

## Jesus Describes His Family

### Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:19b-21; 31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Jesus often said and did things that went against every fiber of the Jewish mindset. In this incident, the cultural norm of the close net family unit will be challenged by Jesus' statement, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

**"and they went into a house. <sup>20</sup>And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup>And when his friends (Gk - family, own people) heard of it, they went out to lay hold (Gk - take charge, arrest, take custody, rescue, take by force) on him: for they said, He is beside himself (Gk - unsound, overwrought, mentally disturbed, out of his mind).**

*(v. 22-30 – These missing 10 verses tell of the scribes' accusation and Christ's warning.)*

**<sup>31</sup>There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, ("and could not come at him (Lit. - reach him) for the press." Luke 8:19) sent unto him, calling him. <sup>32</sup>And the multitude sat about him (Lit. - in a circle), and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." Mark 3:19b-21, 31-32**

**I. Setting** This incident takes part, simultaneously, with our previous lesson.

"they went into a house" – This event happened in a house, probably Peter's back in Capernaum. When the people realized He was back from touring Galilee, they thronged Him again! Peter's house has handled big crowds before, many middle-class homes not only had rooms but also a courtyard. But regardless of the size, it was completely jammed with people. It was here the scribes accused Jesus of being in league with the Devil and He warned them of their blaspheme of the Holy Spirit.

"friends heard of it" – The word translated "friends" is much more specific in Greek. The majority of English translations use the word "family." This would make perfect sense and pull the event together with verses 31-32.

What did they hear of? The great crowd gathering again and Jesus' inability to break from them even to eat! We are getting a glimpse into the everyday life of Jesus at the height of His public ministry: the overwhelming demand on Christ's time, in teaching, healing, and debating! The crowds and work were so demanding He couldn't even eat! Mark 6:31-34

"He is beside himself" – We might say today, "He is out of His mind" "He has life out of balance" "He has lost touch with reality" "unsound" "abnormal" "irrational" "lost His mind" or "mentally disturbed." Jesus' brothers believed at the worst Jesus had gone crazy and at the least, He needed to be rescued from the lifestyle that He had built up around Him and talked some sense into! They were well-meaning but wrong!

"There came then his brethren and his mother," – Verse 31 starts again with the narrative of the family rescue party. Here it tells us it consisted of Jesus' half-brothers and His mother, Mary. All four Gospels tell us that Jesus had half-siblings. Without a doubt, they would be Mary and Joseph's children. In John 2:12 it tells us Jesus' family traveled with Him and interacted with the disciples but about 8-10 months before the crucifixion, as recorded in John 7:5, they had separated from Him. Why would this be? Perhaps the trouble Jesus could or had stirred up for them. They had already left their hometown of Nazareth and moved with him to Capernaum,

but with all the issues with the Pharisees at this point of His ministry, the family might have to endure more separation, maybe from the local synagogue or even education for their children. But why would Mary be part of this? As I am writing, we are just a few weeks from Christmas. As I consider Mary, all the knowledge of her Son she was given by the angel, and the wonderful faith she demonstrated, how did she ever get dragged into this scenario? Well, as a mother of six young adults, I know I sometimes have to keep everyone happy and keep the peace. She likely got talked into thinking that taking Jesus away from the crowds and His ministry might be best for Him right now: eat, rest, regroup. But, oh my, she should have known better! We find in our study of Christ that twice Jesus will gently rebuke her for interfering with His ministry. (Luke 2:41; John 2:8) Her “mom heart” had a hard time watching the will of God being worked out in the life of her Son, the Savior of the World. Don’t forget, one day she will stand at the cross!

“and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.” – It was so crowded that there was no access to Jesus! They seemed to have been on the outskirts of the multitude, and it wasn’t until someone got word to Jesus of their presence, that He then dealt with their coming.

In my study, I have read many times about the close bond within Jewish families. Of course, the fifth commandment of God was, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” So that day whoever heard of Jesus’ family calling for Him would have expected Him to excuse Himself and tend to them immediately.

## II. Startling Statement

“And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? <sup>34</sup>And he looked round about on them which sat about him, (“And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples,” Matthew 12:49), and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! <sup>35</sup> For whosoever shall do the will of God (“my Father which is in heaven,” Matthew 12:50) (“which hear the word of God, and do it.” Luke 8:21), the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” Mark 3:33-35

“Who is my mother, or my brethren?” –This statement of Jesus would have gotten the attention of the listeners. It seems like an odd and silly question.

“Behold my mother and my brethren!” – But then the Scriptures tell us Christ looked around at His listeners, pointed to His disciples, and said, “Behold my mother and my brethren!” Check the exclamation point, it is found in both Mark and Matthew. The energy and emphasis are strong! I am certain the disciples were more than a little taken back! All the listeners would have been startled at such a strange statement!

Jesus used the setting as a time to introduce a new lesson - **His “family” is spiritual**. JW Shepard in his book, The Christ of the Gospels said Jesus was pointing out to His listeners, “Family ties are at best temporal: spiritual ties are eternal.” p. 220 Christ is offering an intimate family relationship with Him: deeper, higher, permanent, and one that surpasses any blood relationship we can have on earth!

You see Christ’s half-brothers were not believers or followers of Him. Jesus was spiritually closer to the disciples and the believing publicans and sinners than those He grew up with! Hebrews 2:9-11

Characteristics of Jesus’ Family – According to Christ His family **does the will of His Father!** But what does that mean? The Gospel of Luke gives the two components to doing the will of God – hearing and obeying!

- Jesus’ Family listens and desires the Word of God. It’s not just being in places where the truths are given, it’s taking them into the mind and actively being engaged with its realities! In 2023,

listening to God's Word can include church services, Bible studies, Sunday School classes, podcasts, recorded messages, reading good books, or using helpful websites. All these tools can enable us to hear and understand the Scripture and truths of God!

But hearing is just the start of doing the will of God.

- Jesus' Family obeys and does the Word of God. Hearing is not enough; the Word of God must be acted upon. God's will for our lives is found within the pages of the Bible. We must know it and then do it! This is a theme of Jesus while on earth and later the writers of the Epistles! Matthew 7:24; Luke 8:15; James 1:22-25

Here are three truths we can learn from the Scriptures:

1. The Scriptures tell us how to be saved from hell. Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9
2. The Scriptures tell us how to live to please God. 2 Tim. 2:15-16; Titus 2:11-12
3. The Scriptures tell us of our responsibility to tell others. Matt. 28:18-20; Phil. 1:27

These are all part of the **Will of God!**

### **Believers Application:**

1. Are you part of the family of God? Are you a sister of Jesus? That day, the Jewish listeners surrounding Jesus held the common belief one became a child of God by being born into a Jewish family. That was wrong! Even John the Baptist preached against trusting a lineage. (Matthew 3:7-12) Becoming a child of God has always been through faith, not by doing some work, or anything earthly! John 1:11-13, 3:3-7; Rom 8:15-17; 1 Peter 1:22-25

2. Let me encourage you to set up your children and grandchildren to hear the Bible. We cannot make our dear children and grandchildren obey the word of God, but we can certainly put the right resources in their hands and put them in the right places to hear truth. It is then the Holy Spirit to do a work in their hearts!

1. Read from child-appropriate Bible books. Have good Biblically-based audio materials for them to listen to. Talk and explain what they are hearing: the work of Jesus and salvation.
2. Take them to classes that teach the Bible. You are responsible for making sure the lessons are taught Biblically and appropriately! Encourage teachers to use their time wisely.
3. As your children grow, continue to give them opportunities to be exposed and hear the truths of God. Church-led classes; Bible camps; Vacation Bible Schools
3. Don't let children get into a habit of not paying attention when the Bible is preached or taught.

Grandmas, we can be a help in these areas by doing these same things with our grandchildren. Look for and provide good materials that teach the Bible. Help with the finances needed for Bible camp, help with transportation if needed, and be an example of a grandma who loves the Word of God!

3. Are you intense about the work of God? Society is full of lazy workers looking for a cushy, easy job that pays big! This should not describe Christians in any job, but especially in our kingdom work! This incident of Christ is a good lesson concerning the level Jesus expects His followers to serve Him. Long hours and personal sacrifice were Christ's pattern. He expects the same from His disciples today! But often this zeal for the work of God is seen as strange.

Consider this, when an **athlete** invests time, energy, asserts themselves beyond normal physical extremes, and sacrifices the pleasures of life, the world calls them dedicated! If a **businessman** works long hours, invests much of their own

resources, and takes time away from friends and family to see success in their ventures, the world calls them ambiguous. When a **student** spends long hours studying, researching, writing, reading, and preparing in their area of interest, the world calls them committed. When a **musician or an artist** sacrifices with long hours in practice, perfecting their skills, and spends large amounts of money on instruments, lessons, and supplies, the world calls them devoted. But when a **believer in Christ** works long hours, rejects many of the cultural norms, is willing to live with less, and is often happy to reinvest those resources into the work, when Christians are willing to leave family, friends, or country for the work of God, when they get up early or stay up late with a Bible, pen and prayer list, when godly young or old, man or woman, child or senior puts God first in their life, the world calls them a **fanatic, crazy, unbalanced, out of touch, foolish**. Ladies, we shouldn't be surprised for this is what happened to our dear Savior!

It is sad, but Christ found opposition from His own family! They believed His zeal for His Father's work boarded on insanity! History tells us that God's servants are usually misjudged by their contemporaries and misunderstood by family. The Apostle Paul experienced this reaction in Acts 26:24-25 when Festus said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad." Paul's answer, "I...speak forth the words of truth and soberness." And like with Paul, God's word often looks crazy to the world! Our dearest loved ones must not influence us away from God's word, and God's will. Working with zeal for the Lord will bring opposition from both friends and foes. Often those who are giving themselves totally to God are branded a "fanatic" and the brunt of jokes. But this is how it has always been for those who seek to follow the Lord and live godly. In it all we seek the Lord and His will. Ps. 69:7-16