

MINISTER'S MOMENTS | REV. DR. JAYSON S. GALLER

Favorite children and left-out siblings can have God's favor

Are you a favorite child or a left-out sibling, or do you have a favorite child and left-out children?

Family-systems theory has a lot to say about such things as how and why there are favorite children and about such favoritism's impact on the favored children and on the left-out siblings.

The Bible also has relevant teaching about "favoritism" and some examples of favorite children and left-out siblings.

Recently our Sunday Adult Bible Class titled "Basic Bible Accounts" considered Isaac and Rebekah and their children, Jacob and Esau, as reported in Genesis 25:19-34 and 26:34-28:09, which tells that Isaac loved Esau because Isaac ate of Esau's game, but that Rebekah loved Jacob.

Not surprisingly then, Jacob later had a favorite wife, Rachel, and also a favorite son, Joseph, as reported in Genesis 29:1-



30:24; 35:16-21; 37:1-36, which tells that Jacob loved Joseph more because Joseph was the son of his old age.

Favoritism caused problems in both families, including Joseph's siblings'

hating Joseph and selling him to a caravan of Ishmaelite and Midianite traders, who sold Joseph as a slave in Egypt.

Parental preference of one child or another is not a good thing but a result of the sinful human nature that all people share, which sinful nature leads us to sin and, together with our sin, warrants both death here and now and torment in hell for eternity.

Yet, because of both God's working through even sinful family dynamics and God's countercultural preference of Jacob over Esau and of Judah over Joseph and his other brothers (confer Genesis 49:8-12), the beloved Son of God could take-on human flesh as the sinless man Je-

sus and be crucified for the sins of the world.

Those who are sorry for their sinful nature and for their actual sins, and who, enabled by the Holy Spirit, trust God to forgive them by grace (or "favor"! for Jesus's sake, are forgiven by God and, in turn, love God more than anyone else (for example, Matthew 10:37).

Christians at least try to love all of their neighbors as themselves (for example, Leviticus 19:8), though we also recognize that our closest neighbors of parents, spouse, and children have some vocational priority over other neighbors, whether right next door or around the world.

With no favoritism, all are welcome at Pilgrim for Sunday Adult Bible Class tomorrow at 9:30 a.m., with Divine Service following at 10:45 a.m.

The Rev. Dr. Jayson S. Galler is Pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Kilgore.

You can reach him through the congregation's website: www.pilgrimlc.org.