

JESUS IS NOT ASHAMED . . .

“Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” (Heb 2:11 NIV)

As with all Scripture, this verse is both simple and profound.

It is simple from the standpoint that we are not ashamed of imperfect people in our earthly families. This is easy to understand. Our love for them enables us to overlook their imperfections. The newborn infant, for example, is not only messy and helpless, it is the personification of selfishness. Babies never care about anybody but themselves. Most of us, however, are not ashamed of little babies, we love them too much for that.

This verse is profound from the standpoint that God's love for sinful man is inconceivable. In the words of Scripture it “surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). In spite of our sinfulness God wants us in His family. We can become His children by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26) We do not earn this love, it is given to us by grace. Even though this Gospel was in the mind of God before the foundation of the world (Eph. 3:9 - 11), its magnitude and scope never entered into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9). It even escaped the inquiring eyes of angels (1 Pet. 1:12). God's judgements are unsearchable and His ways past finding out (Rom. 11:33). Since neither men nor angels could figure out the Gospel, God had to reveal it to us by His Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10).

As you know, our son ship with the Father is not obtained through human organizations and religious denominations. It comes by direct contact with God through Jesus Christ. The Ethiopian Eunuch, for example, became a child of God on a deserted road between Jerusalem and Gaza (Acts 8:28 - 40). Once he became a child of God he automatically became part of God's eternal family. If Jesus was not ashamed to call him brother, why should we be?

The conversion of Philemon and Onesimus is even more interesting. Philemon was a slave owner and Onesimus was his runaway slave. Philemon lived in Colossae and Onesimus was converted to Christ many miles away in Rome. No matter how far apart these men were physically, emotionally, and socially, the fact that both of them became the children of God made them brothers. Therefore, Paul asked Philemon to do precisely what Jesus had already done. That is, he was not to be ashamed of Onesimus and he was also to accept him as a brother (Phm. 1:16).

The application of this truth to the church today is revolutionary. Since Jesus is not ashamed of His imperfect brethren, we should not be ashamed of ours. Fraternity is based upon paternity. It does not matter how selfish and immature our brethren are, as long as the Father's Seed abides in them we are brethren. When we believe that Jesus is the Christ we are born of God and everyone who loves the Father loves his children as well (1 Jn. 5:1). Divisions within God's Family will not be tolerated. Those who divide His brethren do not have His Holy Spirit (Jude 19). Nothing should ever become a test of fellowship which God has not made a requirement of salvation. If God accepts the brethren, and Jesus accepts the brethren, why shouldn't we?

The fact that we do not agree on many matters within the Family is totally beside the point. We do not reject a new born infant merely because he is uneducated and immature. We accept him as our brother if he is a child of our Father. Neither do we reject a brother based upon the location of his birth. It does not matter where a child is born as long as God is his Father. To think otherwise, is to be absurd. When we stand before God in Judgement we will not be rejected because we were born in a bad environment. The church at Thyatira, for example, was a bad church. They had allowed that woman Jezebel to mislead the servants of God into sexual sins and idolatry. There were, however, even in Thyatira, individuals who did not hold to her evil teaching. Note that God did not impose any other burden on these brethren. He merely asked that they hold on to what they had until He came (Rev. 2:24, 25). If Jesus was not ashamed of imperfect brethren in an imperfect church, why should we be? Rom. 15:7 states the same truth in another way. It teaches that we are to accept one another in the same way Christ accepted us. Since I was imperfect and immature when Christ accepted me, I must accept all others in the same way. Please be like Jesus! If you are ashamed of the brethren, He might be ashamed of you!