

(parents especially, think of your children): When they sin against you or do things to hurt you—even betray or desert you—your relationship with them may be strained or damaged for a time, but do you ever stop loving them? No! They’re your family! They’re your children! “Blood is thicker than water.”

How much stronger is God’s love for us through the shed blood of our Savior Jesus Christ? That is a Family Tie that cannot be broken! Jesus’ “blood is thicker than water.” We cannot earn a spot in His family. We cannot ever become worthy enough to be called God’s sons or daughters or the brothers or sisters of Christ. We cannot even pay for **one** of our mistakes or the many times we’ve sinned against our Savior God and shamed our spiritual “family name.” And yet, Jesus is not “embarrassed” by us—even if we are the “black sheep” of His family. Listen again to those wonderful words of the last verse of our text: “So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers” (v. 11b). He has washed us clean and made us white as snow by His blood. He “taste[d] death for everyone,” as our text says, and has made us sons of God and heirs of His crown of glory in heaven (cf. v. 9).

On top of that, as we mentioned earlier, God, in fact, used **both** blood and water: Christ’s cross and shed blood, and the Word and water of baptism, which connects you to Him—which **clothes you** with Christ! “For you are

all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:26 NKJV).

Are you the “black sheep” of God’s family? Do you feel like you are sometimes? Jesus still loves you! He is still your “Good Shepherd.” You are the one He would leave 99 of His other sheep to go and search for when you are lost. And when He finds you and brings you back to Himself, He rejoices (and so do His angels in heaven) (Luke 15:4-7)! He has washed your “blackness” and made it white! He still leads and guides you back into His flock and will lead you to the eternal home He has prepared for you in heaven. He leads us with His cross. On that cross He shed His blood for us, to make us sons and daughters of God and His very own brothers and sisters. That cross and His blood are our unbreakable Family Ties to God. Cling to it! Cling to Jesus! Amen.

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Ministry By Mail

“Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.” -Psalm 96:2

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Sermon Theme:
Family Ties

Scripture Readings:
Hebrews 2:1-8 ; Mark 10:35-45

**Hymns from “The Lutheran Hymnal”
(1941):**
#538 | #219 | #464 | #241

Prayer: O God, the protector of all who trust in You, have mercy on us that with You as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Sermon Text: (Hebrews 2:9-11 EHV) "But we look to Jesus (the one who was made lower than the angels for a little while, so that by God’s grace he might taste death for everyone), now crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered death. 10 Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers."

“You can’t pick your family!” Have you ever heard that expression before? How is that phrase usually used? Usually not in a positive sense, right? It’s usually used when you’re thinking about some of your relatives who are just a bit “off.” The goofy uncle with the strange sense of humor (and even stranger fashion sense), or the aunt who owns **way** too many cats!

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You sometimes also hear this expression, “You can’t pick your family,” when someone is thinking about a relative who can’t seem to keep themselves out of trouble. Sometimes these folks are called the “black sheep” of the family. Do you have any “black sheep” in your family? Often they’re the ones the rest of the family members are a little embarrassed about—the ones the rest of the family doesn’t really like to talk about. Do you have someone like this in your family? Maybe **you’re** the one who’s the “black sheep” of your family?!

Do you ever feel like the “black sheep” of God’s family? Like you really don’t “fit the mold” of what you would expect from a son or daughter of the Most High God? Do you feel that you’re not “spiritual enough,” that you don’t know enough about the Bible, or that you are just plain too sinful to really be deserving of being called a “child of God”? Do you ever feel that if others knew just how bad your attitudes and thoughts were, or if they knew the sinful things you’ve done in your life, your “brothers and sisters” in Christ would probably want to kick you out of the “family”? We’ve all been there, haven’t we?

The writer of Hebrews speaks to us this morning about being members of God’s family. He gives some words of comfort to us “black sheep” of God’s flock as he reminds us of our Family

Ties.

Let me ask those of you who have ever felt “unworthy” to be a son or daughter of God a question: What part did you play in coming into the family you were born into **physically**? In other words, who made the decision to bring you into your family—you or your parents? Even if you were adopted, did you really have anything to do with being made a child of your **physical** family? You didn’t, did you? (Remember that expression, “You can’t pick your family”?)

So how much do you think you were involved in becoming a child of God’s family **spiritually**? The Bible tells us in the Gospel of John, “...He [Jesus] gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12b-13 NKJV). God, your Father, is the one who brought you into His family! For most of us, this is fairly obvious when you think about it: God worked His miraculous gift of faith in our hearts and gave us **spiritual** birth at our baptism as infants. Paul wrote about this in Galatians, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ...Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27, 4:7 NKJV).

Even though we have been adopted into God’s family, we were made His sons and daughters by **blood**. Not by the blood that courses through our veins, but by the blood of Jesus! Our text tells us, “Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings” (v. 10). That’s how God made us His sons and daughters! Through the suffering and death of His Son Jesus. This means that what we’ve done or haven’t done, and whether we feel “worthy” of being a child of God, are really not the issue. The fact is **none** of us have done enough, been “good enough,” or are “worthy” enough to be God’s child. Remember, **He** made **us** His children! He chose us—not the other way around. We didn’t make ourselves holy; **He** made us holy in His sight through the blood of Jesus. The last verse of our text reminds us, “For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father” (v. 11a).

Let me ask you about another expression that deals with family: Have you ever heard the expression, “Blood is thicker than water”? It means that Family Ties are more important and stronger than any other relationship. You know how this works in our everyday life. You might have made picking on your siblings and making them cry pretty much a daily “sporting event,” but if

anyone **else** messed with your brother or your sister, you’d punch their lights out. Why? Because they’re family! Even if you don’t get along with them very well—even if you don’t like them very much—your Family Ties to them are more important. “Blood is thicker than water.”

How about our relationship with our heavenly Father, the one who has brought us into His spiritual family? Are the spiritual Family Ties between God and us more important and stronger than any other relationship? Does the saying “Blood is thicker than water” hold true in God’s family? You bet it does! Just think of the “blood” that God used to make you His child—the very blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus! Think of that price He paid to make you His own. Do you think He’s going to give you up for anything? No! The Bible tells us that He goes after those of us who are His straying “black sheep” and does everything He can to bring them back into the fold (see Luke 15:1-7). Even when we sin against Him—or even forsake Him—He does not stop loving us.

Now, our relationship with our heavenly Father may be strained or damaged by what we’ve done—but that’s because of us. The fact is **He** never stops loving us! We are His children. “Blood is thicker than water.” God’s “Family Ties” are just too strong! Think of your own family members