

## Home Improvement 2014

### *GOD'S Plan for the Family includes being part of a Bigger Family*

**Text: Ephesians 2:19-22, I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10**

#### **Introduction:**

**Read: I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10**

1. Becky Pippert in her book, "Out of the Saltshaker" tells about a young college boy who had never been in church but had been won to Christ through a campus ministry. H4S 8-00 641
  1. The next week he walked into a sophisticated downtown church in Portland, Oregon wearing torn blue jeans, a tee shirt and no shoes.
  2. The church was crowded, so he began walking down the aisle looking for a seat. (No one was too anxious to scoot over and let him sit down.)
  3. So when he got down to the front row and found no seats, he just sat down on the carpeted floor; a perfectly acceptable behavior at a college fellowship, but unnerving at a "real" church and the tension was obvious.
  4. An elderly man walked toward the boy. Everyone braced for the tap on the shoulder and the awkward scolding that was sure to follow.
  5. The church became silent, every eye on this potentially explosive situation, but when the old man reached the college student, with some difficulty he lowered himself and sat down next to him on the carpet.
  6. The two worshiped together on the floor that Sunday. There was not a dry eye in the congregation.
2. What a beautiful story that illustrates how the church is to openly receive those that may differ from us culturally, but who share a common desire and passion for the God of the Christian Bible.
3. It is essential that we do this, for if we claim to be in Christ, then we are obligated to help foster an atmosphere of love and acceptance like no other organization on the face of the earth.
4. We must have standards for all the family members' behavior that are based on the Christian Bible, but be careful our cultural standards never get in the way. The church must go beyond culture.
5. **Prop. : "When you accept Christ as Savior and are born-again, you become part of the family of God with incredible benefits."**
6. **Trans.:** Today we will be considering three benefits of being a part of the family of God that are pointed out for us by the Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 2:19-22**.

#### **I. Entering the family of God changes your citizenship – Ephesians 2:19**

1. For a large portion of the world, the United States is looked at as heaven on earth
  1. They dream, as did most all of our ancestors, of coming to this land of milk and honey
  2. Many couples are opting to adopt children from foreign countries, which is a great idea
  3. These children will become citizens of this country as a result, meaning a change in citizenship
2. Look what happens when we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior – **Ephesians 2:19**
  1. We are no longer transients or aliens, strangers or foreigners, but are the very people of God
  2. As members of God's household, we have new citizenship rights that lay claim to our inheritance
  3. We move from simple worldly beings doomed to death to children of God promised eternal life
3. Our status changes when we choose to be born-again by the water & the Spirit – **Ephesians 2:11-13**
  1. All adoptions come with a cost; our adoption was paid for by the blood of Jesus on the cross
  2. Our new birth certificates read **"A child of the Almighty God & a citizen of His eternal kingdom"**
4. This should affect us more and more as we realize this especially considering this second benefit:

#### **II. Entering the family of God puts you on a solid footing – Ephesians 2:20**

1. Jesus spoke about two houses built on two different foundations in **Matthew 7:24-27**
  1. One was built on solid rock and could withstand the wind and rain of any storm
  2. The other was constructed on sand, which began to shift as a result of the storm & was destroyed

3. Jesus is the Rock of my salvation & can be of yours: choose for yourself
2. Your spiritual foundation changes when you accept Jesus as Lord – **Ephesians 2:19-20**
  1. Jesus is the cornerstone of the church, but many will reject Him – **I Peter 2:6-10**
  2. Build you life on Jesus and nothing will be able to shake you, knock you down or defeat you
  3. As a church family, we must strive to lift one another up with this very encouragement
3. This means we must continue to seek to grow our spiritual strength through this book, the Bible
  1. It is in this perfect Book of books that the teachings of the apostles and prophets can be found
  2. The central figure of ALL the Bible is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah or the Christ of God
  3. ONLY in this Love Letter from Almighty God are the teachings of Jesus recorded for us
4. In the name of Jesus, build your life on His solid footing explained here and receive the next benefit

### **III. Entering the family of God makes you part of something special – Ephesians 2:21-22**

1. God is constructing a beautiful temple where He dwells, made up of souls – **Ephesians 2:19-22**
  1. It started with Jesus, the Cornerstone, dying on the cross & resurrecting on that glorious Sunday
  2. On the day of Pentecost, 3000 souls were added to Cornerstone and foundation of the apostles
  3. I am a part of this same structure as are many of you, but not all of you
2. For a moment, imagine that you are a 2 x 4 waiting to be cut from a mature tree standing in the forest of Oregon
  1. The tree is cut down, taken to a sawmill, cut into many different parts and out you come
  2. Now you go by rail to another part of the country, then trucked to a lumber yard where you wait
  3. Unlike other 2 x 4's, you & your cousins can choose where you end up: just becoming a board in a church sounds boring to you, so you reject that offer, instead becoming a traveling 2 x 4, for that sounds exciting
  4. For a while, it is a great life, going from site to site, getting nailed here and there, then back in the truck
  5. All of a sudden, you begin to notice there are a lot of holes in you and you are being looked over for others
  6. Next thing you know, you start losing a part here and a part there, getting put deeper into the pile, used less
  7. Finally, as just a splinter of your former glory as a young stud, what is left of you is thrown into the fire
  8. You fade from memory forever, lost to the fire
3. But what about that cousin of yours that decided to become a part of that church that was being built
  1. He was placed on a solid foundation, fitted together carefully and lovingly
  2. He heard great singing, teaching and preaching plus laughter as well as the healing tears of many
  3. No, he did not get to see all the things of the world, but he was tightly held in place, secure and strong
  4. Rather than being burnt, this board became part of something so special that helped change lives forever
4. Each of us can be part of the mighty, eternal temple, the very dwelling place of Almighty God
  1. It may not look glamorous now, but the very glory of God will reside in you and shine on you
  2. Hear the prayer of the great psalmist, King David in **Psalms 27:4-5**
  3. Make this your prayer today and become part of the family of God at Adventure

### **Conclusion:**

1. It really is simple: Believe in your heart and confess with your tongue that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Put your faith in Him, repent of your sins past, present and future.
2. Now for the beautiful part: Be immersed in the name of Jesus and thus born-again for the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. Then you will be a part of a special family, a building component of the temple of the Most High God of heaven and earth; a child of His with a new citizenship, standing firm on Jesus the Rock.
4. I made this decision some 39 years ago and it truly gets better being a part of the temple of God.
5. We are going to stand and sing a song to give each of you a chance to respond. Not sure of all this? Then we will go over God's plan for your life. Maybe you need to rededicate, or just ask for prayer.
6. If you need a special touch by God today, why not come forward during this next song while we all stand and sing.