

Today we are going to begin a new adventure in knowing God and how this knowledge impacts the relationship between us. Right from the bat, I need an answer from you: Is God a male or female?

God is neither male nor female in the biological sense, but when we refer to God we refer to him as a Father. We imply the masculinity of God oftentimes because he displays so many father-like characteristics, but the Scripture attribute feminine qualities to God, too. Does the Son complicates or simplify our conception about God? What do you think? Let's vote on that...

I do believe that the Son simplifies our conception of God, because he provides for us the context for knowing the Father and relating to Him in a proper way. The way Jesus relates to the Father is the right way for us to relate to him. Naming God: Father, we make a theological and relational statement. On a relational level, we establish intimacy in direct address... the same intimacy that Jesus, the Son enjoys from before the foundation of the world until the present time.

This is what Jesus wanted from the beginning: to invite us to this eternal communion that was shared between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit from eternity to eternity. It's a family like communion – this statement does not imply that God is three beings (**for us is easy to make this mistake, because in our world, a person is also a being... but in God's category where he is alone, God is one being in a community of three persons**). That makes God a family. In a sense, God is a family, a community that existed before the first angel was created. God was not lonely when he created angels and the universe, and Adam. When we look into the creation we trace back the characteristic of the community of God's persons.

Adam and Eve were created as community. Even when Adam was alone from the dust, the purpose of this was to realize the power and the need for a community, community of those who are alike and different in the same time. In the community of God's persons, or in the community of the angels, or in the community of human beings, there is only one Father.

The angels who decided to run from home, God didn't give them any chance to come back home. In the Scripture, God calls the angels his sons because they are a direct creation of his. Opposite to this, the human beings who decided to run from home, God gave them a second change, to come back home, because he created them from the beginning in his image. Adam is called the son of God because he also was a direct creation of his. For those who come from Adam's family and are lost, the Father brings them back through the act of adoption. Now they are sons of God, too... or sons of the resurrection.

Reading the Old Testament the Fatherhood of God is used only 15 times, sometimes used in relation with Israel, sometimes with certain individuals. The father imagery is used several times without the term "Father". On the other hand, the New Testament abounds in the use of this term. Only in the four Gospels, God is called "Father" for 165 times. Jesus' favorite way to address God was "Father". He taught his disciples to do the same. Jesus talking with his disciples never said "our Father", but "my Father" and "your Father" because His sonship was different than theirs. He was by nature Son, but they were by adoption, sons.

The rest of the New Testament emphasizes the fact that God is our father. Paul talks about the Father over 40 times, the early churches used this term in Rome and in the area of Galatia. This term was used

in most councils of the church and is used even today when the Apostle's Creed, and the Nicene Creed are recited as the Credo of the Church.

So, to draw a conclusion, the people of the Old Testament had a limited knowledge of God the Father. One of the purposes of Christ coming among us was to reveal the Father.

**No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (Joh 1:18 ESV)**

**And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, (Joh 5:37 ESV)**

**They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." (Joh 8:19 ESV)**

**If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (Joh 14:7 ESV)**

**All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Luk 10:22 ESV)**

Why I chose to tell you all these things? Well, I hope you know them, but we all need a reminder. My purpose was to create a background, like a black fabric to put in display a diamond. What's the diamond I want you to watch and awe? The Family of God, The Local Church... this is the most expensive and beautiful diamond on earth. Until you don't have the black fabric of this background, you cannot appreciate at the right value God's Family. It is time! It is time to value the Local Church by being the Church. The church is not the building, and for sure is not the meeting. They are part of the black fabric, but without you and me, the building and the meeting is only a black fabric. You are the expensive diamond sanded by the blood of Jesus and put on display for the unbelievers and for the angels.

One of the most shocking texts where Jesus is using this background and the name of the Father is when after few hard conversations with the Pharisees, his family came to speak with him... but let's read:

## Who are the brothers of Jesus? - Matthew 12:46-50

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### 1. Those who are spiritually related to Him (v 46-50)

- When all these happened, Jesus was in a great stress. In Marc 3 we have a feeling of what the days for Jesus looked like. In verse 13 we learn that he just climbed a mountain to appoint the Apostles after a prayer night, he came back home. In verse 20 we read that the house that he rented became so crowded with people that he and his disciples could not even eat their meal.

When this happened, some of his friends tried to enter the house in order to restrain Him from his activity because they thought he was out of his mind (like when someone is in ecstasy).

- A more literal translation of who the friends were is: „those from his side“. There are some theories about who were these: family, relatives, friends, or outer circle of disciples. According to the human standards, Jesus did a lot of weird things: when everybody came to Capernaum to see Him, he left for other villages, he was against the establishment of Scribes and Pharisees, his teaching was unusual, so on and so forth. Now, Jesus just came back from more teaching, healing and casting demons, and instead of eating, he spent time with another crowd... He must be out of his mind!
- In verse 22 Scribes accused Jesus of working with the power of Satan and this is the moment when Mary and the brothers of Jesus came to visit him. They came from Nazareth knowing that Jesus was stressed. In Marc 6 we have the name of some of the brothers of Jesus: James, Joses, Judas and Simeon. They were not able to talk with Jesus, so they asked someone who was near the door to intermedate their request to speak with Jesus.
- Jesus takes this opportunity to indicate that for Him the spiritual ties are more important than the ties of blood. How is he doing this? By asking a question and answering His own question.
- Jesus after he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples saying that they are His mother and brothers. Was His blood tied family embarrassed by this answer? I don't know what to say about his brothers, but His mother went through this in the past. When Jesus was 12 he was left at the Temple and his family went home in Nazareth. When they realized what they did, they came back to take Jesus home, but he said:
  - **"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luk 2:49 ESV)**
  - A Jewish boy would learn a trade from his father starting with the age of 12-13. Jesus was in His Father's House to learn a trade.
  - **sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. (Luk 2:46 ESV)**
- For Jesus the spiritual ties are more important than the blood ties. Do you get it? Do you? Is the relationship with the church members more important than your blood family? The spiritual family is spiritually related through Jesus. We are brothers and sisters with each other, because we are brothers and sisters with Jesus. This bond is covenant based, not blood based.
- Jesus would be tired and stressed, His own family would come to visit with Him in order to encourage Him and help him in this difficult time... but you know what? Jesus considers you more important than Mary! Isn't it hilarious? There are Christians today considering Mary more important than Jesus because she is like us and she can understand us better than Jesus. While some Christians consider Mary so important, Jesus considers you more important than Mary!
- You know why? Because for him, the spiritual ties are more important than the blood ties. Is this true for you, too? Do you believe and act on your belief in the same way Jesus believed and acted? If yes, be blessed! If no, repent!

## 2. Those who do the Father's will (v 50)

- On one hand we can see the inclusiveness of Jesus statement: whoever... black and white, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, smart or dumb, bond or free, commoner or elite... whoever can be my brother. Right away when you become a Christian, there are no barriers between the family members.
- We should learn from this, because we make so many barriers in the church! Calvinists and Arminians. Pre-Millennialists and A-Millennialists. The most recent one is Vaccinated and Unvaccinated. Let's learn from Jesus how to use: whoever.
- On the other hand we can see the exclusiveness of Jesus statement: those and those alone who do the Father's will. They are true brothers of Jesus. That means Judas Iscariot was excluded, because he was not doing the will of Jesus' Father, but the will of his Father: Satan
  - Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him. (Joh 6:70-71 ESV)
  - Judas was diabolic. The word devil comes from DIABOLOS, slenderer.
- What is the Father's will? The Father's will is
  - 1. that man repents from his sin
  - 2. surrender's to Jesus as Savior and Lord
  - 3. Lives to the glory of God.
- Doing the Father's will you follow Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus you must do the Father's will. There is no negotiation and there is no change... the Father has spoken... the word is clear!
- The brothers of Jesus are only those who do the Father's will. Are you one of them?

## 3. Those who live by God's Word (Luke 8:21)

- In the parallel text in Luke 8 there is another twist of the same idea. Those who are brothers with Jesus, meaning they are from the same family, they listen to the word of God and in the same time they do what the Word of God. While they listen, they also practice this Word!
- The loyalty to the spiritual family should transcend all other loyalties because when you stick to the family that listen and practice the Word of God, you improve in the best version of you!
- Think about this:
  - Is your earthly family keeping you from congregating with the family of faith? Then you are more loyal to your blood ties than your spiritual ties. You are not loyal to Christ!
  - Do you care more about what your family, friends, associates... those who are on your side have to say or ask? Or do you care more about what Jesus and the community of believers who hear and practice the Word of God have to say or ask?
- Now is the time to decide if you are more loyal to Christ or to your family!

## CONCLUSION

Do you consider yourself a good brother of Jesus? You should consider more important your spiritual ties with Jesus and his local church, than your blood ties. You should live your life for the glory of the Father, because this is His will. You should hear and practice the Word of God daily.

If you are not a good brother of Jesus, you should repent. You should repent and start having the same relationship with the Father as Jesus enjoys this relationship with the Father.

As I see the situation here, the Father wants you to be integrated in the life of the Trinity and He gave you the best example how to do this in His Son, Jesus Christ. Don't forget the cost:

1. Jesus was killed for doing this
  - a. **This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (Joh 5:18 ESV)**
2. Jesus spent the only family based celebration (not Temple based), the Passover, with his disciples, not with his family. The last Passover meal Jesus was with his apostles and he called them brothers after the resurrection:
  - a. **Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (Joh 20:17 ESV)**

Are you ready to act like a genuine brother of Jesus, and pay the price for being part of this spiritual family, the Family of God?

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