

October 8, 2017

(Foreign to Familiar Series)

“The Father’s Love”, Ephesians 1:1-6

In the first chapter of Paul’s circular letter to the Ephesians and multiple churches, we are shown God’s answer to our deepest question as Christians: Does God the Father, God the Almighty, really love me? (Ephesians 1:1-6) This book about unity in Christ begins with God’s great love for every one of us that are in Jesus Christ, regardless of the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

Three Ways We can See the Father’s Love

I. In Christ, the “heavenlies” have become a place of blessing. (Ephesians 1:3)

God the Father through His Son has already won the war between the spiritual powers of light and darkness, as Jesus declared victory over Satan: “It is finished.” (John 19:30), and in three days rose from the dead (John 20). Our Father set this all up for our welfare...because He loves us....whether our real lives are difficult or not, whether people tell us we are lovable or not, whether we are struggling with sin or not.

II. In Christ, we were chosen from the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4)

Even before creation, God the Father chose us...long before we chose Him. We were not chosen because of our goodness, or because God had to love us, or just for our well being, or even because Jesus loves us. We were chosen because of God the Father’s goodness, drawing us to Himself.

The credit for loving us belongs to God the Father. If we truly understand this, we realize that God becomes much bigger and we become much smaller. God’s grace and mercy extending to the world (John 3:16) make us less judgmental. After all, it’s about God, not our merit.

III. In Christ, we were lovingly adopted into God’s family. (Ephesians 1:5-6)

God chose us and developed a plan to make us His adopted children “in accordance with His pleasure and will.” (Ephesians 1:5) It was God’s plan to bring us into His family by sending Jesus to show us His love (John 3:16). The price for this adoption was free for us, requiring our belief, but was high for the Father, sending to earth His only Son. God did it for us! He loves us...whether our circumstances are difficult, easy, or heart breaking.

God the Father loves us deeply. He chose and loved us before the world was formed, laid out a path by which we could be drawn into His family, and through Jesus Christ has lovingly adopted us as His own. It was and is the Father’s choice and pleasure to love each of us intimately. It is our choice whether to accept this love so that we can know Him: share in His love, wisdom, and provision here on earth and eternally.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we be sure that God loves us?
2. What difference does it make that God chose us?
3. What does it mean to be adopted by God? (See Galatians 4:4-7)
4. D. Bonhoeffer struggled with his identity in his poem “Who Am I?” His conclusion was “Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!” Does this suggest love to you? How?

5. How might knowing we have been chosen by God, affect how we think about others?
6. In all honesty, do you experience the Father's love (a) in your thinking (head), (b) in your heart (feelings)? (c) both.