“Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent someone to call him. A crowd was sitting around him and they told him. “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you***

There seems to be two interpretations to what Jesus' family was thinking.

The first being that Jesus' family was concerned about his health.

Jesus' family who lived in Nazareth had heard that he had made the Pharisees angry on two Sabbaths and that he was working too hard so hard that he was going without food. They loved Him and were worried about Him.

And a second, interpretation is that Jesus' family were more concerned about the family's reputation because according to them Jesus was acting in a fanatical and even insane way. They were concerned and they didn't want to look bad and have their family name be disgraced. However, their concerns were self-centred. And throughout history, many families have been destroyed by family member's selfish acts.

My dear friends what is your relationship with your family? What does your family mean to you? Are we concern about our families? Do we love our families or are our families an embarrassment for us?

Parents do you love your children? Children to you love your parents? Are there some of you who are not on speaking term with one of your family members because of an argument that happened many years ago?

I know we are experiencing the COVID pandemic, with all its restrictions but when last did we see or contacted our families?

Our call in our physical/biological families is to reflect again the family values of love and faithfulness.

Let us reflect on our Church family relationships

33-34 we read ***“Who are my mother and my brothers Jesus asked? Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said. Here are my mother and brothers. Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother?”***

These words may sound disrespectful, as if Jesus has disowned his mother and brothers, but that is not the case. His love and respect for his mother and his relatives was unquestionable.

However Jesus used this opportunity to teach his disciples and the crowd a spiritual lesson and truth about the kingdom of God. On this occasion when many gathered to hear Jesus he pointed to another higher reality of relationships, namely our relationship with God and with those who belong to God.

Therefore in v 34 and 35 when Jesus said. ***“Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother?”*** he means he cares as much for everyone who did the will of God as for his own mother. In this way he did not neglect his own relations but treated them as part of the much bigger family, the Great family of those who do God’s will.

When Jesus asked who is my mother and brothers// Who are my real family/ Mark wants to emphasize that the real family of Jesus are the ones who are with him as disciples, the ones sitting around listening to him those to whom he can reveal the secret of the kingdom.

Those who believe Jesus is the Saviour and whose power comes from God. And those who do God’s will by living justly, generously, compassionately, inclusively and selflessly

Do you believe Jesus is the Saviour of the world? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus? Do you live justly, generously, compassionately inclusively and selflessly with your fellow parishioners or with your neighbour?

Conclusion

When Jesus called everyone who does God’s will his brothers and sisters. He made a new Great family the Church

There are two families to which all Christians belong the one which we are born in (our natural //biological, physical families) and the Great family of the

Church (our spiritual family into which we enter at Baptism). We do not serve our natural (physical) family any less when we begin to serve the great family.

The Church family must be open, inviting, welcoming, forgiving, caring healing, blessing, nurturing, and full of love.

We cannot know and grow in Jesus by ourselves. Where do we get courage? It is through community, through family. Where do we find help, comfort, accountability, and encouragement, and rebuke, hope when our heart is doubting and fearful? We get it from the Holy Spirit (God) who works through community (our Church family)

Here in our own Parish we have a lot of parishioners who are living alone whose family lives overseas or in other parts of the country, or who don't have a family. We also have families that go through challenging and difficult time. We have single and divorced parents and we have young people who also experience their own challenges and pressures (studies).

If we say we are St Paul's family we have to reach out to one another. We must be there for each other, we must love, comfort, encourage and care for each other.

As a church family we need to nurture our family bonds and love for one another. And we must try to minimize things (like culture, selfish desires, prejudice etc) that break us down. That's one reason why we share in the Eucharistic meal every Sunday, because sharing food is an intimate activity and through it we grow in deeper relationship with God and with each other, because we are one body. Every week we say "***We who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread.***"

Jesus says here are my mother, brothers and sisters
My brothers and sisters do you feel part of God's family here at St Paul's?
Do you let at others feel part of St Paul's family? AMEN