**Ephesians:**

**God Creates Family**

**God Welcomes us Home**

Open: Tonight we will be talking about our unity as a family of God’s people. This is an appropriate lesson on the day that a new president is sworn in. One who promises to do much to create unity in our country. Let us pray for his success in this effort, whether you voted for him or not.

Paul to the Ephesians: A letter to those nearest and dearest to his heart.

1. Spent 3 years there, including a little riot.

2. Stopped at Troas on way to Jerusalem for arrest, trial and death to say hello to the elders. Acts 20 his most emotional sermon. (but don’t worry, I will not preach all night).

3. Sent his right hand man, Timothy, to take care of the church.

4. John was a shepherd there from the 70s on.

5. John was buried there.

Eph 1:3 Every spiritual blessing IN CHRIST.

The point: We are one IN HIM. Outside of him we were not one, to say the least!

Our oneness is IN HIM!

So, what do we have IN HIM?

v.4 holy and blameless

v. 5 We have adoption into his family!!! God took us in. He chose us!!! In Roman tradition, adopted sons had full inheritance.

Illustration: Ezekiel 16:1-7, 9-13. That is what God did for us. This was us spiritually….

The way Paul puts it: Eph 2:1-7!!! This is what we have in Christ. What did we have outside of Christ? This is not a pretty picture.

Adoption is a big theme in the Bible. God tells us/foreshadows for us our relationship with him by adoption:

1. Ruth was adopted by Naomi (and therefore married Boas, the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. A hint about our adoption.

2. Moses was adopted by Pharaoh. Pharaoh (king, symbol of God here) adopts a slave into his household. Moses a prefigure of Jesus.

3. Esther was adopted by Mordecai. Esther saved Israel, becoming a prefigure of Jesus.

4. Oh, and guess who else got adopted in the Bible: Jesus!

Romans 9:4 Israel itself was also adopted (which explains Ezekiel 16),

Romans 8:23 In another sense, we have not yet been adopted but will be [fully] adopted when we reach heaven.

Illustration: the movie *Instant Family*. Mark Wahlberg.

More on adoption:

Eph 2:11-18. Here he is talking to Gentiles.

The audience of Ephesians is GENTILES (unlike Hebrews and Romans)

Where were we at? Spiritually, you were an orphan.

a. v. 11 Uncircumcized (I can live with that)

b. v. 12 Separate from Christ

c. v. 12 Excluded from citizenship

d. v. 12 Without hope

e. v. 12 Without God Talk about being on the outside looking in.

v. 14-18

a. He has made the two (Jew and Gentile) one

b. He has destroyed the barrier

Look at what we have in the Bakersfield Church of Christ! Black, white, Hispanic Asian, country music fan, rocker and hip-hop, old and young and yes, even Republican and Democrat!!!!

We are one. Q: How are we one? IN CHRIST!!!

v. 17 In context: Who was “near” the Jews. Who was “far away” Us!

Good news! It does not matter how far away you are.

v. 17 Q: is there a separate Holy Spirit for the black and the white?

 For the old and the young?

 For the rich and the poor?

 For the male and the female?

Q: Do we still have dividing lines in the church, and hostilities?

Yeah!

He is our peace!!! v. 14

You want to get close to your brother or sister: come close to Jesus.

Q: What else do we have IN CHRIST?

Eph 1:7-14

a. Redemption.

b. Forgiveness

v. 8 I love this word lavish…. Lavish

Pour so much on that you can hardly even hold it. (but v. 8 he did it with wisdom and understanding so as to not totally spoil it….)

v. 9 He let us in on the mysteries hidden for ages.

Q: What is this mystery?

v. 11 chosen

v. 13 included

Ephesians 3:3-6 A church of Jew and Gentile, progressive and conservative, rich and poor, black and white,

Fellowship questions:

1. How does it feel to you personally to be adopted into God’s family?

2. What can you do personally to make this church feel more like a home?