

THE BIG IDEA: We can't say no to anybody when the cross says yes to everybody.

The Take-Off

There's a lot that we'll never agree on, right? Wolfpack or Tarheel. Panthers or Cowboys. Democrat or Republican. But can we all just agree on this one thing: family is awesome and awkward all at the same time!

I found some pictures to help drive that point home.

[Awkward Family Photos]

So kicking a series off with a title like "We are Family" is risky, right, because all of us have good and bad experiences associated with that word.

But we can all agree on the truth that family - in its truest, intended sense - is a concept we all desire.

Sometimes, because we're in the family, we'll do some pretty crazy things, like streaking in front of your mom.

Sometimes, because we so desperately want to be in the family, we'll do some pretty crazy things, too.

Illus: Story of Steven Burton trying to fit in at his 20 year high school reunion in 2008 (story [here](#))

Why would anybody do that? Is family that powerful? And what does it even really mean to be a part of a family? The next few weeks will shed some light on those questions.

For now, let's start with one of the biggest lies we've ever been told, and it was found in the middle of an extremely popular movie.

1. **The biggest lie in Castaway**

- a. Remember that great movie starring Tom Hanks as a FedEx dude that got stranded on a deserted island?
- b. It was a fantastic movie about man's ability to face anything and survive it, but it was based on a lie.
- c. Hanks' character was never alone, because Wilson was always with him!
- d. Even movie producers understand the truth found in Genesis 2:18.
- e. It's why people turn on the TV for white noise, and why people who live alone get pets and talk to them like they're people.
- f. We were made for relationships!
- g. God saying that it wasn't good for man to be alone came before sin entered the world.
- h. We think being on our own is a sign of maturity, but it's often a sign of pride because we don't want to need others.
- i. But according to Genesis 2:18, **needing others is the design of God, not the curse of sin.**
- j. It's so much a part of who we were made to be, that when we're alone, we do everything we can to ensure we won't be alone, even if that means talking to ourselves or giving a volleyball a name.

2. **God made family easy, our sin makes family hard**

- a. We've established the fact that we were made to be in relationships, in family
- b. Sin didn't cause us to need others; God designed us that way
- c. But look what else God did!
- d. He created us in such a way - without sin, shame - that relationships could be easy.
- e. Genesis 2:25 says that Adam and Eve never even had to figure out what to wear!
- f. Before sin, Adam never had to answer the loaded question, "Do these make me look fat?"
- g. But notice what happened after sin entered the world:
 - Genesis 3:16
 - We can argue all day long about theological nuances of this one verse, but can we at least agree that some tension got introduced into the relationship because of sin?
 - Pride and appearance and blame wasn't a part of the equation before sin, but now it is
- b. God made family easy, our sin makes family hard

3. **God sent His Son far in order to bring more children near**

- a. Sin is a huge factor in putting distance between us and God, and God wasn't ok with that
- b. His answer to the question of sin was His Son
- c. Galatians 4:4-7
 - Jesus redeemed us

- Jesus restored our rights as family
- Jesus repaired the broken relationship between us and our Dad (Abba)
- d. God wasn't content with one son, or one daughter
- e. Romans 8:15-16
 - Same adoption process as before
 - This time, notice all the plurals (sons vs son, children vs child, we vs I)
- f. Jesus is building a kingdom by growing a family

4. Family means we're accepted

- a. Over the coming weeks, we'll learn more about what it means to be in the family
- b. We'll learn that being a part of a family means we're expected, connected, corrected, protected, perfected
- c. But for now, can we just get this one: being a part of the family means that we're accepted...
- d. ...by a forgiving Father
 - Luke 15:20-24
 - He doesn't teach lessons as much as He celebrates learning
 - No shame, no agenda, just an unexpected and undeserved welcome home
- e. ...by a forgiven family
 - Luke 15:28 - this was the older brother's problem
 - We can't rejoice over salvation when we can't remember being lost
 - Ephesians 4:32
 - Forgiven people forgive people

The Landing

So on week 1 of what will be an amazing exploration of what it really means to finally be home and in the family, let's really get this: being part of a family means we're accepted.

The open arms of Jesus on the cross are mirrored in the extended arms of his disciples in the church.

Whosoever means that all can come, and that's the message of The Big Idea today:

God wants us to be blessed, because He wants to bless others through us. That means that blessed people have a very different perspective than others: as long as they have something, they have something to give.

And that kind of generosity spreads like wildfire. As we close, here is one example of that: **We can't say no to anybody when the cross says yes to everybody.**

I know you want to push back on that, and that's fine.

But not today. Today is simply the day to point people to a forgiving Father and invite them to join a forgiven family.

If you're good enough for my dad, you're good enough for me.

Let's pray.