

God's Family & Our Families

If you have your bibles, turn with me to Luke 14. Excited to be back up here teaching this week after a couple weeks off. Although, fair warning: I've caught whatever the most recent plague of sickness is going around. When you've got kids, you actually get to catch everything at least twice. It goes around, and then comes back around, so I'm gonna do my best not to hack up a lung this morning. We'll see how it goes.

But today we're wrapping up our series, *Church is a Family*. Throughout the series, we've talked a lot about the ins and outs of life together as a church: how we are called to interact with one another in the kingdom of God. Today, for the *last* Sunday in our series, I want us to make a pivot and talk about how all of this impacts the way we think about our *earthly* families. As in, not other people in our *church*, but rather people in our immediate *household*. Thus far in this series, when I use the word "family," I've often been referring to our *church* family. Today, I'm switching it up. In most of today's teaching, when I say "family," I'm talking about the people that make up your *household*. Make sense? That's very important for you to know before we start.

So real quickly, before we begin, I want you to just have in mind who that would include for you. If you're married, that would probably be you and your spouse. If you're married with kids, that's you, your spouse, and your kids. If you're single parenting, that's you and your kid or kids. If you're in college, that might actually still be your parents and siblings back home—they are still functionally your *family*. If you're in college but you only call your family back home like once every two years, maybe not so much for you. If you're single and living with roommates, that might be you and your roommates, especially if you're reasonably close with them. But just think with me about whoever your *earthly family*, your *household*, would be. And it might be that you live on your own and you don't really have a good idea of who that is—we'll get to that towards the end. But a lot of us probably have some type of a "household" we belong to: a *family* of some sort. I want you to have those people in your mind because those are the relationships we're talking about today.

And with that in mind, to start off, I want us to take a look at a few somewhat *peculiar* passages from the life of Jesus. They're *peculiar* in that they kind of run *counter* to what many people assume that the Christian faith *is*. When a lot of people think about the movement of Christianity, they tend to think of it as a "family-friendly" movement. Some of that is because of the way Christianity has *marketed* itself through the years. Christian radio is often called "family-friendly radio." Christian movies are called "movies for the

whole family.” There’s even a somewhat famous Christian organization called *Focus on the Family*. This is the language used often to talk about what Christianity is.

And there’s *part* of that terminology that makes a lot of sense. The good news of Jesus does indeed *generate* healthy, thriving families, and has the ability to *repair* really *broken* families. As members of a biological family surrender their lives to Jesus, it will in time make that family healthier, create healthier family structures...all of those things. But here’s my rub with that language: **when we use the words “Christian” and “family-friendly” as if they’re synonyms, I think we might be overly simplifying some things a bit. And I think we might be missing some very important things about Jesus, and some very important things about how he thinks we should relate to our families.**

For instance, we tend to talk a lot about the *pro-family* teachings in the bible. Verses like “honor your father and mother,” “love your wife as Christ loved the church,” “bring your kids up in the way they should go...” We talk a lot about these “*pro-family*” passages in the bible. But some scholars have pointed out that there are perhaps just as many (of what we might call) *anti-family* teachings in the bible, especially from Jesus himself. Now by that, I don’t mean that Jesus is *against* families. I just mean that **Jesus, at times, will de-emphasize the importance of our earthly families, and will emphasize something else over and above it.** We tend to think and say things like “family comes first.” But Jesus in many places in Scripture is going to say something more like “family comes *second*.” Or maybe even further down the list than that. So, now that some of you think I’m certifiably crazy, let’s take a look at some bible: Luke 14, v. 25 and following:

*[25] Now great crowds accompanied him [that’s Jesus], and he turned and said to them, [26] “If anyone comes to me and does not **hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.***

Wow. So Jesus says, if anyone comes to him and wants to follow him, but does not *hate* his own family, that person *can not be* his disciple? I just don’t know if this would have made the cut onto our family-friendly radio stations. In fact, this is one of those moments where it really feels like Jesus could’ve used a P.R. rep or something, right? Like it seems like here is when a good campaign manager would step in and go “okay, you know what? It’s been a long day for Jesus—he’s saying a lot of things, I think we’ve all got enough to think about today. Why don’t we just all take the rest of the day off, we’ll

get Jesus some food and a nap, and we'll all join back up later?" There's really no way around it: this is very *jarring* language from Jesus.

And I want you to see that **the way Jesus presents it here, he actually includes every type of familial relationship we have.** His language is, and I quote, "*father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters.*" So apparently, this covers *everybody*: both what we would call our "family of origin"—the family we *come* from—and what we would call our "*nuclear family*"—the people who make up our *household now*. Jesus seems to be insisting that we should "*hate*" those people. So, what in the world could Jesus mean by saying something like this?

Well first off, let's be clear about what Jesus is *not* saying: **Jesus is *not* telling people to neglect, despise, or demonstrate contempt for their families** [repeat]. I say that just in case you read that and were thinking, "not going to Thanksgiving with the in-laws this year and now I've got a bible verse for it!" Jesus is not giving us license to be unkind or disrespectful towards our families and then blame it on him. That would go against everything else Jesus teaches in the Scriptures about how we should treat other people. So that's not what's happening here.

But here's what *is* happening: Jesus is using a rhetorical formula that was fairly common in his day—what we might call the *love/hate* formula.¹ It was a way to teach competing ideas by way of *contrast*. So it would be kind of like me saying to you something like "When Tennessee played Alabama, they made us look like a JV high school team." Now by saying that, I'm not being *literal*—I'm not saying that I *literally think* we are a high school in disguise. I'm just saying that there was a substantial *gap* in the talent level between our two teams. Right? I'm using hyperbolic language to make a point. That's similar in some ways to how Jesus is using the words "love" and "hate" in this passage. He's not saying that you should literally *hate* your family. **He's saying that your commitment to Jesus should at times make your commitment to your family look weak by comparison.** Does that make sense?

But when you think about it, this does mean that **there is a significant difference in what Jesus thinks it means to "love" something, and what we think it means.** You and I tend to think that we can "love" *a lot* of things, right? We can love Jesus, and love our families, and love our friends, and love our hobbies, and love our jobs (some of us not so much on that last one, but you get the idea). We feel like we can *love a lot* of

¹ For another example, see Jesus' teaching on money in Luke 16:12-14.

different things in our life, and those things we “love” don’t really ever have to interfere or compete with one another in any substantial ways, because they’re all in separate *compartments* of our lives. That’s how *we* think about love. But that’s not really how Jesus thought about love. **In Jesus’ language and the language of the bible, to love something is to show preference or priority for it.** Jesus thinks about *love* a lot like you and I would think about concepts like “loyalty” or “allegiance.” **Jesus would say you can indeed love many different things, but only one thing can have your allegiance. Only one thing can have your primary loyalty. You can only love one thing most.**

And so in this passage, while Jesus *isn’t* telling people to *neglect* their families, he *is* telling them that they will eventually have to decide where their *primary loyalty* lies. He’s saying that **as a follower of Jesus, there will come moments in life where you will have to decide whether your earthly family has your primary loyalty, or whether Jesus has your primary loyalty.** Now, that *messes* with us a little, doesn’t it? **My guess is that most American Christians have never even considered that their love for their family could be in competition with their love for Jesus.** Because I think most American Christians would assume that those are one in the same. But **Jesus seems to think that there are times where doing what is best for Jesus and his kingdom might not necessarily be the thing that is most ideal for our families.** There might be times where following Jesus means, at the very least, disrupting or inconveniencing our earthly family’s life.

Now that’s not license for running your family *ragged* trying to participate in the mission of God. It doesn’t mean, for instance, that you never ever have a family dinner together because you have to be having people over to your house every single night. And it doesn’t mean that you use God as an excuse to not care for your family well.² It doesn’t mean any of that. But here’s the thing: I don’t know that most American Christians err on *that* side of the spectrum. I think more of us err on the side of never doing anything that *interferes* with family, even when it *is* for the good of the kingdom. ~~There’s a popular saying in Christendom: it goes “don’t sacrifice your family on the altar of ministry.” And that’s a very necessary thing to say—especially guys like me *in* ministry often need to hear that. But perhaps some people also need to hear the opposite: “don’t sacrifice your ministry on the altar of family.” Family, just like anything else, can become something we put in the place of God. And Jesus says *here*, in no uncertain terms, that there will be times where putting him first might be at odds with putting our earthly family~~

² Jesus actually condemns the Pharisees for doing this very thing in Mark 7:10-13.

first. And that in those moments, followers of Jesus are called to devote their *first love*—their *primary loyalty*—to Jesus and his kingdom.

Now, we're going to talk in just a bit about what types of scenarios this might apply to exactly. But for the moment, let's take a look at another, similar, passage together. Turn back just a page or two to the left in your bibles to Luke 12. I realize how difficult of an idea this might be for some of us, so I want to try and unpack it from a few vantage points. Because this emphasis is actually a bit of a *theme* in Jesus' teachings. In this passage from Luke 12, Jesus is discussing this very same idea—he just uses slightly different language this time. Start reading with me in v. 51. This is Jesus speaking, and he says this:

[51] Do you **think** that I have come to give **peace on earth**?

Honest question: how many of you read that question and go “uhhhh...yes I actually did think that”? Like, is this a trick question? Some of you are like “I'm new to the whole Christian thing, but isn't that like one of the main ideas? That Jesus came to bring peace on earth? Like isn't that in a Christmas song or two?” Yeah, definitely seems a little confusing at first. Keep reading with me and we'll circle back to that. Look with me at the *second half* of v. 51:

*No, I tell you, but rather **division**. [Interesting...] [52] For from now on **in one house** [that is, in one household or one family] there will be five **divided**, three against two and two against three. [53] They will be **divided**, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”*

(Some of you are like “I haven't understood anything else so far, but I get that being ‘divided against your in-laws’ part. I'll say ‘amen’ to *that*.”) So with this passage, like always, you have to read it in *context*. You have to read it together with other things Scripture says. So Jesus *did indeed* come to bring “peace on earth” at a global, cosmic, *macro* level. Jesus is restoring peace in the world by restoring the world to the way it was meant to be all along. In *that* way, he comes to bring ‘peace on earth.’ But Jesus is very honest about the fact that at a *micro* level, within individual families and households, that very well may mean *not peace*, but *division*. For instance, **if one member of a family decides to follow Jesus, and another family member decides not to, those are two radically different approaches to life.** Because at their core, those people are

now members of two different *kingdoms*: one is living under the rule and reign of Jesus, and one is living under an entirely different rule and reign. And that reality will likely create some conflict, some tension, maybe even some *division* between them. And Jesus here is saying that that is to be expected.

Now the hope is that it doesn't *have* to create that, right? The hope is that *everyone in* your family decides to live under the rule and reign of *Jesus* along *with* you, so that all of you are going after the same things *together*. But there are plenty of times where that will *not* be the case. There will be times where you are following Jesus, and nobody else in your family is, and that will create some division. Or maybe more common for us living here in the Bible Belt, there will be times where you are following Jesus, and other people in your family only *claim* to follow Jesus, and *that* will create some division.

For instance, a friend of mine once felt the Lord prompting him to move to a North African country as a missionary—to one of those places that you're not allowed to talk about going to because if the wrong people found out, it could go bad for you. He had spent years training for the move, learning the language, learning a trade profession for his time there. And as the time neared for him to leave, his family began pressuring him *not* to go. And their plea wasn't just "we're nervous for you and scared and we don't *want* you to go." They eventually turned it into a *moral issue*. Their statement to him was "where you're going isn't safe and God wouldn't want you being so careless about your own safety." And eventually it created real tension and animosity between him and his family.

Another example. I knew a guy who had been dating a girl for a little over a year, and he went to go talk to her dad about asking her to marry him. Her dad was not a follower of Jesus, and during the conversation, her dad insisted that they hadn't been dating each other long enough to *know* if they should get married or not. Which sometimes happens. But what he suggested *next*, in no uncertain terms, is that what they should do is move in together in order to "test the waters" for a bit before they made such a permanent decision like getting married. Now, first: can you *imagine* a more uncomfortable conversation to have with your future *father-in-law*? But my friend realized that in order to honor what the Scriptures teach about marriage and about sexuality, he was called to *marry* his girlfriend, not just to "test the waters." Which almost immediately created tension between him and his future father-in-law.

I know of women who are followers of Jesus, but are married to men who *aren't*—or at least aren't at any *functional* level. And these women have to navigate the almost *weekly*

conversation of why they are going to attend church that Sunday, even if their husband has no interest in going with them. I've known *men* who want to be involved in the life of their church community—they want to spend time pouring into other followers of Jesus around them—but their wives see every church function, every small group meeting, every opportunity to pour into others, as a *threat* to time their husband could be spending at home with their family.

I could go on with examples—but I think these are the types of situations created when we take life in the kingdom of God seriously. At times, it is going to create some tension. As followers of Jesus, submitting our lives to him and his kingdom *will mean* conflict and confusion and misunderstanding with those who *don't* follow him. Or at least with those who only loosely identify with him. And Jesus wants to prepare us for that to happen.

But all that said, there *is* another, slightly *brighter* side to all of this that I don't want us to miss. So far we've only heard Jesus talk about all this in terms of a *warning*: he *warns* his disciples that following him may negatively affect their relationship with their family in some way. This next passage we'll look at isn't a *warning*, but instead a *promise*. Let's take a look at this one, and then we'll step back and talk about what all of this means for us. This one we'll put on the screen just for time's sake. This is Mark 10. This is Jesus speaking to his disciples:

*Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is **no one who has left** house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, **who will not receive a hundredfold** now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, **and in the age to come eternal life.** [v. 29-30]*

So Jesus here shows us that his instruction to re-prioritize how we think about our familial relationships is not just a warning, it also includes a *promise*. The promise that for anything we lose, or sacrifice, or give up, or re-prioritize for the sake of the kingdom, we will receive back a truer, more lasting version of it, in this age and the one to come. Never, never forget that God's intention is not to *take* from you. It's intentions are always to *give*. Now, sometimes, in order to *receive* what he has to give us, it looks like reprioritizing some things that we *have*. Sure, in some ways we "lose" those familial relationships—they become less of a priority than they were before following Jesus—but we also *gain* a truer, more lasting family in the process. Jesus offers us an *incredible inheritance*, both in this life and in the one to come. And that includes a newer, bigger, truer family. That's the promise we're given from Jesus.

So with that all as our framework from the bible, let's talk a little practically about what all of this might mean for us. Seeing family in this way, what should it generate in us as a result? I've got a couple implications for us. First...

If you *do* have a *healthy* family, leverage it.

Think back with me for a second about whoever your "household" includes: your spouse, your spouse and kids, your roommates, your family of origin...whoever makes up your family, I want you to ask yourself: is it a *healthy* household? Now, by "healthy," I don't mean "perfect"—no family is perfect. What *I mean* is, as a pattern, does it aim to reflect the values of the kingdom of God? As a pattern, are the grace and compassion of Jesus present in it? Is there a quickness by each person to own up to their faults and sins and to repent quickly of them? Is there a desire by the people in it to become more like Jesus? Does the family you're a part of have a *healthy* culture about it?

If it *does*, here's what I want to encourage you to do: see that family you're a part of as a *tool*, not as an end in itself. See it as something to be leveraged for the kingdom, and not just something to maintain and protect for its own sake. Here's another way of saying what Jesus said in that first passage we looked at: **between God and your family, you will always use one, to benefit the other.**

If your primary loyalty, your primary commitment lies with your family, you will simply *use* God to benefit your family. And we've often done just that here in the South. We often operate as if God is simply a means to an end. He simply becomes a way to improve and upgrade our earthly family. We put our kids in church so our kids will behave. We drop our kids off at church so the kids' minister or the youth pastor can teach them how to follow Jesus. We drag an unwilling spouse to church so that the church can help improve our marriage. Now, make no mistake about it: we here at City Church do want to *help* with all of those things. We do want to help you disciple your kids, we do want to strengthen the marriages in our church. But here's the *kicker*: **if your primary commitment is to your family and not to God himself, you will only follow Jesus insofar as he benefits your family, and doesn't disrupt anything about it.**

On the other hand, if your primary commitment is to *Jesus*, you will look for ways to *leverage* everything in your life for the purpose of the kingdom of God...*including* your earthly family. Which means that *sometimes* you will be okay with life being a little bit *less ideal* for your family, if it means that the kingdom of God gets served and built up

through your family. You'll be okay with a little less uninterrupted time with *just* your family, if it means that your family gets to participate in the mission of God *together*.

When it comes to our earthly family, followers of Jesus should aim to build *doors into it, instead of only building walls around it*. Most Americans are good at building *walls around* their family. We place the supreme value on *family*, and try to insulate from and block out anything else in our lives interfering with that. We build “walls” around our family to keep all the other things out that might disturb or interfere with it. And there are times and seasons where that may be necessary. But what if we also looked to build “doors” into our family? What if we looked for ways to *leverage our family* for the sake of those *without* families? What if we sought out ways to give other people *glimpses* of family, opportunities to experience life *in* that family, instead of seeing every other relationship as a potential *threat*?

I would submit to you that this is a much more biblical way to think about the family you're a part of. Such that it goes all the way back to one of the very first families in the Bible. Back in the early pages of Genesis, God tells Abraham that he will bless Abraham's family—his household—but that *the reason he is doing that is so that they might be a blessing to the rest of the world.*³ **The end goal was never just to bless Abraham's family. The end goal was to make Abraham's family a blessing.** And God's intentions with our family is very much the same: he doesn't just want to bless our family. He wants our family to *be* a blessing. Do you see the difference?

And furthermore, in a very real sense, this is what *Jesus himself* did. Jesus existed from eternity past in heaven with a “family” of sorts: him, the Father, and the Spirit. But eventually, Jesus “left” that relationship, for the purpose of bringing more people *into* that relationship. And ultimately on the cross, he experienced *broken* relationship with the Father...for what purpose? *So that more people might be welcomed in.* So that more people might be rescued and welcomed into God's family. Jesus knew that the purpose of *family* was to reach those outside of itself. And we're called to see it the same way. To have the same mindset.

Now, what I absolutely *love* about our church is that by in large, you guys embody this mindset towards your earthly families so very well. As one example, in our church, it has become a very normal thing for *families*—a husband and a wife, or a family with kids—to offer to let *single folks* move in with them. It's happened a variety of different ways, but

³ See specifically Genesis 12:1-3.

generally, a family will catch wind that a college student or grad student or young professional needs a place to live. Maybe because they're on a tight budget or they're trying to save money, maybe because they don't want to live alone and struggle with temptation because of that—but for whatever reason, a single person needs a place to live. And a married couple or family in our church will say “hey we've got a spare bedroom that we're not using—why don't you just move in with us for a bit?” And usually, that's not just them saying “hey you're allowed to come take up space in our house.” It's them saying “hey come be a part of our household. Let's grab dinner all together at least once a week if not more, let's live life together, let's work through the inevitable conflict and frustrations that will come from sharing life this closely.” That's building doors into your family and not walls. It's seeing your family as a tool for the kingdom. So first, if you have a healthy family, *leverage* it for the kingdom of God. And second...

If you *don't* have a healthy family, now you do.

Second, if for one reason or another you *don't* feel like you have much of a family at all, we want you to know that now you do. So maybe you recently moved here, and you're on your own, and you don't really know hardly anybody in the city, and any family you have is miles and miles away; we want to be your family. Maybe you *have* a family, but there's so much hurt and fall-out *in* that family that it's not functionally a family to you at all; if that's it, we want to be your family. Maybe you had a family, but it fell apart—maybe something happened and it's not a family anymore, or if it is, you're not a part of it; we want to be *your* family. Or maybe for you, you have a family, but it's just that all or most of the other members in the family don't follow Jesus, and you do; if that's true, we want to be your family.

This entire teaching series has been about how we are called to be *family* to one another. So if you're in a spot where you don't have a functional earthly family to speak of, we want you to know that we desire to *be* that family. Psalm 68:6 tells us that “God sets the lonely in *families*.” Here at City Church, we firmly believe that that is what God did for us in Jesus, and we want to be a central part of how he does that for you. So if that's part of your story, we want you to know that you don't have to go another single day on your own. Come talk to one of us after the teaching, sign up online for a LifeGroup—get connected in whatever way you want, but know that we want to be your family.

Now when I say that, I don't mean that you now have a *perfect* family. I will be the first to tell you that we are far from perfect around here. I'm not saying you have a picturesque

family who will never fail you or let you down in any way. I'm not saying that we will fulfill every single spiritual, relational, and emotional need you have at all times. But I am saying you have a group of people that desire to be family to you. Who desire to be what you don't feel like you have. That's part of what it means for church to be a family.

So as we close out this series, whether you need to be on the *receiving* end of family (you need us to be family to *you*), or whether you need to be on the *giving* end of family (you need to look for ways to *leverage* your family for the kingdom), I pray that God does the work that needs to be done. I pray that he moves and works in us to make *us, and our families*, into *his family*. Amen? Let's pray together.

Applications:

- If you have a *healthy* family, *use* it.
 - Family is an invitation, not a stop sign.
 - All the way back to Abraham: “bless you, and *make you a blessing.*”
- If you *don't* have a healthy family, now you *do*.
 - Laura's response
 - “God sets the lonely in families.”
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Scripture to choose from:

[25] Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

– Luke 14:25-27

[18] Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. [19] And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." [20] And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." [21] Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." [22] And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

– Matthew 8:18-22

-- OR --

[57] As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." [58] And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." [59] To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." [60] And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." [61] Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." [62] Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

– Luke 9:57-62

[28] Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. [30] But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

-- OR --

*[28] Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”
[29] Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers
or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,
[30] who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and
sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to
come eternal life. [31] But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

– Mark 10:28-31

Maybe:

*[51] Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but
rather division. [52] For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three
against two and two against three. [53] They will be divided, father against son
and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against
mother-in-law.”*

– Luke 12:51-53

Maybe entire context of this passage:

*[25] Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] “If
anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and
children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my
disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be
my disciple. [28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down
and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when
he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,
30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ [31] Or what king,
going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate
whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with
twenty thousand? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a
delegation and asks for terms of peace. [33] So therefore, any one of you who
does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. [34] “Salt is good, but if
salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? [35] It is of no use either*

for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Bucket:

Figure out word picture about your family being an invitation rather than a stop sign
See Ch. 7 of <i>When the Church Was a Family</i> , specifically starting at location 3479, <i>Family is about More than Me, the Wife, and the Kids</i> .
Camp out on tension between “no one has left family...” passages and “whoever comes to me and does not hate his family...” passage.
Maybe bring in the stuff about how people were closer to family than with their spouses