

**The Household of God**  
**Titles of The Church (5)**  
**Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan**

<sup>NAU</sup> **Ephesians 2:19** <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Apostle Paul says to the Christians in Ephesian church that they are of God's household. What does the word household mean?

**God's Household means God's family**

I check the meaning of the word "household" in the English dictionaries:

- A house and its occupants regarded as a unit. (Oxford English Dictionary)
- The people in a family or other group that are living together in one house (Merriam-Webster English Dictionary)

According to these English dictionaries, people in the household may or may not be one family, as long as they live together in the same unit, they are considered in the same household.

Then what about the meaning in Greek? The Greek word for "household" is "οἰκεῖος" (oikeios), it means:

- members of a family, relative (Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon).
- persons who are related by kinship or circumstances and form a closely knit group (Bauer-Danker, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)
- one who belongs to a particular household or extended family (Louw-Nida, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament)

All three Greek dictionaries define oikeios as family (or kinship), not just people living in the same house.

Apostle Paul says Christians are of God's household, that means we are of God's family, therefore each one of us is a member of God's family.

**God is Our Father**

The Lord Jesus mentions again and again "your Father in heaven": Matthew 5:16, Matthew 5:45, Matthew 6:1, Matthew 6:9, Matthew 7:11, Matthew 18:14, Matthew 23:9, Mark 11:25, Mark 11:26, Mark 13:32, Luke 10:21, Luke 15:18, Luke 15:21.

The Lord Jesus teaches us to pray to God as our Father in heaven:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Matthew 6:9** <sup>9</sup> Pray, then, in this way: “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be your name.”

That was exactly how I prayed when I first came to God, there was no one guiding me, I just followed the Lord’s teaching in the Bible word for word.

According to Apostle John we become children of God when we believe in His name:

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 1:12** <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Apostle Paul says we are adopted as sons and we cry out “Abba! Father!”

<sup>NAU</sup> **Romans 8:15** <sup>15</sup> For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

### **A Privilege to Address God as Father**

Many Christians don’t realize that it is a big privilege to address God as “Abba Father” or “Fahter in heaven”! Our intimate relationship with God is one that no Jews nor non-Christians have.

People in different religions don’t have such close relationship with their god. Buddhists don’t address Buddha as father, Hindus don’t call their many gods as fathers, Muslims don’t address Allah as father either.

The Jews know that God is their Father in the sense of Creator:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 64:8** <sup>8</sup> But now, O Yahweh, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Malachi 2:10** <sup>10</sup> “Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?”

They also know that God is their Father in the sense of Redeemer:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Deuteronomy 32:6** <sup>6</sup> “Do you thus repay Yahweh, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 63:16** <sup>16</sup> For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us. You, O Yahweh, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

Even though they know all these, but they don't address God directly as “our Father in heaven” or “Abba Father”! They see that calling God as one's own Father means making himself equal with God:

<sup>NAU</sup> **John 5:18** For this reason therefore <sup>a</sup>the Jews <sup>b</sup>were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, <sup>c</sup>making Himself equal with God.

That is why the Jews in those days were very offended when the Lord Jesus referred to God as “my Father”.

But it was Yahweh God who wanted the Israelites to address Him as “my Father”, but they did not want it, because if they had addressed Yahweh as Father they would have to follow Him:

<sup>NAU</sup> **Jeremiah 3:19** <sup>19</sup> “Then I said, “How I would set you among my sons And give you a pleasant land, The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!” And I said, “You shall call me, my Father, And not turn away from following me.”

<sup>NAU</sup> **Jeremiah 31:9** <sup>9</sup> “With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is my firstborn.”

Very few individual in the Old Testament dared to address God directly as “Father”, David was one of them.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Psalms 89:20 – 26** <sup>20</sup> “I have found David my servant; With my holy oil I have anointed him, <sup>21</sup> With whom my hand will be established; my arm also will strengthen him. <sup>22</sup> “The enemy will not deceive him, Nor the son of wickedness afflict him. <sup>23</sup> “But I shall crush his adversaries before him, And strike those who hate him. <sup>24</sup> “My faithfulness and my lovingkindness will be with him, And in my name his horn will be exalted. <sup>25</sup> “I shall also set

his hand on the sea And his right hand on the rivers. <sup>26</sup> “He will cry to me, “You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.”

And to Solomon, God said, “He will be my son, I will be his Father”:

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 Chronicles 17:7 – 13** <sup>7</sup> “Now, therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over my people Israel. <sup>8</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. <sup>9</sup> “I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and not be moved again; and the wicked will not waste them anymore as formerly, <sup>10</sup> even from the day that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover, I tell you that Yahweh will build a house for you. <sup>11</sup> “When your days are fulfilled that you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up *one of* your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>12</sup> “He shall build for me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. <sup>13</sup> “I will be his father and he shall be my son; and I will not take my lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you.

### **Are We Truly Close with God?**

I am very close with God my Father in heaven, because He knows my heart through and through, He is much closer to me than my own parents are: even though my parents love me very much, but they don't know me as deep as God my Father. I enjoy the time with God, I can come before Him and tells Him everything in my heart, I know He will not reject me, He will accept me, but He will correct me and lead me in His righteous way.

One of my concerns is that it seems many Christians don't enjoy the time with God; they have some kind of fear towards God. Apostle John says “perfect love casts out fear”:

<sup>NAU</sup> **1 John 4:18** <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

If we are not close with God, we won't hear God's voice. Especially in the last days we have to be able to discern what we hear is God's voice or the enemy's voice.

### **The Church Should Be a House of Prayer for All The People**

## The Household of God

The family of God should be communicating with God just like the children in the family communicate with their father. The communication with God is called prayer. Is the church a house of prayer?

If the church truly communicates with God, when non-Christians come into the church, they would perceive the church has something that the world doesn't have, which is the presence of God. They would know the church is not just another social club.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 56:7** <sup>7</sup> “Even those I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar; For my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”

God says His house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. Our God always have in mind salvation for all the peoples, not just for the Jews.