

A NEW FAMILY

John 19:23-27

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What does “family of God” or “brother/sister in Christ” mean to you? How do you define these relationships? What responsibility do we have for each other in the family of God?
- How does your experience with your biological family affect your view of the family of God?

Family relationships can be both wonderful and just as often fraught. But family plays an important and valued role in society. Throughout his ministry, Jesus redefined what family means and he did so from a kingdom perspective, creating the framework for what we now recognize as the Church. With some of his last agonizing breaths, Jesus spoke words of compassion and command to his disciple and his mother standing at the foot of his cross. His words reveal deep compassion for his mother, but also affirm what he demonstrated throughout his ministry—that believing in Jesus brings together unexpected people through God’s love and creates a new family.

Listen: [A New Family](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Even on the cross, a time of great suffering and spiritual magnitude, Jesus took note and cared for earthly concerns. What might Jesus’ care and concern teach us about how we care for our own faith and how we care for and minister to others?
- In segment 2, host Scott Hoezee paraphrases Bible commentator Frederick Dale Bruner noting that when Jesus says “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother,” he honors his mother and thus fulfills Old Testament law, but also creates “a new nuclear family based on faith; a new family of God where water is thicker than blood...” What do you think this means for you and your relationship with fellow believers?
- In *Thank God It’s Friday*, William Willimon echoes Bruner’s understanding but goes further to describe the implications, “We, who once cared only for those folk who have the same genetic endowment as us, now are made to care for those with whom we have nothing in common except Jesus” (p. 50, Books). Do you think this is easy or difficult for most Christians to care for others this way? Why? What might we need to do or practice in an effort to make our bond in Christ stronger than our familial bonds, particularly when we do not share other traits, interests, or values in common?
- Think about Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry. What stories or teachings can you identify that demonstrate the compassion for the vulnerable and the understanding of God’s family that is communicated in this word from the cross?
- As host Dave Bast closes the episode, he reminds us that at its heart, this word Christ utters from the cross speaks to God’s great love for us: “God sees us, God knows us, he reaches out to us in love.”

What does that mean to you? Who do you know that needs to hear this reminder of God's great love and care?

Related Passages

- **Exodus 20:12**
- **Colossians 3:12-17**
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**
- **Galatians 3:26-28**
- **Revelation 7:9-10**

Conclusion

Think about your relationships with Christians who you do not know well, who you do not like, or who make you uncomfortable. Then read and reflect on Colossians 3:12-17; make note of the thoughts and feelings the Holy Spirit stirs in you as you read. Finally, prayerfully consider these words from Willimon:

“Look around you just now, at these losers who gather at the foot of the cross, people whom you hardly know, much less have much in common with. Pray to God for the grace to be able to see these strangers as your siblings. Pray to God that they'll be given the grace to see you as a close relative” (from “The Third Word” in *Thank God It's Friday*, p. 51, Books).

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/a-new-family>

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