

Title: Family Ties**Object:** Pictures of Family**Scripture:** **34** “And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.’” (Mark 3:34-35)

Have you ever been to a family reunion? You know what that is, don't you? It is a time for all the members of a family to get together — grandpas and grandmas, moms and dads, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and lots and lots of cousins. Most of the time it will include playing a lot of games and eating a lot of food, but the main reason for a reunion is to help family members to stay in touch with one another. Many times family members become scattered and live in different towns and different states far away from one another. They may keep in contact by email or by phone, but nothing beats a family reunion to help a family to stay in touch.

We should never overlook the importance of family. In the very first book of the Bible, God established the family. He created Adam and Eve, blessed them, and said, "Be fruitful and multiply." God intended for family members to be there to care for one another in times of need. Family is there to help us when we are sick. When we are young, our parents and grandparents look after us. As our parents and grandparents get older, that sometimes changes and we become the ones to take care of our parents or grandparents. That's what family is all about.

When we put our faith in Jesus, we become a part of a family of believers — the church. Just as the members of our earthly family have a responsibility to love and

care for one another, members of our church family have a responsibility to love and care for one another.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our families. Thank you for grandparents, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. We also thank you for our church family. Help us to love and care for one another as you have taught us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

John 15:26-27

Bear Witness

Chapter 15 of John has been a wonderfully rich experience. It begins with the parable of the “Branch and Vine” continues with Jesus’ great commandment to “love one another” then Jesus adds that He is not just our Lord and Savior but also our friend which Christians desperately need since the world hates Christians because it hates Jesus and now it ends with the promise of the Helper. We need the Helper today more than ever as we see this progression from the time America was founded with Christian principles to a nation with a difficult environment today for Christians. To see this attitude shift one can look at the Washington Monument.

The monument was begun in 1848 to honor America’s first president and was not completed until 1885, 37 years later, because the government did not want to borrow money to build it. When completed it was the world’s tallest structure at 555 feet. On July 17th, 1994, my 41st birthday, it was revealed that while the monument was being repaired workers found an inscription inside reading, “**Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory more lofty and enduring than this.**” It was signed BFB, no one knows who this person was, but what is important is the attitude that prevailed 150 years ago in our society and government as compared to today.

Christians have moved from being the cornerstone of American society to being offensive to a society that has few standards of truth and morals. So as Jesus taught 2000 years ago we are becoming more and more hated throughout the world, even here in America. This should not come as a surprise for as Jesus so clearly said “**If the**

world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19)

How are we to survive, live true to God and thrive in this growingly difficult world system? First we have the church, the living church made up of believers who are to live holy or apart from the fallen society around us. Strength is found in Christ’s church. Second and greater, Jesus promises the Helper. Today we will look at who the Helper is, what He means to believers and how He affects the way we live.

Bear Witness Of The Spirit

The ultimate witness to Jesus Christ is God the Father. One place we see this spelled out in the scriptures in John chapter 5 – please turn there. Jesus said of God the Father’s testimony concerning Him, “**And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.**” (John 5:37-38) God the Father gave inspired thought and writing to the Old Testament authors telling of Christ and His coming. But, Israel and the rest of the unbelieving world had walked away from God and were spiritually blind. Jesus continues saying to His Jewish opponents, “**You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life (knowing the scriptures without a regenerated soul – is knowledge not spiritual life); and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.**” (John 5:39-40) The unsaved world refuses to hear the truth of Jesus. This has always been the case and will continue until Christ returns. Paul speaks straight to the point, “**Therefore God has highly exalted him (Jesus Christ) and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at**

the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(Philippians 2:9-11) Make no mistake, when Christ returns everyone will confess Jesus before God the Father. Everyone will confess Jesus, those in heaven with the greatest of joy and those in hell with eternal gloom. But until that time we live in this lost world and are called to bear witness to Jesus.

The world is damaged because of sin. It is greatly influenced by the evil of Satan. As Christians we are called out of this corrupt world system to live holy. But, even beyond this blessing of living holy before God, the Creator of the universe has appointed us to be His coworkers in carrying out His plan of salvation for this lost world. I believe this to be true and that many Christians simply do not understand who they are in Christ and what their responsibility as believers entails. One of our responsibilities in being a coworker of God is to share the gospel of Jesus. Only Jesus offers salvation to the lost. Turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians chapter six. Here we find what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the Corinthians, *“Working together with him (considering what Paul wrote at the end of chapter 5 he is referring to working with God), then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says, (quoting what God said to Isaiah in 49:8) ‘In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* (This was current at the time Isaiah wrote *I now is the favorable time*, at the time Paul quoted it to the Corinthians and it is current and directive for our lives today. Now verse 3 begins a long sentence of 81 words; both Paul and I are known for our long run-on sentences of thought.) Reading beginning at verse **3**, *“We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, (As Christians we are to live holy so that no one may find fault in us and our Lord.) Continuing in verse 4 but as*

servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, **5** beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; **6** by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; **7** by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; **8** through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise.” (2 Corinthians 6:1-8) The Apostle Paul says as believers we are coworkers of God and we are not to receive this gift in vain, but we are to live and proclaim the gospel in all of life’s circumstances. In a world desperate for answers, for a world searching in vain for truth outside of the Word of God, Christians have the truth to share but most remain silent! How about you? When was the last time you shared the gospel of salvation?

The Apostle John puts forth this same thought in our passage we are exploring this morning. Reading beginning at John 15:26, “**But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.**” (John 15:26-27) Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit will testify or **bear witness** about Jesus and that we must also testify or **bear witness** of Jesus. Found in these two statements is revealed how God exalts Christ before a fallen world and draws men and women to Himself. This is an incredible thought of how God uses believers in His plan for salvation. But, before we think too highly of ourselves, we must remember Jesus put the Helper or Holy Spirit first and believers second. Our witness is necessary to God’s plan, but our witness is powerless without the presence and supernatural power of God’s own **Spirit of truth**. Only the Spirit can bring to life the dead souls of the lost.

How does the Helper or Holy Spirit bear witness of Jesus? There are primarily two

ways. One is the Holy Spirit inspired and directed the writers of the Bible to communicate God's thoughts and purposes to believers. The Bible makes little or no sense to unbelievers because the Holy Spirit has not brought their souls to spiritual life and given them spiritual wisdom. This brings to mind the second way the Spirit works to bring objective truth to believers who live in a subjective world.

Turn in your bibles to 2 Timothy 3:12, **“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted** *(This is exactly what Jesus just taught the disciples, you and me in our study of John 15)*, **13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived** *(Have we not seen this in many societies throughout history and in today's world?)*. **14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it** *(We have learned of God by His Word, the scriptures given by the power of God the Holy Spirit.)* **15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** *(As the Church of Christ, Canyon Bible is to come along side of parents to teach and train our children in the sacred writings that will bring them spiritual life and enable them to live in the lost world. They will be hated by the world and will need to know how to live for Christ among the lost.)* **16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”** *It is clear “All Scripture is breathed out by God” giving authority to the scriptures. Paul does not stop here, but continues; listen to these next verses – this is important.* **4:1 “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.** Paul say as directed by the

Holy Spirit, **“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus!”** My dear beloved, does it get any plainer and any more serious than this? We have been given a directive from our Lord and Master - will we be obedient? By the power that lives in us, the Holy Spirit of God, the answer is yes, we are able to be obedient!) Paul speaks of his time and he speaks of the time we live in, continuing in verse **3**, **For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.** *(Not only is this seen all over the world, but also here in American society’s abased standards and life styles. But, also look at the churches and denominations that claim be to Christian, but have decided they no longer have to live the Word of God, the Bible!)* **5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** (2 Timothy 3:12-4:5) My brothers and sisters in Christ we may not have control over many things, but we can be in control of our own lives and live in such way as to honor God and bring glory to Christ and to submit to the Holy Spirit. Peter made clear that everything is to come from God and His Word as He gave it. Peter wrote, **“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”** (2 Peter 1:21) This means that no TV evangelist or modern day prophet or preacher speaks with authority apart from the Bible. Anything prophesied or preached must be consistence with the Bible.

Let me take a little time to explain what this means in Christian language and definition concerning the inerrancy of the Bible. There are two basic approaches churches or denominations or people take concerning the Bible – **Sola Scriptura** (*Scripture Alone*) or **Prima Scriptura** (*Scripture First*). Here at Canyon Bible we take the Sola Scriptura stance - meaning the Bible is the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine and

Christian life.

Prima Scriptura has a wide swath of meaning from the Bible first but also human traditions to the farthest meaning of the Bible is equal with traditions, charismatic gifts, mystical insight, angelic visitations and the needs of the times. Prima says that wisdom gained from outside the Bible and can be used to interpret the Bible and this is how denominations have justified their taking stances outside of what the Bible teaches. These would include among others: Wesleyan, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Anglican, Episcopal, LDS/Mormons and JW/Jehovah Witness. The Catholic Church's position, as outlined in their Catechism, is that the traditions of the Catholic Church are of equal authority to the Bible. All of those who change the Bible and claim to be Christian, by the definition of Sola Scriptura, are not. Does this mean Canyon Bible is narrow-minded and rigid? Yes, when it comes to the Bible! We believe the Bible is inspired by God the Holy Spirit and is what God wants Christians to know, believe and live without our human efforts to fix it because God did not get it completely right. We believe the Bible is the only book or writings inspired by God to reveal Himself to mankind – the Bible is unique.

At Canyon Bible we believe in and hold to the Five Solas. Sola is a Latin term used during the time of the Reformation to explain where reformers stood on key doctrinal positions. Let me quickly list them.

- **Sola Scriptura** – *Scripture Alone*. The Bible alone is our authority.
- **Sola Fide** – *Faith Alone*. We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
- **Sola Gratia** – *Grace Alone*. We are saved by the grace of God alone.
- **Solus Christus** – *Christ Alone*. Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
- **Soli Deo Gloria** – *To the Glory of God Alone*. We live for the glory of God alone.

Bearing Witness with the Spirit

This brings us to the way the Holy Spirit and we work together to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. **The Spirit of truth** or **Helper** continues, as He has throughout history actively speaking through the Bible eternal truths into the hearts, minds and souls of those God the Father has called to Himself through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. This truth is the heart of Jesus' command in John 15:26-27, that **"the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness ..."** To bear witness of Jesus to the world is obedience - to not is sin!

We can learn from D. L. Moody, the bold American pastor, preacher and evangelist who lived in the second half of the 19th century. He was speaking of Christ, my may say in a time that was more acceptable than today, as he often did. He was telling people of Christ and evangelizing. A woman approached him and said she did not like his direct method of evangelism. Moody responded, "I don't really like mine all that much either. What is your method?" The woman grew silent and thought, finally replying that she did not have one. To which, Moody replied, "Then I like mine better than yours." My beloved, what is your method of sharing Christ?

Bear Witness About The Son

The Holy Spirit's primary ministry to this lost world is to bear witness of Jesus, God the Son. Likewise the message of the Church may not be politically or socially correct, it may not be current with the times or psychologically or in tune with the latest trends of humanity trying to find itself. The Church's message is Jesus Christ; Son of God and Christ, crucified and risen from the dead for the salvation of man. Please turn in your Bible to Acts chapter 3. In Acts chapter 3 is recorded the second sermon of Peter and he boldly spoke out after healing the crippled man. Peter spoke to those there who

were dumbfounded, “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.” (Acts 3:13-16) People were changed by the power of the Holy Spirit and Peter’s faithful boldness to preach. Paul likewise said to the Corinthians, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2) The Apostle John wrote, “I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” (Revelation 1:9) John preached the gospel of Jesus and was exiled. Not even this stopped John from sharing the gospel. The scriptures teach that as believers we should witness to the world by living and preaching the gospel of Christ. So as believers the primary purpose of our lives is to witness to the world about Jesus. This is this morning’s message - preach Christ always. Many churches may have gone down the road of trying to meet every felt need and have many programs to address these felt needs. The Holy Spirit and the Holy Bible confront our sin, show us our need for Christ and offer salvation through the atoning work of Jesus. The way of evangelism of the Apostles and of believers throughout history is the same – it has not changed. When we submit our lives to Christ we experience grace and desire to serve Him. Our true needs are met through Him. We think of others more worthy than ourselves – this is a healthy state of mind. We have peace that the world does not understand. Go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 let me read Paul’s words in more detail. **1** “And I,

when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, **4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) Paul did not worry about being eloquent, but preached the truth of salvation and let the Holy Spirit change a person’s heart. So it is to be with us.

A Gallup poll indicated that out of all evangelical, American believers, "only two percent had introduced another person to Christ." Is it any wonder that the cults – Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses and Islam are out pacing Christians in many areas of the world? They take evangelism seriously and most Christians take the gospel for granted. As one called to bear witness of Jesus Christ we are not necessarily called to be eloquent in speech but we are called to be like a signpost. As a signpost it does not matter how old or young or petty or ugly we are. We are called to point people in the right direction. We are called to be like a signpost and stand out from the surroundings of the world. Our lives are to be a witness to Christ and point to Him. What kind of signpost are you?

Continuing this line of thought we go to the Book of Romans chapter 10 beginning in verse **13** “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (Quoting Joel 2:32.) **14** How then will they call on ~~him~~ Jesus Christ in whom they have not believed? (The world hears about Christ from believers.) And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? (This is the heart of evangelism.) And how are they to hear without someone preaching (Here the word “preaching” means the public proclamation of the gospel by any believer)? **15** And how are they to preach unless

they are sent? *(Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit teach all believers are sent to share the gospel.) Continuing in verse 15, “As it is written (Paul quotes both Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15), ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”* (Romans 10:13-15) Are your feet beautiful or stinky? Do you love your Lord Jesus so much that you have to tell others what He has done in your life? Obedience or disobedience – that is the question! Bearing witness to Jesus is our duty and pleasure.