

## **ARM Prison Outreach International**

### **"Ministers' Minute"**

#### **Volume III Number 7**

#### **GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN**

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**Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 31st email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message develops a text in Philippians as Paul tells us the wrong ways and the right way to become the children of God. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it!**

**May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director**

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#### **ARM QUICK FACT:**

**Over 15,000 ARM Bible courses have been sent in the first five months of 2004 -- AN AVERAGE OF 100 per day!**

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#### **GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN**

**Philippians 3:3-14**

Grandpa read the story of Noah's ark to his 5-year-old granddaughter. At the end she asked, "Pa-Pa, did you ride the ark?" "Oh no," said he, "I wasn't on the ark with Noah." She thought for a minute, then said with a scrunched up face: "Then why didn't you drown?"

Grandkids are special! That means ALL of us are special, for all of us are SOMEBODY'S grandkids! One preacher said he was enjoying his grandkids so much, he now wishes he could have had THEM FIRST!

Now grandkids are important! Note these scriptures:

**Deut 6:1-2 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. (NAS)**

**Deut 4:9 "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. (NAS)**

**Deut 4:25 "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger, (NAS)**

**Prov 17:6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. (KJV)**

As noble and honorable as it is to be a grandparent, I must declare: "GOD WILL NEVER BE YOUR GRANDFATHER!"

It isn't "Our Grandfather which art in heaven ..." Jesus referred to His role of protection as a mother in Matthew 23:37 -- "...as a hen gathers her chicks..." but there are no references to God being our Grandfather. AND YOU CAN'T BE A GRANDCHILD OF GOD! You are either His son or daughter, or you aren't in His family at all!

Here's why: EACH OF US MUST PERSONALLY COME TO THE FATHER THRU HIS SON JESUS; by that total commitment of trust and obedience, we become his children!

Paul declared the truth about HOW WE CONNECT TO THE HEAVENLY FATHER in this classic passage in Philippians 3:3-14:

- 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,
- 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:
- 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;
- 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.
- 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
- 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,
- 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,
- 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
- 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- 12 Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
- 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
- 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (NAS)

## **1. WE CANNOT COME INTO GOD'S FAMILY BY OUR ANCESTRY. Verses 3-5**

"No confidence in the flesh" means "no standing with God based on our parents. There is no 'second-hand' faith.

No matter how much you went to church with Godly parents or grandparents, YOU CAN'T RIDE THEIR COATTAILS into the Kingdom! Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian anymore than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger!

Your grandfather may have built that old church building a hundred years ago. Your parents may have been charter members of the "First Church of the Most Devoted." They did not pass along spiritual justification thru their genes and chromosomes!

THE PRODIGAL SON HAD A MOST GODLY FATHER, BUT HE STILL HAD TO DECIDE HIS OWN SPIRITUAL DESTINY.

Your older brother might be a preacher, your big sister may be a missionary -- it's still YOUR decision to make Jesus Lord in your own life.

You must choose to submit to Jesus, give your whole self to a personal relationship with Him. Then you are a child of God -- not a grandkid!

## **2. WE CANNOT COME INTO GOD'S FAMILY BY OUR LAW-KEEPING. Verses 5 and 6b**

Paul says he was a foremost keeper of the Mosaic law. Like other Pharisees, he kept the laws he knew meticulously.

In His "woes to the Pharisees" in Matthew 23, Jesus said that they even counted out the herbal seeds and gave one tenth of each pile of mint, anise, and cummin seeds! Matthew 23:23.

Paul came to understand that he had left "the weightier matters of the law undone. Jesus said these weightier matters were judgment, mercy, and faith. And Paul says he now knows that his standing with God is not based on ancestry (Hebrew of Hebrews) or law-keeping (Phariseeism) but only his personal faith and commitment to Jesus, God's Son.

### **3. WE CANNOT COME INTO GOD'S FAMILY BY OUR AFFILIATIONS. Verses 5**

Paul said that he had once trusted in "being in the right group." He was a Pharisee, the most strict of all the sects at the time of Jesus.

What sub-group do you count on to be your 'ticket' to God's family?

*When one Englishman was asked if he were a Christian, he responded: "Of course I am; I'm an Englishman, aren't I?"*

Sometimes folks trust in the name of the church over the door; sometimes it is a fraternal order, lodge, or veterans organization. You get some insight on this just reading the obituaries. I like the simple epitaph on one old gentleman's tombstone: "No memberships to speak of; he just was totally devoted to Jesus and His church."

### **4. WE CANNOT COME INTO GOD'S FAMILY BY OUR ENTHUSIASM. Verses 6a**

Paul documented his devotion, sincerity, and enthusiasm by his record of zeal in persecution of the church. Talk about committed! He was no doubt considered on who went 'overboard' for Judaism! A fanatic indeed! Consider his own description in Galatians 1:

**Gal 1:13-14 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. (KJV)**

Sincerity is thought by some to be the "magic potion" of justification. "As long as you are sincere," they say.

Paul, however, says that his sincerity as a persecutor was like the devotion of Cornelius: **INEFFECTIVE UNTIL A PERSONAL FAITH AND COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST LED TO THEIR NEW BIRTH!**

Paul says that all these human devices to gain entrance into God's family are ineffective. In fact, he counted them all as refuse for the one true way of becoming a child of God: Personal faith in Jesus Christ that leads to:

Surrender and submission: Faith that leads to total pursuit of a personal relationship with the Savior. Paul is the example himself as he obeys the Lord's command on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:17-20; 22:12-16 He totally submits, is immersed into Christ by Annaias,

and immediately pours his whole life into serving the King of Kings.

**Are you depending on your ANCESTRY? LAW-KEEPING? AFFILIATIONS? ENTHUSIASM? Your personal decision to make Christ Jesus the Lord of your life is the ONLY way to truly become a child of God.**

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**Rod Farthing, ARM National Development Director  
"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B**