

Melva's Corner

OUR SPIRITUAL 'DNA'

June 13, 2005

Bible Text: Colossians 3:12-17, I John 3:1

Central Truth: We are the community of God! We carry His spiritual DNA.

Someone once said, "there are two things one cannot do alone – be married and be a Christian." They are right. The essence of being a Christian is not an extended set of correct doctrinal beliefs or even well-formed personal character. To be a Christian is to be connected to Christ in such a unique and special way that all other relationships are defined by that union. It means the perfect triune fellowship of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from eternity past and present has been opened to me by the blood of Jesus at Calvary. But I cannot experience their fellowship in isolation from all others who have been called into it. We are the family of God.

Having others around is not a nuisance but a necessity for families. These interactions shape us. We sing and read, stand and bow, laugh and cry. And, yes, we certainly eat and drink together. But we do all these things as a network of friends. A gathering of family members. A church whose identity is not contained in itself but is found in the God who has formed it.

We are the community of the children of God! We carry His spiritual DNA. We bear His name. We have a great inheritance. Awareness of these things makes a difference in how we see ourselves and function in this world.

Perhaps if more of us saw ourselves as children of God rather than members of the church, we would claim a nobler family inheritance. If we understood church as persons in relationship rather than names on the roll, we would function differently as the church. If we saw sin as the breaking of relationships rather than the breaking of rules, we would live better and deal with one another more gracefully.

If we really love God the Father, we will create churches that are communities of love, accountability, and nurture where gradual spiritual transformation takes place over time. We will live gently with one another. Listen to one another's issues. Teach and learn from one another.

Does anyone doubt that the church, as a community, would have far greater credibility with our not-yet-Christian neighbors if we modeled this sort of behavior consistently? That these positive relational activities count for more than our abilities to sing or preach or proves ourselves correct to those not-yet-Christians? That we have been our own worst enemies over the years in neglecting these relational demands of our faith?

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:12-17).

This description of family life is a call to love and respect, consideration and kindness. It describes the sort of healthy relationships that allow growth and spiritual formation, that confer peace and joy. And it describes a New Church for a New World that puts the heart of God on display in the relational life of His family.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” exclaimed John the apostle. (1 John 3:1). And that is what we are! There is no greater honor to which a human being could aspire. To be part of the Family of God. To have Him as our Father. To sit at the table where there is always abundance. And where there is always room for others.

Memory Text:

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:16, 17).