

**“A REAL FAMILY”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**TEXT:** ACTS 2:14(a), 36-41

**GOD’S WORD:** 1 PETER 1:17-23

**I- FAMILY TIME:**

I’ve caught on the news recently about how domestic violence goes up during times like this with people confined together. They have also been talking about possible PTSD cases that will come out of this quarantine and the effect it’s having on depression and mental illness. I am happy to see they aren’t only talking about it but are putting out numbers and other information to help anyone experiencing these things.

When I preach I can sometimes get bogged down on the negative things going on in our society and this Corvid-19 virus could certainly give me plenty of fodder. But instead of concentrating on the negative things I have taken note at some marvelous things going on. I see selfless sacrifices being made to help everyone get through this. I see acts of kindness that go above and beyond what would normally be happening. I see frontline health care workers staying in hotels and campers so they don’t take the disease home to their families. I see whole neighborhoods and others standing along the road or standing on balconies applauding those workers who are on the front lines battling this disease. I see restaurants who are closed still preparing meals for the medical people, the police, the firefighters, and EMS people who are also on the front lines. And blue lights all over the place in recognition of them all. Then we have the parades by the houses of little ones to honk and celebrate their birthdays.

And how about families who are usually disjointed, usually too consumed by work, sports, meetings, and the rest of life that their time together is lacking. We're seeing them now having to stay together. They're playing board games, doing art work together, cooking together, silly dancing to music. They are actually spending time and loving on one another. They are being families. My prayer is that families remember these lessons and continue on even after the world gets back to some order of normalcy. We are finding out that the love of family can get us through a lot.

## **II – PETER:**

This is the kind of love we are supposed to have for one another in the family of God. We started to talk about that family last week. We talked about how, because of what Jesus had done for us, we had an inheritance. Peter told us this was due to what Jesus had done for all of us and for those of us who believed. Do you remember all of that?

In this week's reading Peter lays it out for us even more. He tells us that we all have the same Heavenly father because God does not play favorites. He loves everyone. They are all his Creation, all his children. He loves us so much that he gave his Son Jesus to us to pay the debt of our sins. He gave more than could ever be bought with money, it was only bought with blood. Peter says it was bought with *“the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.”* That's how much your God loves you...each and every one of you. You are his children...his family.

Peter tells us that with this family comes some behavioral changes we must make. We are supposed to fear God, which means we are supposed to be in awe of him and hold him in respect. He's supposed to be a priority, not an afterthought. Then comes the big one! Not only do we have to love God, but we have to love each other too! If God is the father of us all, and we have all been saved by the blood of his Son Jesus, then we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Peter says that we

*“must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.”* Not just say I love you, but really love you. Love your family with all of your heart. That we’re finding out is the action of a real family.

### **III – TEXT:**

I see in this morning’s text the beginning of this family.

#### **Acts 2:14(a), 36-41 (NLT)**

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd,

<sup>36</sup> “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

<sup>37</sup> Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” <sup>40</sup> Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

<sup>41</sup> Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

This passage is the continuation of the story of Pentecost. At the beginning of the chapter we read about the Holy Spirit coming in a whirlwind and flames to the disciples locked in the upper room. They began speaking in different languages and the people on the street had two reactions. Some were amazed and others thought the disciples had been imbibing too much. In this morning’s passage Peter steps out in

front an commences to preaching. He preaches about the prophecies of their past and the predictions of the end times but tells them all who call on Jesus will be saved (vs. 21). Then we get to the end of the sermon.

It says that the people were “pierced to their hearts.” They heard, they believed, they wanted to be a part of this new family. They ask Peter what they must do and he said they needed to repent of their sins and then get baptized in the name of Jesus and then they too would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide them in this new life.

He also points out that this promise is not only to them but also to other people and to other generations.

And then it happened...the new family, the Church, was born and people were born into it by their acceptance of Jesus. They believed that Jesus was both Lord and Messiah as Peter called him in verse 36. Lord means Jesus is the one you belong to, the one who gets your allegiance and service. Calling him Messiah means you believe that he is the one who fulfilled all of God’s promises and brought Salvation to the world.

#### **IV – JOIN THE FAMILY:**

So the question for today is what do you do when you come to believe? When you reach the point in your life that you believe Jesus is your Lord and Savior. When you believe that Jesus has fulfilled the long held hopes and dreams of humankind?

The simple answer is “you join the family.” You do like those 3,000 souls on that first Pentecost Sunday...you join the Church. I’m not talking about a particular church, a denomination; I’m talking about The Church. The one with a capital C. I’m talking about the body of Christ.

I’m talking about doing what we talked about last week, what we saw modeled by the people listening to Peter’s sermon. That you have a desperate cry of your heart for God’s love and grace. That you have a

heartfelt sorrow for your sins and you repent and turn them over to God who covers them in the blood of Jesus. That you accept Jesus to live in you and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you all the days of your life, from now to eternity. You join the family.

## **V – THE FAMILY:**

And just like I'm talking about "THE" church, I'm talking about "THE" family. I'm talking about the body of Jesus Christ, which passes all denominational and geographical boundaries. His family is not only global, it's universal. It covers everyone who ever lived and who ever will. Once we join THE family we realize we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, all from the same father.

When we realize that it's easy to do the part where Peter later told us that we must show sincere love for one another and love one another deeply with all of our heart. That's the sign of a real family.

The pandemic has caused the strengthening of families and has reshaped the way they live together and love each other. As the church we need to realize that we are a real family. A family born in the image of God and through the blood of Jesus. Just as the pandemic has forced us to remodel the way we live, it is also remodeling the church and the family of God. A couple of things have been obvious as you sit and watch this service on your screen at home. We have to worship in a different way and we have had to limit our activities of socialization. But we remain a family through phone calls, mail, e-mail, and other things. I hope all of you are taking the time to call and talk to one another and let each other know the faith family of BUMC is alive and well.

But we also have to ask ourselves other questions in light of our family ties:

- What are the new ways in which God's Holy Spirit inspires us and shapes the identity of the Faith Family / Christian Community?
- How do we invite fellow sinners to the family and be able to start anew?

- How can we be more loving to one another? How do we love Deeply from our hearts?
- How do we become a pandemic of God's love to our community and beyond?

We are meeting and will continue to meet the challenges we are and will be facing. The main thing we must remember is that we belong to a family that is full of love and then share that love with one another looking forward to the day we can come together and practice it without social distancing.

We miss and love you all!

AMEN