

THE BIG IDEA: Security is the soil of maturity.

The Take-Off

Today, we're wrapping up the "We Are Family" series, and what a ride it's been!

We've learned that we're accepted, connected, expected, and corrected.

That we've got a place, power, purpose, and perspective.

We began the series talking about how families can be awkward and amazing all at the same time, and after 6 weeks, I think most of us are starting to understand that God's family isn't that much different than our own families.

God's family is definitely BETTER because of it's spiritual nature, but it functions a lot like our physical families.

And as we turn to the last week, that's going to be more true than on any of the other weeks, because the struggles we may have faced in our natural families tend to show themselves in our supernatural family, as well.

Last week was a perfect example of this. Just hearing the word "correction" was enough to send some of us running for the hills, wasn't it, because correction wasn't a healthy experience in our own families!

And so the thought of God's family correcting us kind of causes an "oh no you didn't" reaction, doesn't it?

That reaction isn't necessarily sinful or evil, it's just the normal reaction of a person who hasn't experienced the FULL FAMILY DYNAMIC.

This morning, we're putting the final piece in place, and it is the icing on the cake of the family that God's making.

Family means we're PROTECTED, and being protected gives us PEACE.

Here's why this is so important: all of the things we've talked about take place over time, don't they?

That means that even though we're in the family, we're still going to go through times that are - well, less than desirable. Kind of like the 80s. In fact, most all of these families would like to wipe out these moments, but they can't, because they live in web lore forever!

[Awkward Family Photos - 80s style!!]

All of us are going to need time to mature, and protection gives us that.

The Big Idea says it like this: security is the soil of maturity.

This morning, let's look at 3 reasons we can feel secure and protected in God's family:

1. We're protected by the unseen army of God

- a. Without trying to get spooky or weird, you and I are surrounded right now by anomy that we can't see.
- b. There's an interesting story in 2 Kings 6 about Elisha and his servant.
- c. They were about to get ambushed, and early in the morning the servant went walking out of the hut and saw an enemy army surrounding them.
- d. Understandably freaked, he went to find Elisha, told him, and heard his master tell him to chill because those who were with them were more than those who weren't.
- e. I can picture the servant doing a double take and wondering what Elisha was smoking, but Elisha prayed for his eyes to be opened, and when they were, he saw a bigger army that was for them.
- f. When you and I stepped into the family of God, we stepped into this reality: there is an unseen army that will always be bigger and more powerful than any seen enemy.
- g. Always.
- h. Imagine if we could see right now the army protecting us! We would be afraid of a lot less, wouldn't we?
- i. Story of the missionary child hit by the car - laid down by unseen angels
- j. Here are a few Scriptures that can give us a lot of security:
 - Psalm 34:7
 - God "encamps" around us
 - The word literally means "pitches His tent"
 - He is not moving in and out - He's there, taking up residence, watching over you and me
 - Psalm 125:2 - you and I are surrounded

2. We're protected by the unrelenting mercy of God

- a. When you hear the word "unrelenting" what comes to mind? Taxes, bills, troubles.
- b. But Lamentations 3:22-23 reveals something better: the mercies of God.
- c. Think about the security of that truth: no matter how bad today may be for us - no matter how much of a screw up we may feel like - the next morning God has prepared a fresh batch of mercy.

- d. We can start each day with a clean slate because God never serves leftover mercy!
- e. Look at verse 22: God's love is what protects us and keeps us from being consumed.
- f. Romans 8:38-39 - NOTHING can separate us from that love, and knowing that makes all the difference
- g. Rick Warren tells of someone who couldn't stop sinning in an area and he told Rick that he probably just needed to love God more.
- h. Rick's response? "That's not your problem. Your problem is not that you don't love God enough. Your problem is that you don't understand how much He loves you."
- i. When we understand the unrelenting love and mercy of God, we find the security of His protection.
- j. John 10:10 reveals an enemy who wants to steal, kill, and destroy us, but the unrelenting mercy of God keeps that from happening.
- k. In fact, the only way Satan can rob us is by convincing us that God doesn't love us.

3. We're protected by the unmovable family of God

- a. There's no doubt: let someone talk about your family, and you're ready to fight. That's what family's all about.
- b. There are probably a lot of reasons for that, but one is simple: family is permanent.
- c. I love the unmovable picture that we find in Ephesians 3
 - Paul is writing with the idea of family in mind (Father in v. 14 and family in v. 15)
 - He prays that they would be so grounded, so rooted and fixed - so unmovable - that they would find fulness
 - Probably that same fulness mentioned in John 10:10 that Satan wants to steal
 - That kind of "band of brothers" mentality is what creates the unbreakable unity that is one of the core values of our church
- d. Knowing that we all have each others' backs allows all of us to feel protected and secure, and security is the soil of maturity.

The Landing

I have to confess that I wanted to wrap this series up with a big ending. You know, so you would all think I'm amazing! A lot of lists of practical benefits that come into our lives because we're family and we're protected, but at the end of the day, I don't have that.

What I do know is that being protected gives us peace, and that being in the family of God means you and I have room to grow - safely, in peace.

It means we have the freedom to disagree, to work things out, to, well, **be family**.

And I think our country planned the big finish for us, because there is no better sermon illustration of what we've talked about this morning than our veterans.

They are the men and the women who have done for our country what God's army, mercy and family have done for us. They've protected us and given us the freedom - the peace, the security - to grow as a nation.

It's so easy to forget it, both as a country and as a family, and so we're going to close this out with a short video and then we'll respond as a family to the Father.