

- First chunk done more explicitly with the kids early in the service, second chunk (from "Because I'm Worth It") more like a sermon, second talk in the service.
- Box of sweets with various types - *Liquorice Allsorts, Quality Street, or similar*

## Allsorts!

- Start today with a treat!
  - take sweets round!
  - comment on favourites
- After been round, comment on how choosy some people were!
  - everyone has their favourites!
- Sadly, sometimes we can be choosy with people too
  - we can have our favourites - and some we don't really like
- Imagine what it would be like if God were like that!
  - what if he took a dislike to me? dreadful!

## Families!

- One of the places we are "stuck" with each other is in our families!
  - God designed our families as places where we could experience absolute acceptance and love
  - where the worry about being disliked by others evaporated in the experience of being loved just as we are
- Who here is related to who?
  - try and see whether there are any connections I'm not aware of!!
- There are strong family connections - invisible, maybe, but terribly important!
  - families are places where we find a large chunk of our identities;
  - "who am I?", ... Colin BROUGH; where I come from was determined by my family; many of my values and aspirations, the things I think are important came from my parents; more currently Helen's support is critical in just about everything I do.
  - I'm also partly defined by being father of Peter, Andrew & Mark!

## Summary

- Being choosy about sweets is all very well:
  - but a problem if we are so choosy about people too!
- God gave us families as places where we can't be choosy:
  - we are related to one another, for good or ill, for better or worse!
  - intention is to give us security in that love - we are accepted!

## Because I'm Worth It

- Have you seen the ads on the TV:
  - finish with the tag line, "Because I'm worth it!!"
  - *L'Oreal, I think, hair & skin care - looking good is worth spending money on, you are worth it, you are important, you are the centre of your universe....*
- But while that message is being broadcast across the country, there are many who simply don't feel like that:
  - who feel decidedly unimportant, who don't feel like they belong anywhere, or who are constantly unsure about other people's acceptance of them, who can scarcely believe that anyone could like them...

- *attempted suicides, depressive illnesses, anorexia & related body-image problems...*

- There are many, many people out there - and probably some in here - who are not convinced that they are worth it.
  - we have a fundamental, God given need to be loved, to be accepted for who we really are without having to put up a pretense, an act;
  - without it, we don't function right.

## Happy Families

- Talked about families earlier on:
  - designed as places of affirming acceptance
  - places where we find a large chunk of our identities
- The core of what Jesus demonstrated here is a very simple truth:
  - **we are part of God's family**, we are brothers and sisters with the Lord!
  - we are not **servants**, not **slaves**, but **sons**.
- I've talked to folk on a number of occasions who, when presented with the picture of heaven as a great banquet from Jesus' parables, visualise themselves not as guests, but as servants; not enjoying the festivities, but working hard somewhere in the background!
  - Jesus here firmly reminds us that that is **NOT** the way he thinks of us, or treats us!
  - we are his brothers and sisters!

## Exposition

**(31) Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.**

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- They've arrived!
  - probably busy house, crowd around, "could you get Jesus for us?"

**(32) A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."**

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- Sitting implies teaching relationship
- Crowd - still gathering to hear what Jesus is saying despite growing opposition from authorities
  - remember, this wasn't an individualists culture like ours!!
- Phrasing suggests natural expectation was that he'd go: no one would be miffed, family had the prior call.

**(33) "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.**

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- Here is where Jesus throws the spanner in the works!

**(34) Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"**

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- Clearly they literally weren't, so what is Jesus saying?
  - these folk who are listening and learning from him, who are seeking to follow him, they are his brothers and sisters, the most critically important people in his life!
  - we all like to be included - picked for teams, invited to parties, asked to help, whatever...
  - *here is the ultimate inclusion!*

**(35) Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."**

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- Jesus goes on to amplify what is was about the folk gathered round him that picked them out for this special treatment:
  - "whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother"...
- But, **what is God's will in this context?**
  - is it **detailed obedience** of the **minutiae** of God's laws?
  - **clearly not**, otherwise the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law would have been

the ones sitting round Jesus' feet!

- Think on it another way.... **what does God want most in the world?**
  - **for us to be in relationship with him**, to be his friends, to return his offered love!
- All the way through the Bible God is looking for people to respond in faith, **to begin to trust him**:
  - that is what God wants!! that is God's will!!
  - *sure, it will have consequences, as we increasingly align our lives with his commands, his character expressed in law;*
  - **but the starting point is his desire to have us in his family!**

## Because you're worth it!

- You know how little kids often like to have a comforter, a blanket, a sookie, a cuggy:
  - something soft and familiar to cling to when tired or grumpy?
  - heaven help any parent who forgets it, or dares to wash it!!
  - those blankets have huge value to the child...
  - ...not because they are beautiful, or clean, or anything!
  - *but because they are loved!!*
- The **worth** comes, not from the object itself, but **from the love of the child**.
  - to take the analogy back to ourselves, **we have value** - not because we are worthy, good, special **in ourselves** - but because **Jesus loves us**, because he wants us in his family, because as we respond to his offer of salvation, of friendship and relationship, then we are fitting right in with God's will!
- Incredible reassurance, incredible motivation:
  - have you ever seen a child visibly grow in confidence when you tell them they are special, what they have done is of value?
- **Jesus values us in that way; he wants us (not for a sunbeam) but for a brother or a sister!**