



# Christ Lutheran Church

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**Share God's Word, share His love, and do it now!**

Pastor Chip Winter, Director of Ministries

## *“Who is in your DNA?” Romans 9:1-13* *Aug 5&6, 2017*

**Pastor David Paul Goehmann**

Dear family in Christ,

Would you believe I am related to Abraham Lincoln? I'm sure it could be true, but I haven't checked my ancestry that far. Some might say I look like a German, or a polish person, or even a Jew. Some people have the look. Certain facial features, whether they are short or tall, all kinds of physical characteristics could align you with certain ancestors. Even hairstyles, clothing, or maybe even the way you walk might associate you with a certain people group. Racial profiling can be done inappropriately, but on the other hand you may have certain advantages if you have certain ancestors. For example Native American's may get scholarships. Not that there is anything wrong with that. We are not talking about scholarships, but we are talking about Jesus.

Who you are depends on what is in your DNA. Only DNA tests can really prove one way or the other who you are. Even if I am related to Abraham Lincoln it doesn't mean that I want to abolish slavery. But I do want to abolish slavery so am I related to Abraham Lincoln?

Abraham from the Bible physically passed down his DNA to his children and ultimately every Israelite and then Jewish person. That fact was permanently fixed in the DNA. But here is the problem. Sadly we hear the passage that “not everyone who

was a part of Israel is Israel.” Getting DNA from Abraham isn’t the answer. No matter which Abraham you’re talking about.

Here is the thing. Scientists know that your brain chemistry can be changed. Those whose brains respond to certain stimuli change their brain chemistry. That’s why pornography changes brain chemistry and seriously messes you up. Also Scientists are finding trauma can actually change your brain as well. I can’t get into all the research, you can change from the inside out, and that can be quite drastic for your health.

Yet just as our flesh can change for the worse from toxic experiences, so our flesh can change from positive healing experiences. And that healing experience is the spiritual transformation of being a Christian. Not just becoming a Christian, but being one.

There is a story of an Eastern Orthodox monk who was revered by his brothers for his extraordinarily holy life. On his deathbed, he had a vision of God, angels, heaven—the whole works! After this vision, his brothers, who had been standing around his bed, pleaded with him for a word of wisdom. All he could say was, "I have only begun to repent."

It is by faith that we are children of Abraham (the one from the Bible). Even if it made a loop around different people groups, God’s love can still get to you. Becoming a Christian is like getting new DNA. You who have been baptized with Christ have been clothed with Christ. The old has gone and the new has come.

Jesus took on flesh. He took on your DNA and rewrote it. Now you are part of his family, because he died, not because you changed yourself. And now you are a new person.

In the Old Testament the Israelites had tons of sacrifices. They had a sacrifice for this and that all down the line. And Paul commends them for being a part of that heritage, with the patriarchs; the giving of the law, the covenants, and all that good stuff God did for them. Paul commends them for those times of worship when they would come and offer sacrifices for their sin again and again.

The only sacrificing that is done now is when Paul urges us to offer our bodies as living sacrificed holy and precious to God. **Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living** sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

We live in the Daily Nature of Atonement. Jesus atones for our sins. We sacrifice our desires, our passions, our addictions in order to live a new life. **1 Peter 2:5** you yourselves like **living** stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual **sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

He daily offers his atonement that is already done. We have it. It is part of our DNA by his work and his promise. That's what we have to live on. His promise. That is what Abraham had to live on. God's promise that he would have a son. God set a date and time for the fulfillment. Isn't that amazing how God says, "around this time next year Sarah will have a son." That promise is what links us with the Israelites, the ones who believed in the promise. We are one and the same people group because of the promises of God.

God's Word is not limited to only one people group with one background, in only one geographical location. And just because you are born to believing parents, doesn't mean you will be a Christian. By opening up the family of God to the Gentiles, God

essentially says I have no limits for my grace. I can go anywhere, find anyone, and transform any single person, not based on gender, race, or even sexual orientation. Consider Rahab, she fits all the wrong categories. A woman Canaanite prostitute. Yet she believed that the Israelites would wipe out Jericho, she believed in God. Her elimination would have actually been a part of God's promise!

Even those who were considered dogs, or considered themselves dogs like the woman who was not an Israelite; God's grace reached her. Samaritans, Pharisees, Centurions, It's all through faith, and it's all for you!

But you know, God extending his grace to different kinds of people is really no sweat. The hard part, at least for us to grasp is that God can break down the single biggest barrier that is a part of people, their very own DNA, meaning the deepest darkest part of a person. Sin.

Consider the people Jesus reached. Sinners. "Jesus if you only knew who was touching your feet you would never let her." She is a sinner. Jesus if you only knew he was a lying thief you would never go to his house. He is a sinner. But we know the end of those stories. These people were healed, forgiven, and rewritten into the family of God.

Elaine grew up in a fearful home. Her mother warned her that when her father got home things were not safe. They never knew what her father would do. He was so violent everyone all over town stayed away from the family.

The pastor in that town had prayed for her father many times and knew him since he had grown up. One day the pastor ran into her father in the store. They had some polite conversation. The pastor suggested that the bus could drop off his daughter at the

church for VBS. Elaine's father agreed. But he strongly warned the pastor that no one should speak the name of Jesus in his house.

Elaine's father came home that day and told his family exactly what he said to the pastor. No one was to speak about Jesus in his house. But the one glimmer of hope Elaine had in her childhood was when the bus did drop her off nearby the church. She could hear the children singing in the distance. Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Elaine remembered that day all the way into adulthood. She remembered the Pastor said Jesus loved her too. That was one thing that brought her healing from all the trauma she had growing up. God broke through the walls of sin and fear and that changed who she was.

We, like her, are children of Abraham, offspring of our same heavenly Father. God continually changes us from the inside out, no matter how far away from him people have taken us. We day by day hold on to that promise that we too are sons and daughters of our God. Amen