

## FATHERS: SEEING THE FACE OF GOD

Scripture Lesson: Deuteronomy 5:6-21

Text: Deuteronomy 5:16

Songs: "Holy is the Lord;" "Mighty to Save;" "Jesus Paid it All;" "Nothing but the Blood;" "The Wondrous Cross"

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Today we have the wonderful privilege of celebrating our adoption into God's family through the sacrifice of God's one and only son, Jesus Christ. God invites His children, His sons and daughters, to His table, the communion table. Rejoice that God has chosen you! Since God chose you, He is your Father. When we honor our earthly fathers as Deuteronomy 5:16 and the rest of the Bible teach us to do, we are actually honoring God.

Following the language of God, the Founder of USA Today, Al Neuharth and his wife call their eight adopted children, "Chosen children." After their biological children were out of the house, they adopted eight children from different races and nations. Their oldest "Chosen child" graduated from high school this year at 18 and Al is 78. His weekly column on Friday often tells anecdotes from their family life. The column that received the most mail ever was about his three-year-old son who announced to the checkout lady, "Those diapers are not mine. I go potty all the time now on the big toilet" as Al paid for his Depends. A vignette from a father who loves his children regardless of their origin, background, or abilities! God loves all His children regardless of origin, background, or abilities. He accepts us as the song says, "Just as I am." God truly loves His children.

There is no better way to show love than by sharing a meal. When a couple begins to date, they go out to eat. As their relationship deepens, the places they choose to eat changes. They go from McDonalds with a group of guys and gals to an exclusive restaurant where they can hold hands and look into each other's eyes. By engagement time they may have a favorite restaurant where the question is popped and the diamond ring is given. That restaurant may even be the place where the wedding rehearsal dinner or wedding banquet is held.

When guests come over, we carefully plan what we will eat together. Even if people drop in unexpectedly, we scrounge up something to eat. We show our affection and appreciation for their friendship with food. Our entire life we find food a favorite way to show love. You may think of more examples, but you get the point.

We do that because we are made in the image of God. Just as God has His "Chosen children" with whom He wants to sit down and eat, so we who are made in His image want to sit down and eat with our children. Sociologists are wringing their hands because American families do not eat together anymore. Teens stop at a quick fast food, kids grab a bite from the fridge, and Mom and Dad both have jobs so their meals are eaten on the run as they pass like ships in the night. Professional observers of American family life, both Christian and secular, are bemoaning the loss of mealtime. They know that healthy family life involves love around food.

That is exactly what God our Father does. He invites us to dinner, the banquet feast of His great wedding with His bride, the church. Do you remember how the Bible ends? The last chapter is all about food and drink. The last verse of the Bible is God's final blessing, "Revelation 22:21". The verse just before that is this, "Revelation 22:20." These words certify and seal the meal God's "Chosen children" will have with Him in heaven forever.

That is hard to believe so God provides an appetizer that we call Communion, the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper. Increasingly churches in every tradition, including our own, celebrate the Lord's Supper every week as did the church up to the days of the Reformation. There is significant pressure today to return to the Biblical pattern of weekly Communion advocated by John Calvin. After all, eating together is a great way to

show our love for one another. Just as God our Father invites us to His supper, so we who are His image-bearers honor Him by inviting family and friends to dinner. This is one example of living Deuteronomy 5:16. Honor your earthly father as you honor your heavenly Father's invitation to share His Supper. Come to supper!